

GRADUATION 2007

6/14/07

GOOD EVENING TO OUR HONORED GUESTS, THE GRADUATING SENIORS OF 2007, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ROBIN WILLINK, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TIMOTHY WALSH, THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, PARENTS, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS. WE GATHER HERE TONIGHT TO RECOGNIZE THE CLASS OF 2007 ON THEIR MANY ACHIEVEMENTS AND TO WISH THEM EVERY SUCCESS AS THEY LEAVE SHELTON HIGH SCHOOL TO MAKE THEIR WAY IN THE WORLD.

YOU LEAVE YOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL EXPERIENCE WITH HOPE AND OPTIMISIM FOR THE FUTURE, AS YOU SHOULD, IT'S THE AMERICAN WAY. THE ONLY LIMITS TO YOUR DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS WILL BE SET BY YOU. TO QUOTE RONALD REGAN, 'WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT ONE STRIVES TO ACHIEVE A GOAL.'

GO WITH CONFIDENCE, AIM HIGH, BUT ALSO BE AWARE THAT LIFE AS YOU KNOW IT WILL NOW CHANGE.

BILL GATES, THE FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF MICROSOFT, AND THE WORLD'S RICHEST MAN, WAS A KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT A COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY. HERE IS SOME OF WHAT HE SAID:

1. LIFE IS NOT FAIR-GET USED TO IT
2. THE WORLD WON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR SELF-ESTEEM. THE WORLD WILL EXPECT YOU TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING BEFORE YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF.
3. IF YOU THINK YOUR TEACHER WAS TOUGH, WAIT TILL YOU GET A BOSS.
4. WHAT YOU MAY THINK ARE MENIAL JOBS IS NOT BENEATH YOUR DIGNITY. YOUR GRANDPARENTS HAD A DIFFERENT APPROACH. THEY CALLED IT OPPORTUNITY!
5. IF YOU MAKE MISTAKES, ITS NOT YOUR PARENTS' FAULT. DON'T WHINE ABOUT THEM, LEARN FROM THEM.
6. BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, YOUR PARENTS WEREN'T AS BORING AS THEY ARE NOW. THEY GOT THAT WAY FROM PAYING YOUR BILLS, CLEANING YOUR CLOTHES, AND LISTENING TO YOU TELL THEM ABOUT HOW COOL YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE. SO, BEFORE YOU SAVE THE RAIN FOREST FROM THE PARASITES OF YOUR PARENTS GENERATION, TRY DELOUSING THE CLOSET IN YOUR OWN ROOM.
7. YOUR SCHOOL MAY HAVE DONE AWAY WITH WINNERS AND LOSERS BUT LIFE HAS NOT. IN SOME SCHOOLS, THEY HAVE ABOLISHED FAILING GRADES AND THEY'LL GIVE YOU AS MANY TIMES AS YOU NEED TO GET THE RIGHT ANSWERS. THAT DOESN'T BEAR THE SLIGHTEST RESEMBLENCE TO ANYTHING IN REAL LIFE.
8. LIFE IS NOT DIVIDED INTO MARKING PERIODS OR SEMESTERS. YOU DON'T GET SUMMERS OFF AND VERY FEW EMPLOYERS ARE

INTERESTED IN HELPING YOU FIND YOURSELF. DO THAT ON YOUR OWN TIME!

LASTLY, TELEVISION IS NOT REALITY. THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTIONS WILL HAVE CONSEQUENCES BOTH GOOD AND BAD. IF YOU AGREE WITH THIS, TELL SOMEONE ELSE.

IF YOU COULD READ THIS, THANK A TEACHER. IF YOU COULD READ THIS IN ENGLISH, THANK AN SOLDIER.

WE MUST BE EVER MINDFUL THAT LIFE WILL HAVE ITS CHALLENGES. LIKE EVERY OTHER GENERATION OF AMERICANS YOU WILL NEED TO DO YOUR PART.

AS HENRY DAVID THOREAU SAID "GO CONFIDENTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DREAMS." AND EVEN IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY DEFEND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE THAT IS SO ENVIED AROUND THE WORLD.

YOU WILL SOON UNDERSTAND, IF YOU DON'T ALREADY, THAT THERE IS NO OTHER PLACE IN THE WORLD THAT WILL PRESENT SUCH ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES LIKE THE COUNTRY IN WHICH YOU ALREADY LIVE. ON THIS DAY OF YOUR GRADUATION WE ALSO CELEBRATE FLAG DAY, THE AMERICAN FLAG, THE SYMBOL OF FREEDOM RECOGNIZED AROUND THE WORLD. WE ARE REMINDED OF THIS WHEN WE SEE A PHOTO OF RESCUE WORKERS RAISING THE FLAG AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IN 2001 OR THOSE COURAGEOUS MARINES RAISING THE FLAG AT IWO JIMA 62 YEARS AGO. GOD BLESS OUR COUNTRY FOR GIVING US THE FORTITUDE TO CREATE A FREE ENVIRONMENT. A COUNTRY PROTECTED AND FOUGHT FOR BY YOUR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND PAST GENERATIONS. WE ARE A NATION DEDICATED TO FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND THE WELL BEING OF ITS CITIZENS. BE REMINDED OF THE GREAT GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE MADE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO PURSUE THOSE HOPES AND DREAMS FOR A FULL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE.. BE THANKFUL TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES WHO SERVE AND HAVE SERVED AND THOSE WHO HAVE PAID THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE TO ALLOW US TO BE FREE. BE REMINDED THAT FREEDOM IS NOT FREE AND THAT THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE HAS ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME AT A PRICE.

AS YOU LEAVE SHELTON HIGH SCHOOL, EMBRACE THE WORLD BEFORE YOU, SEIZE ITS MANY OPPORTUNITIES AND BE MINDFUL OF THEIR ORIGIN. WHICH EVER COURSE YOU CHOOSE, OR WHATEVER PATH YOU TRAVEL, THERE WILL BE OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME. SUCH IS LIFE. WHEN YOU SEE OLD GLORY BLOWING IN THE BREEZE, IT TOO HAD MANY MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB, HURDLES TO CROSS BUT THAT IS WHY OUR FLAG STANDS FOR OUR COUNTRY'S DEVOTION TO FREEDOM TO THE RULE OF ALL.

CLASS OF 2007, I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR MANY ACHIEVEMENTS. DEDICATION AND HARD WORK UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYED A ROLE AND WILL

CONTINUE TO DO SO IF SUCCESS IS IN YOUR FUTURE. I WISH YOU HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN YOUR QUESTS IN LIFE AND HOPE THAT YOU WILL LEAVE AMERICA BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT.