

JULIA GARZA'S VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

Thank you, Mr. HaddoxGood evening Dr. Reinberg, Dr. Oliveri, Faculty and staff, family and friends. Thank you for joining us on this truly memorable night. Also, a special thanks to my parents and siblings. Mom and Dad, without your loving support, I would not be standing here today.... And now, to my fellow graduates, classmates.... and close friends:

First off, congratulations to us, the class of 2010- we made it! We have officially completed all four years of high school. Throughout these years, we have withstood the physical and mental challenges life has thrown at us. We have forged friendships as well as lost them. We have taken tests, and hopefully, passed them. But overall, we have persevered through good times and bad and that is why we are gathered here on this very evening. We, as a class, are here to commemorate the happy ending of a major chapter in our lives as well as celebrate the beginning of a new chapter-A chapter that we are just beginning, with a pen in our hands, and an ending unplanned.

When we first arrived at Saint Francis Borgia Regional High School as awkward freshmen, many of us did not know what to think. We felt lost, primarily because the school was so much bigger than what we were used to! We felt confused because: number one, there were so many uniform combinations to choose from... and number two, if we were girls, we didn't know what the deal was with this plaid skort thing...I mean is it a skirt...a pair of shorts...til this day, I'm still not sure... And lastly, we felt hunted by the rather intimidating upperclassman. Upon first entering high school, we could say that we experienced an array of emotions. However, after the first few weeks of

classes, it seemed like everything started to click. We began to find our way to classrooms without first wandering into janitor closets. We started to establish lasting friendships with our classmates after giving them the creepy “I wanna be your friend but I’m too shy to ask” glance across the classroom. We got an idea of which uniform shirt made us ridiculously good-looking. And we found out that the upperclassmen were not vicious predators...

Today I stand before the 77th class to walk the halls of Borgia High School. Looking at you all right now, it is evident that once again Borgia has fulfilled its mission in fostering spiritually, morally, academically, and technologically prepared students. Thanks to our theology department, we grew both spiritually and morally. The latter largely due to a woman by the name of Mrs. Louise Leger. If she did not teach us moral from immoral I don’t know who could. I don’t think any of us will ever forget the morality polls taken in that class that we would either answer truthfully or deceitfully just to start a class rant. Either way, Mrs. Leger’s concerned lectures always seemed to put us on the right track.

And despite Father Kevin and his rampages with his toy sword, we managed to survive his classes and make it all the way to Mrs. Hertlein whose stern wit seemed to be just as piercing. I’m pretty sure all of you would agree that as soon as she would ask the infamous reading of the day question, we would either a. avoid eye contact with her, b. suddenly look interested in the religious artwork covering the walls, or c. begin to break a sweat. Somehow she always managed to pick out the person who did all three.

Technologically, who could forget Mr. Meyer's principles of technology class when we learned how to format papers, letters, and résumés... as well as play computer games....

Academically, chances are that Mrs. Snider, Mrs. Steffens, or Mrs. Pelster have taught us something over the years...such as not to freak out when we see more than one letter in a math problem. Yes, those are still solvable. Meanwhile, Mr. McKee and Mrs. Russell let us know that we were human and humans make many mistakes especially when writing papers. Mrs. Russell also tag-teamed with Mr. Russell to make sure our senior year was challenging. The Russells were "out to get us" to say the least. Furthermore, I guess you could classify Judy Kandlbinder's appearance as an academic class in itself. She always looks so dang good, why wouldn't we want to mimic that hip, vibrant woman? Clearly, our teachers are an important part of what is referred to as the Borgia Tradition.

Borgia Tradition has molded us into the strong, independent, knowledgeable, and determined young men and women we are today. Borgia has motivated us to be the change we wish to see in the world. And, in my opinion, who better to be that change than each and every one of you sitting in front of me. I have spent 4 years of my life with a truly talented and motivated group of individuals, a group that I like to call my Borgia family. I have experienced the best in all of you, and I genuinely know that there is no better group of people to take on the world ahead.

Tonight, we move onto a major stepping stone in our lives and begin our journey into adulthood. Parents....notice how I say begin...for this does not mean that after

tonight you are done tucking us in...giving us advice....making us supper...or providing us with that necessary cash flow. After all, you will have to put up with us this summer...and, warning.....we will take advantage of you every opportunity we get. Now back to my classmates...Our parents, our teachers, and Borgia Tradition have provided us with all the wisdom and knowledge needed to begin our journey. They have instilled in us a belief that the wise, philosopher, and poet Ralph Emerson once quoted, “what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us”.

Although we have completed high school, Borgia and all that it stands for will continue to be a major aspect of our lives. And so, I would like to leave you with one of Borgia’s newest traditions initiated by Garret Searcy in his 2005 valedictory address. A poem that you may always take with you:

May you always have walls for the winds,
A roof for the rain, tea beside the fire,
Laughter to cheer you, those you love near you,
And all your heart might desire.
May every wind that blows
Send happiness to you.
May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields, and,
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Upon officially leaving high school, a pen is passed to us, so that we may now become the authors of our own lives. Class of 2010, I challenge you to pull out the loose leaf...college-ruled...and grasp your pen in hand. For today is where your book begins...The rest is still unwritten.