

Cheers to the class of 2020

Four short years ago we came here as children, but tonight we leave as adults. We have finally completed a basic education that will serve its purpose to help launch our future. Three years have passed since we've felt the peak of achievement in the high school classroom. The jump from middle school to high school is a large milestone in one's teenage years and the fact that everybody here today has achieved it brings great happiness. We have accomplished something not everyone has done. And here we are today, wondering what's next.

As we sit here, let us remember no matter what we do, the road ahead won't be easy. Many of us will attend college, others will head straight into the workforce, and some into the military. There will be obstacles and missed exits, roadblocks, and potholes...literally.

We all have our own set of memories from high school. Whether it was from the football field or having the company of friends during the academic school day, they all mean something. From all the bad ones like getting kicked out of a school dance to the good ones like hanging out with your best friends, winning the championship game, and letting loose. The past four years we've experienced many emotions. That first day feeling of freshman year, being called "fresh meat", not knowing where you're going and seeing the upperclassmen laugh at you. The calmness of sophomore year, knowing your way around the building and making more and more friends in your classes. Junior year feeling anxious and nervous, trying to get good grades and having to look for colleges. Finally, getting to feel relaxed senior year, knowing all the hard work you've been putting in all these years will pay off. Somewhere in that mix of emotions, you've had your first love and even your worst heartbreak. There have been times where you felt like quitting that sport because you couldn't get a certain move down or dropping out because failed a single test.

Graduation is not the end goal, but it is just the first exit you get off at in life. Life will continue to test our skills and knock us down. Wherever the future wants to take us, let it, because sometimes life wants you to live on the edge. Don't get me wrong, it's good to have a plan, but sometimes going with the flow is just as good. You may feel blind, not knowing what exit to get off at or which highway will be closed. That is what the next chapter of your life will be like. If you're headed off to college, you'll have many new experiences like being on the college campus, college parties, and people from all around the state and even the country. I've been told that the military is just like school without the school education system. They have a "campus" called a base and follow many more strict rules. When you go into the workforce, you'll wake up and complete your 8 hour day, go to sleep, wake up and repeat. NO matter what path we take in life, there will be times where we feel like giving up because you feel that there is nothing you can do. You feel like you have no energy left and nobody can help you get through. That's just the game of life.

As we confront our fears and face our challenges, I need each and everyone of you to face them head on. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something. There have been times where I was told that I won't be able to get into college or that I could never move away from home because I couldn't be without my family. Standing here today I can say that I proved them all wrong. I've had a job ever since I was 16, went to school, and came home to take care of my little brother. I have learned life lessons and made many mistakes within my high school life, but I can proudly say "I've made it!" Even though I'll still be with my best friend, I'm moving away, to a different state. I'm going to college and I finally know what I want to do with my life. I have changed my mind so many times, just like life wants us to do, but after getting serious and knowing how much time I have left, I can truly say I know what I'm going to do with my life and I'm proud of my decision. I don't have all the details mapped out, but the past couple of months I have been going blind, letting life guide me. Seeing where it takes me is very exciting and adventurous.

Although it may not be easy to see, every accomplishment you achieve is added to the world's success stories. We may not have the power to inspire the entire world to strive for success, but we do have the power to try and achieve it for ourselves. Let me just say that I am proud of each and everyone of you. Individually, each of you have accomplished many things throughout the past four years that you should be proud of. Congratulations to you all. I know many of us won't see each other till later on in our lives, but I wish all of you the best.

With all that said, cheers to the class of 2020