

## Valediction

Ms Hutson, Deacon Iannarino, Mr Urquhart, faculty, parents, friends and fellow classmates, I welcome you. And at this, the day on which we celebrate our graduation, I say goodbye. As we the class of two thousand fourteen bid our *alma mater* farewell, we turn our sights to new endeavors and begin to select for ourselves a new home in the world.

Our graduation from high school marks a time of many and wonderful changes in our lives. Of the many changes which might mark a young person's life, none can match the distinction held by his passage into adulthood, the same transition marked by our celebration today. Our many years of schooling and extracurriculars, our stress in the face of exams and our anticipation of college decisions have all come to pass and their consequence now pales in light of the journey ahead.

We now enter the world with a new and excellent credential: we can now call ourselves Watterson alumni. To be sure, graduation is a day of significance in any young person's life, but we the graduating class of Bishop Watterson High School are today endowed with something even grander: we now go forth into the world armed with a Watterson degree. This degree is the key into college for many of us, and a workforce-credential for those of us taking different paths, but more importantly, it is a symbol of our time spent in these halls, the formative years which we have spent as members of the nurturing Watterson family. These years were marked by our growth as individuals, our coming together as a community, and our development into the fruitful leaders and moral role models who now take the stage as graduates.

These four years have been perhaps the most formative of our lives. We who entered as a group of timid freshman, largely unfamiliar to one another, now exit as a tight-knit community, with friendships that will last a lifetime. Even beyond the walls of Watterson, high school tends to catch its students at a time of rapid change. In these past four years we transformed from middle schoolers into adults. We were faced with two hundred strangers, and we managed to find for ourselves a group with whom we could enjoy these years. We took the roads as licensed drivers and for the first time, the world now felt a little smaller. And now, as we go forth from these halls and continue to grow, this whole world will begin to feel within reach.

Of the many advantages of a Watterson education, none outshines the way in which she prepares her students for life after high school. Over the past four years we have been surrounded by remarkable faculty and immersed in a unique environment, one marked by passion for one's work and compassion for one's peers. Now we have a responsibility to our school: with degree in hand, we set out to become role models for those around us, to bear the image of Watterson in all that we do.

As we take our places in this world, I urge you, members of the graduating class, to excel; to take the lessons you have learned in these halls, and to put them to use in the real-world; to live moral lives and to find those people whose lives you can value above all else; to devise far-fetched dreams, and seize them;

to give your all to this life, and make a name for yourself.

These past four years have been a crazy journey, a time of rapid development and extreme growth. Now, as we end our voyage across this bridge from elementary school to adulthood, we turn to new endeavors, forever altered by the journey behind us. We go forth as Watterson graduates, prepared to take on the world and to act in Watterson's name for years to come. Congratulations and good luck to the graduating class of two thousand fourteen!