

Valedictorian Address, 2009
Rachel Mudd

Thank you, Mr. Haddox.

Your Excellency, Archbishop Dolan; faculty and staff; family and friends present; and fellow classmates of the Class of 2009:

First of all, I would like to cordially apologize to Mr. Buchheit, our speech teacher, as well as everyone in the audience for all the mistakes I will undoubtedly make throughout this speech. I will try to remember everything you taught us, but definitely no promises. Also, just so everyone knows, I timed this speech today and it should be between 5 and 6 minutes. Don't worry, I'll make it fast, I promise, just hang in there. I'm sure opening with this was a mistake in itself so now I'll continue...

Class of 2009, throughout our lives, we have been through a variety of obstacles, as Amanda touched on earlier. As children, we learned how to walk, talk, ride and fall of a bike. We attended grade school, played kickball and four square, took our first tests, and made our first friends. We graduated eighth grade and went on to high school, learning how to drive and receiving our first cars, or in my case, my first of two minivans. (thanks mom and dad) In high school, we got a taste of varsity athletics, theatre, clubs, and other organizations. We created a new home away from home where we spent 5 days out of every week – Borgia. And now, we must face another obstacle – moving on, maturing, and starting new. There is a saying that states, "All good things eventually come to an end." I guess, in a sense, this is true. However, we must not fail to acknowledge the *better* things that will soon begin.

Next year, we will no longer be together. Our class, sitting here now, praying that this ceremony will end soon (I know I am), will be spread all across the United States. For some, this is scary and sad, for others, this is exciting and long-awaited. No matter what thoughts you may have about college, it is understood that our education here at St. Francis Borgia is complete. I am confident that our past four years here have readily prepared us for the future. Though you may not realize it, St. Francis Borgia has instilled morals and values that will come with us, no matter how far away we choose to go.

Last week Thursday, Doctor Heger asked me how far I had gotten on this speech. I started laughing, because I had not actually started writing it yet, nor had I really thought about it either. Needless to say, he was not very pleased with my reply. That night, I came home and had nothing to do. I very well could have been proactive and started writing this address. Logically, however, I chose to watch *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* instead (by myself and crying because it was so sad...I'm really cool...). It was in this movie, however, that Benjamin stated the following quote to his daughter as he neared the end of his life. I thought it was more than fitting for this ceremony. It states...

For what it's worth: it's never too late to be whoever you want to be. There's no time limit, stop whenever you want. You can change or stay the same, there are no rules to this thing called life. We can make the best or the worst of it.

He continues....

I hope you make the best of it. And I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel emotions you never felt before. I hope you meet people with a different point of view. I hope you live a life you're proud of. If you find that you're not, I hope you have the strength to start all over again.

Class of 2009, we have finally come to our end here at Borgia. We made it through every sporting event, detention, lecture, test, quiz, exam, and pep rally. We will no longer be asked what the reading was today by Mrs. Hertlein, if we are going to prom by Mrs. Kandlbinder, or if we are going to college by our guidance counselors. We will no longer be able to sneak away to Mrs. Chalk and Mrs. Vossbrink's office when classes get boring. We will no longer hear Mr. Jankowski's stories about nuclear weaponry, Mr. Noelker threatening to "start cracking skulls", or Mr. Russell's stories about growing up in the most ominous city of Flint, Michigan. We leave just as we entered high school four years ago – unsure of the future. Who knows what the next four years have in store for each of you. Amidst this change, we are given the opportunity to start over again. Meet new friends, try new things. This is your chance to change yourself for the better. Think about the person you wish to become and take advantage of this new beginning.

I speak on behalf of the entire class when I say it has been a pleasure attending Borgia. Thank you faculty, staff, and parents, for putting up with us throughout high school. I simply hope the next four years turn out to be as blessed, privileged, and memorable as out last four spent here.

I am going to close with a poem, yes Mr. Russell, I am almost finished. This poem was read first in Garret Searcy's Valedictory address. It has been included in each address since, and I will continue the tradition tonight. It states...

May you always have the 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,

Class of 2009, with the utmost sincerity,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.