



High School Graduation

June 8, 2008

Speech by Kevin Barr, High School President

Good afternoon. This is not the first time I have stood at this podium in my capacity as principal, so I understand the drill. My job is to say the words that crystallize the moment and capture a graduating class conveniently and conventionally. But having known some of these graduates since they were born and many of them since they first entered the Lower School, I won't pretend that a word or phrase could capture them in total or express what each of them is feeling just now. For this moment carries in it all the past moments that have brought them to this point. Gavin Stevens in Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* said that "the past is never dead. It's not even past." When I look at these beautiful, capable, self-aware 18-year-olds who in this moment seem so grown-up, I see just behind their shining eyes the kindergartner who wore his superman shirt under his street clothes just in case an emergency arose, the third grader with eye glasses thicker than mine, the fifth grader so skinny it was astonishing that she could play soccer as well as she did, the seventh and eighth graders who knew the pain of losing fathers, and uncles, and brothers, and the new ninth graders who worried whether they would find their place among the other grasshoppers. And yet here they are, each of them carrying their own personal griefs and joys, struggles and triumphs; they have had their dry spells and their moments of unbelievable growth; so if I can't find words capacious enough to capture them in total, I can tell them that their futures are bright, their talents are immense, and their hearts are made of gold. I thank the parents who gave to us the gift of these precious souls and the faculty who labored long and hard to teach and nurture them.

Be well, and be faithful to who you were and who you have become.