

Greetings, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming today.

The time is upon us when we congregate, and recognize the rite of passage of the seniors of Ridgeview Classical Schools. The time of *Graduation* is upon us, with all of its celebrations, and all of its somber recognitions of change.

We, the Graduating class of 2006, are gathered here today at once to say a final farewell to our erstwhile careers as High-School students, and also to greet the world from the new perspective of graduated students; of those who have weathered the burdens of homework; of papers; of Latin translations, and have borne through with firm resolve; have overcome all of the challenges which rose to meet us.

And we have overcome much. We, the Graduating class of 2006, have endured; have even perhaps *enjoyed* the mandatory semester of Latin; the moral philosophy papers on such topics as why Kane, in *High Noon*, is a virtuous man. More than weathering and enduring much, as various teachers threw various paper topics through our brains, we have risen into action; have conquered and subdued the knowledge within us, in order to transform it into a paper of some predestined length. We have overcome much.

We have engaged each other in debate over Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Conrad, and even Plato. We have even waged war upon one another, as Mr. Herndon arbitrated a Modern History test, turned into a team-based battle of will and knowledge. Though we have overcome one another, it is true, more often have we overcome ourselves, somehow miraculously forcing out of ourselves energy and knowledge which we perhaps didn't know we had, writing an essay, a book-review, or a paper in the middle of the night the day before it was due. We have overcome ourselves, or perhaps only the lazier sides of ourselves, and inscribed in 25 pages our greatest thoughts; our deepest understandings; our Senior Thesis. We have been improved by Ridgeview, and Ridgeview has given us the self-propulsion to improve ourselves. In becoming something greater, we have overcome.

Some of us have founded a throne midst a wading pool in the hallway. Some of us have weathered

the star-streaked night with no bed greater than the asphalt of the parking lot. We have eaten. We have drunk. Here, at Ridgeview, we have spent our days as Seniors.

We move on now to greater difficulties; to more arduous endeavors. Having overcome the challenges which Ridgeview proffered us, we progress to the next stage of this ever-more-serious life, be it the night-shift, the day-shift, or the ever-present, sleepless shift of the freshman college student, delving deeper and deeper into the depths of the great books and the debts of the check-books.

The infinite sea of possibility stretches out to the horizon, as we finally find ourselves on the shore; on the no-man's land between earth and ocean; between High-School and the ever-ambiguous "real life." We have always known that this must lie somewhere on the path between childhood and adulthood; between being "young" and being "grown up."

This is the fulcrum, upon which balance both of the extremes, weighing equally upon us: the memories of the past and the possibilities of the future. And we hang in the balance, looking as much backward into the past as we look forward into the future. This is a sunrise and a sunset; a closure and an opening of a new chapter in our lives. What might be contained in this newness, we cannot fully tell.

If there is one thing of which Ridgeview has reminded us, it is this:

We can go anywhere from here.

The Class of 2006 greets you, at this most glorious ceremony: the graduation of Ridgeview's fourth Senior Class. To us, it is a transition; a change; a progression. We rise to meet this turning point with open arms, embracing past and future in this present moment: the graduation of the class of 2006.

Welcome.