

Katie Klotzbach
Graduation Speech

Congratulations, class of 2009: we made it! We have survived the transformation from junior high to high school, and from underclassmen to upper classmen. And now as we get ready to take our next big steps, we have a moment to pause and look back at how we ever made it through.

The past four years have been more eventful than we, as wide-eyed freshmen, could ever have imagined. Window's Vista replaced Microsoft Word. Drew Carey replaced Bob Barker on *The Price is Right*. Barry Bonds replaced Hank Aaron with his 756th home run. And Barack Obama replaced George W. Bush as president of the United States.

We have also weathered through updates that were uniquely our own: a single tablet computer in Biology was the precursor to multiple laptop classes, a computer-oriented library, and new technology such as Vision spyware, Chatzy, and Noodle Tools for the classroom.

New organizations were formed and old ones were revitalized. Fifth Step adjusted as members came and went, and a new girls group, Stella A Capella, was formed. A successful and student-run dodge ball tournament will hopefully become one of Rotary Interact's lasting traditions. And alumni will hardly recognize the speech team of yesteryear: Mr. Adams and a slew of talented and passionate students and coaches have made our speech team a nationally-ranked phenomenon.

As a class we have accomplished so much throughout these changes. Our scores on standardized tests are exceptional, and we have an extraordinarily high percentage of 5's when it comes to AP tests. One of us has earned a perfect score on the ACT. We are sending people to nationals in speech and debate, and our sports teams continue to be a source of pride. We are receiving scholarships and even full rides for our academic, musical, and athletic abilities. I am always amazed at the talent and passion that so many of my peers have for their subjects and hobbies.

Our successes could not have been accomplished by mere individual effort. Yes, we may be the "greatest students in the world," but we are not the only ones who walk through "these halls." It is only with the support of our teachers and our parents that we have not only succeeded, but have triumphed.

From the very beginning, the teachers and coaches and staff at University High School have gone above and beyond their educational call of duty. Whether learning about flying buttresses, Mole Day, or the Chain rule, we have been taught by some of the best. You have taught us how to find the wumpus and how to build a mousetrap car. How to understand Shakespeare and how to wrestle with a DBQ. But most importantly, you have given us an appreciation and an appetite for knowledge. For that, we thank you.

Parents, I don't even know where to begin. You have driven us to school, to practice, to meets and concerts and competitions; you have brought us forms and payments and projects that we leave at home the day they are due. You've sat in crowded bleachers in all kinds of weather and spent hours watching other people's children at sporting events and performances to cheer us on. Without you we might never have joined that new

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club, applied for that big scholarship, or stuck with that sport. We appreciate the extra hours and extra effort you have put in, and thank you for helping us get to this ceremony on this stage tonight.

It doesn't matter how many memories you make, or whether they are mostly good or mostly bad; what matters is the people you make up those memories. I couldn't have asked for a better group of people to make my memories with. The people you share food, music and floor space with on those five or eleven hour bus rides. The people you see for twenty hours a day during tech week, and the people you pass in the hall every day on your way to personal fitness. The people who stick up for you in Socratic discussions, and who will cough when your phone goes off during choir. The people who warn you about pop quizzes and who add a few seconds onto your presentation time. I am lucky that I was able to make my memories, both good, bad and in between, with the class of 2009.

We have done well and it is clear that we will continue to do well. However, do not forget that it is not enough to get the highest scores, to swim the fastest times, or to perform the most challenging pieces. As former president of Illinois Wesleyan University, Minor Myers said each year to his graduating seniors, "go forth and do well. But, more importantly, go forth and do good."