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MART 120 - Creative Coding I
January 19, 2026

Homework 2 Reflection Paper

Randy Pausch's talk, "Last Lecture", was not anything like what I thought it was going to be like. When he opened up the lecture talking about his cancer and all of the tumors the doctors had found around his body, I thought the talk would take more of a pessimistic turn. Still, immediately, I was disproven when Pausch said, "That is what it is, we can't change it, we can only play with the cards we have on hand." Despite this, I was still skeptical about why he chose this lecture to be about childhood dreams, when I myself had dismissed many of the dreams I had as a child as just being 'silly', or 'unrealistic'. But taking a look at the long list of dreams Pausch had for himself, I had thought the same thing. I was incredibly surprised and delighted when I continued to watch and learned that he had actually accomplished the majority of them.

Pausch had achieved his goal of being in zero gravity, being a Disney Imagineer, winning stuffed animals, and meeting Captain Kirk. There were lessons he learned from the dreams he didn't achieve (like being in the NFL), and there was a lesson to be learned there, in which Pausch said, "I got more from that unaccomplished dream than all the dreams I accomplished, which is the importance of fundamentals". But unlike Randy Pausch, I learned more from his accomplished dreams, and I was so amazed at how hard and diligently he worked to accomplish his dreams in any way he could. When Pausch would hit a brick wall, he responded: Brickwalls are there to not stop us, but for us to show how much we want something. Brick walls are there to stop those who don't want it as badly. Randy Pausch wanted all of his childhood dreams so badly that it made me stop and reconsider the dreams I have had since I was a child, and ask myself, "What's stopping me from achieving what I want to?"

He talked later on about how he tried to enable his student's dreams, and how his mentor told him he couldn't set the bar for his students because, "You don't know where the bar is, and you're doing a disservice by just putting it anywhere," and by not limiting those under him, his student's just kept on going, and achieved more and more. This really stuck out to me, and really encouraged me to let myself keep going, and not put limits that I don't know exist onto myself.