

**Salutatory address**  
**Mr. Luke Heyliger**

Friends and family, teachers, distinguished guests, and, finally, my fellow seniors: allow me to welcome you to the sending-off of this, Ridgeview's fifth graduating class.

All of you have endured much to reach this point: you have worked hard and made sacrifices for those close to you. You have seen both what this class has done and what they are capable of achieving. Now, you come to see us off, in a final farewell to our careers as high-school students, yet in eager anticipation of what the future holds for these extraordinary young men and women.

Families: you have seen your sons and daughters arrive at this school, perhaps eagerly, perhaps reluctantly. You have seen them, though apprehensive at first, thrive at Ridgeview. You have seen them undertake the most difficult tasks, you have observed their dedication, you have seen them grow from untested, unready children to mature, seasoned young adults, well-instructed and prepared for life ahead.

You have seen the difficulties your students have lived through – the long nights of homework, finishing that one last paper, studying for that one last test. But you have also seen the honor they have brought to themselves by the way in which they have distinguished themselves not only in their pursuit of academics, but in their pursuit of character.

So to you family members, you who have supported your sons and daughters through the greatest tribulations and the greatest triumphs; you who have given love and encouragement over the years; you who celebrate with us today: welcome.

Teachers and faculty: many of you have known these students from their first moments at Ridgeview. You have seen and facilitated their growth as writers, thinkers, and individuals. You have given everything you have to our class. You have thrown everything you had at us: the tests, the papers, the lab reports; but by this you have taught us to work, to triumph, and to overcome.

To you teachers, you who have sacrificed so much in order to guide us; you who have become so much more than teachers; you who have cheered us on, encouraged us to continue when we thought we could not; you who are our role models; you whom we have looked up to through these years: welcome.

And finally, my comrades and fellow students: you are perfectly aware of everything that has gone before. And now, with so much behind us, we move on to all that is before us. Over your years at this school, you have grown closer together, through shared experiences, mutual activities and undertakings, and, at times, mutual suffering.

This class has done much. We have embraced the senior lifestyle; we have fulfilled old traditions and begun our own. We have spent virtually our every waking moment at Ridgeview, and often moments when we were not awake. We have competed against each other individually and as teams against others; we have worked together; we have laughed together; we have lived our lives with zeal, fervor, passion. We have even given the school its first senior parking section.

And we have overcome. We have endured the sciences, the humanities, the mathematics, the dress code, and reached the point of readiness. We have come to a conclusion on the nature of goodness and of life in the 25 pages of our senior thesis. We have overcome every history paper, every biology test, every math quiz that the school has thrown at us. We have called and

e-mailed one another late at night for last minute help on that last impossible physics problem. But most importantly of all, through all of this, we have learned to succeed.

Now this day, refreshed, rejuvenated, reborn as individuals, we go out into the world, to endure perhaps greater difficulties, and to achieve even greater triumphs. We shall take everything we have learned, everything that our teachers and families have given to us, and apply it to this looming reality known as...“reality.”

You who have accomplished so much, yet who still have so much to accomplish; you whom I have come to see not only as fellow students, but as my brothers and sisters: welcome.

All of you who have come on this momentous occasion to bid your sons, daughters, acquaintances, students, and loved ones farewell one last time: the Class of 2007 welcomes you to the Fifth Graduation Ceremony of Ridgeview Classical Schools.