



High School Graduation

June 9, 2024

Speech by Yom Fox, High School Principal

Good Afternoon,

Welcome to our special guests - grandparents, parents, friends, faculty and staff. And let me extend an *especially warm welcome and congratulations to the Georgetown Day School Class of 2024*.

Today is an important day. I am certain you are simultaneously looking forward to what's ahead, while taking time to savor all that has been.

You may recall your fourth-grade trip to Prince William Forest. If you arrived at GDS after fourth grade, you have probably heard about these trips or even recall more recent overnights. A few weeks ago my son, Ollie, was preparing for the same trip. We received strict instructions about what we could send. The GDS packing list said no electronics, which I assumed was meant to eliminate getting on social media. On car trips, we normally listen to music or podcasts which helps to stave off motion sickness, boredom, and bickering. I told him I'd check with his teacher to see if I could make him a mixtape, and he could listen to it on a Walkman. He looked at me like I had two heads. I explained that a Walkman is a device that plays music without connecting to the internet. His expression remained blank—he told me he would prefer an Apple Watch—and left the room, probably convinced I had no idea what I was talking about.

This got me thinking about childhood, adolescence, and the mixtapes I used to painstakingly create over several days before streaming platforms like Spotify or Apple Music allowed us to effortlessly create a playlist in mere minutes. Since I wasn't lucky enough to have a double cassette recorder, I dutifully sat next to my stereo listening to the radio, waiting for the right song, hitting record on my small tape recorder as soon as the DJ stopped talking, hoping to hit

'stop' at the perfect time, the moment the song ended; dutifully, I waited by the radio until the next song I wanted came on to repeat the meticulous and nerve-wracking process at least 9 more times. It was the 1990s equivalent of using your phone to record videos playing on someone else's phone – primitive and time-consuming, but worth the effort.

That's because the perfect mixtape isn't just a collection of songs – it has the perfect flow, creating the right mood and conveying a deeper message. Done right, a mixtape can say I love you, I'm sorry, or I won't ever forget you or help you recall a sunrise after Prom. When you put it on, it will take you back to when it was created and fill you with all the feelings of that moment. I remember the first mixtape I got from my High School boyfriend, who ultimately wasn't the best boyfriend, but had good taste in music. It was an eclectic mix of Bob Marley, INXS, Talking Heads, Grateful Dead, and Madonna.

But the mixtape I remember the most is the one I made before I left for college. I remember driving off to my freshman year, having spent weeks perfecting the mixtape that would mark my transition from childhood to adulthood. Every time I hear Free Bird by Lynyrd Skynyrd, the last song on my mixtape, I recall the summer of bonfires, unshed tears, declarations of staying in touch and ultimately the bittersweet knowledge that the "freedom" we had earned and craved, was tinged with the sadness of goodbye.

So today, Class of 2024, I share a few of my suggestions for your mixtape as you stand at this special moment with so much behind you and more ahead of you.

Side A: Looking **Back**

[Probably Up](#)- Lawrence

From those late-night text chains about Freshman Research Paper (FREP) woes to endless group chats asking about deadlines for the senior paper and senior quest, you've probably been up all night. But through it all, you've known that your friends have been right there with you. You've made it through **together**.

[Forever](#)- Ben Harper

Your families have watched you grow, from tiny tots who couldn't tie your shoes, into vibrant, engaged young adults on the cusp of taking on the world. Though it may seem like it has taken forever for you to get to this point, believe me when I tell you, for them it has gone by in the blink

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of an eye. They have been there for Side A, and they will definitely make an appearance on Side B.

Side B: Looking **Forward**

[Unwritten](#) Natasha Bedingfeld

As you leave GDS, remember that the person you've become during your time here is just a small part of your story. You'll continue to grow, do amazing things, meet people, and have experiences, becoming someone new a month from now, a year from now, and, as Russell often reminds us, a well-adjusted 30-year-old.

For my last song, I just wanna tell you how I'm feeling...

Class of 2024, you are an amazing group of human beings. As you leave GDS and embark on your next adventures—be it college, gap years, or whatever awaits you—remember the friends you made here, your teachers who enriched you, the dreams and passions that shaped who you are and who you are working to become. It may feel like the past, but those people and experiences are the foundation that will power you through your future. We can't wait to see all the incredible things you will accomplish in the years to come. Remember, no matter what you do and where you go, you should always have a good mixtape as the soundtrack for your life.

Take it away, **Rick!**

[Never Gonna Give You Up](#) - By Rick Astley