



High School Graduation

June 10, 2007

Speech by David Gold, Class of 2007

A lot of people have told me that this speech should be funny, and so I recall the words of Jon Stewart, who, when prompted to "be funny" by Chris Matthews on Hardball, said "I'm not your monkey." Because, you see, there's a time for jokes, for laughter, for merriment, but this is not one of those times. Today we mourn the loss of our innocence, the loss of our warm, precious home. Never again will we be part of such a nurturing environment. There are many emotions swirling around this room, but I know that, for me, the greatest one is sadness.

I'm not sure how I said that with a straight face. College is going to be ridonkulous.

As such, I know that a lot of my classmates are eager to move on, and I did my best to keep this brief. However, I ask that you all sit patiently as I take you back, way back, to a magical time I like to call 1993.

See, apparently I didn't show sufficient "friend-making" skills in pre-school, so my parents feared that if they sent me to public school for kindergarten, I'd become a social outcast and, I suppose, eventually die alone without bearing them grandchildren. They needed a school where I'd receive the specialized attention I needed to break out of my shell, where I'd be surrounded by a select group of other socially inept kids. So, they set up an interview with Maret.

The only problem was, in those days, I didn't like to commit to activities that held no immediate benefit for me. So as the time of the interview approached and I refused to get in my mom's car, she did what all great parents do in times of crisis: she bribed me. I hopped in the car and, by all accounts, charmed the hell out of the Maret admissions staff for almost all of my visit. I say "almost all" because when it came time to leave, I allegedly walked over to my mom, and still within earshot of the admissions personnel, said, "Let's go. You owe me 20 bucks."

So it didn't look like Maret would be the best fit.

Fortunately, another bribe got me in a car to GDS, another bribe got me to keep my mouth shut, and yet another bribe got me admitted.

What I'm trying to say is, I've gone to GDS for 13 years. And if you don't think that's a long time, then you're old. A lot of kids here today don't know anything but GDS. And every member of the Class of '07 has a different story of how he or she came to be a Hopper. Some of us have been here since pre-K. Some of us grew up as far away as Indonesia, Colombia, or South Korea. Some of us backed into a red Ford Taurus out front and are in the directory if you want to exchange insurance information. But the important thing is we're all here, and we all made it. The Class of 2007, the "bad class," the class that has been warned of its less-than-stellar reputation every step of the way, is graduating every student.

I can't help but be reminded of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, part of our English Eleven curriculum. Specifically, I'm reminded of a quote from when Huck is having a conversation with Miss Watson about heaven and hell. Huck narrates, "I asked if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go [to heaven], and she said, not by a considerable sight. I was glad about that, because I wanted him and me to be together."

I always thought that was charming, how Huck was content to be damned so long as he could stay with his friend. It makes me think that, while the Class of '07 has had its scapegoats, the making of our reputation, good and bad, has been a team effort. When we made inappropriate Powder Puff shirts, we all wore them to support our squad. When someone lost their off-campus privileges, there was always someone to aid them, abet them, and pick them up a sandwich from Subway. And when we got in trouble, we never turned on our own. Through it all, we may have occasionally lost our heads, but we kept our friends.

And so with Huck's poignant words in mind, I say, with pure intentions and great excitement, to the entire Class of 2007: Congratulations, and I'll see you in hell. Thank you.