



High School Graduation

June 10, 2007

Speech by McKenzie Fowler, Class of 2007

Georgetown Day High School Class of 2007: I only have one question for you. Did you guys do the right thing by choosing me to speak at our graduation? In my opinion, you had much better options. The other nominees were more eloquent, vastly more mature, and tremendously wittier than I am known to be, which is why I can't believe that you all actually chose me. I think we should recount the votes, in fact I demand a recount. (pause and look at Kevin) I can wait. I'll wait until an election official from Florida comes to certify the vote. Well, I realize that at this point it would be pretty unfair and even a bit awkward to have someone trade places with me right now. So I'll give the speech, but I do want to make it clear that I still don't think the votes were counted correctly. I know we, as a class, have a reputation of never doing anything right, and this situation seems to follow in that regard. I thought that before we graduated we would get at least one thing right. Maybe stop playing with girls, or learn to appreciate Shakespeare. But unfortunately our class continues to make unwise decisions. I know it sounds weird coming from me, but honestly, you all would have been much better off voting for Eliza Hecht. She would have said something memorable. I seriously doubt that anything I have to say will be at all meaningful. You all know that I'm no where near as responsible or organized as Julia Halperin, so she would have been a much better choice. The only reason I started writing this at eleven-thirty last night was because I was afraid that one more missed assignment would get my college acceptance rescinded. Contrary to what some may have been expecting, there will be very little if any humor in my speech. Laura Gilbert's speech would have been funny and she wouldn't even have had to pull an all-nighter, although trying to get an extension may have crossed her mind. I'm not sure if it was due to my level of fatigue, but early this morning, asking for an extension seemed like a really good idea.

Last night as I navigated my way through the SparkNotes website, just as I do before starting any GDS assignment, I realized that this would be my last time visiting the web page as a GDSer. I got a little choked up and quickly became misty eyed, but just as quickly, I felt relieved. I know all of you feel at least a little bit relieved to be graduating from GDS. We've been so

stressed out for almost four years. Focusing on getting good grades, trying to excel in our extracurricular activities, worrying about getting into college, and in Jason's case, trying to get me to like him. When everything you've been working towards for such a long time finally comes together, it really is a huge relief.

Graduation is one of life's moments where we should all feel a sense of relief and a sense of accomplishment. So often it seemed over the last four years, that we received only a letter grade for our long hours of hard work. Sometimes we put forth tremendous effort, and still didn't get the letter grade that we felt matched our level of effort. Even when we tried our absolute best, it still sometimes wasn't enough. Many of us aren't recognized as often as we think we should be for our dedication outside of the classroom in our clubs and on our sports teams. When we make mistakes sometimes it seems we are remembered more for our failures than our achievements. Just one little slip-up and you're stuck with an unfavorable reputation for the rest of your high school career. Crushed hopes and dreams, lost chances, lost games, and lost friends are all bitter pills to swallow. But once we fight through the adversity the struggle should only make us stronger. High school presented us with many challenges. We met each of those challenges and made a concisous decision to succeed. The long and hard hours of work we put in only made us better and wiser students. Today we celebrate our efforts and realize that this victory was worth the fight. We may not have been rewarded for every little step that we made in the past four years, but today each of us will be recognized for the great growth we have made from ninth grade until now.

College acceptance may have felt like the ultimate reward for our diligence in high school, but graduation is truly the time that we celebrate the fruits of our labor. In the last four years we have both suffered and prospered. Some might say that it is impossible to flourish without going through a little bit of pain. We may have fought and rebelled against GDS for piling on the work, but today we should acknowledge and thank this institution for leading us to success. Georgetown Day School has molded us into the young adults we are and has positively impacted each of our futures forever. Aristotle said it perfectly: "The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet."

Georgetown Day High School Class of 2007: I know I told you that I only had one question for you, but I hope you don't mind if I pose a few more.

Have our roots been just bitter enough to enjoy the taste of the sweet fruit? Will the fruit be so sweet that we never forget our GDS roots? Have we been given the ability to see past our weaknesses and still find the strength to chase our dreams? Have we developed enough dreams to send our imaginations soaring? Will we stay attached to reality just enough to keep us grounded? Have we been given enough independence to develop and accomplish our own individual goals? Do we have enough dependence to know when and where to seek the help and support that we need? Will we give just as much help as we receive? Do we have enough freedom to make our own choices? Will our free choices be bounded by responsibility? Are we open-minded enough to accept conflicting views? Are we just closed-minded enough to have firm opinions? Will we ask enough questions to get all the right answers? Will we stay silent long enough to really soak up the knowledge? Has the joyfulness of our friendships given us the ability to rise above the sadness of saying goodbye? Is this final goodbye really just another beginning?

I would guess that to all of my questions you answered yes, and if so, then you have to thank GDS. We need to thank GDS for giving us the power to dream, to choose freely, to openly question, to passionately accept diversity, and to fearlessly look to the future. Goodbye GDS, and yes, I thank you!