

A High School Musical

"Here comes goodbye, here comes the last time." – fitting lyrics from a Number One on the Billboard chart on April 25, 2009. Before I begin, I would just like to say that in case this speech goes terribly wrong the Franklin and Marshall athletic training staff is close by. And if gets so bad that you need an ambulance, the following signal will summon one for you. Thank you Ms. Atkins Sports Medicine class. With that said, congratulations seniors, we made it. We have successfully finished 4 years of high school. I applaud all of you for being here today. You have struggled through hours of studying, excruciating research papers, and worst of all PSSA testing. You have done your fair share of fire drills and spent hours waiting in the cafeteria lunch line. Congratulations.

I applaud the teachers for their dedication to us students. They have sacrificed their time for our advancement as students and as adults. They have put up with our antics, from inappropriate drawings as freshman, parents please ask your students about those I don't want to go into details up here, to obnoxiously shouting football in the hallways as seniors. In the end they have always been there for us and we owe them a huge thank you.

Our parents and loved ones should also be thanked and applauded, as they have stood by our sides as we grew out of adolescence and into adulthood.

Our administrators have been incredibly helpful and I would like to give a personal thank you to the custodial staff. They work day and night to keep our school presentable and a healthy learning environment.

Whether or not you are a talented musician, more than likely, music or a song has impacted your life. Each of us probably has a song that helps us get in the “right frame of mind” for the task ahead; for me I listened to *Power by Kanye West* on my IPOD on the way to football games. What is your song?

Now, most of you who know me very well will know this, but I’m going to level with all of you right now. I sing...a lot. But here’s the thing, I am a TERRIBLE singer. My attempts at singing are just horrendous. Because I sing all the time I figured why not bring it into my speech at graduation. But don’t worry, I won’t be singing tonight. I will spare all of you. In addition, Mr. Gale let me know that if I did he would full-body tackle me off the stage. Instead, I found song lyrics from the top 100 billboard hits from our time as freshman to seniors and incorporated them into the rest of the speech. I will apologize now though, if I get carried away and happen to belt out a lyric or two.

Now that, that, that, that, that don’t kill me will only make me stronger. For those of you that remember, that was the number 4 hit when we were freshman and, ironically enough, it was on Kanye West’s CD, *Graduation*. As we continue on we will experience failure after failure. However, it will be these failures that shape our character and they will eventually lead to success. For every failure that doesn’t kill us, we will only get stronger.

Baby you’re a firework, come on let your colors burst. Now originally I had intended that to be directed solely to Mr. Gale but then I decided everybody would benefit from it. We are all unique and talented in our own way. I think we can see that through all our accomplishments as a class. We have a talented

class with incredible athletes, artists, musicians, FFA and tech kids. For us to stand out and achieve these accomplishments we need to let our colors burst. We need our future professors and employers to see that we are talented individuals with unique capabilities and personalities. Nobody likes a firework that doesn't burst, but everybody loves the firework that blows up across the sky with different colors and those sparkling, sizzly things that come out of some of them. So Mr. Gale *let your colors burst, cause baby you're a firework.*

Never say never. Now don't get me wrong I dislike Justin Beiber as much as the guy next to me, but these are powerful and important lyrics. You are all capable of being and doing whatever it is you want to. I have seen the Justin Beiber movie and I am not saying I enjoyed it, however his determination and his will to make it was incredible. He never gave up and now he is a sensation. All of you can be that sensation. Whether you want to be a sensational doctor, a sensational storage auction hunter, or even a sensational pop artist, you must attack your dream with fervor and never give up. Fight for your dreams, I will fight for mine beside you, and *never say never.*

Fergalicious definition make them boys go loco. At this point I hope all of you are wondering how I am going to tie that in to some valuable life lesson that you will carry with you for the rest of your life. To be honest, that wasn't the plan I just wanted to remind you that was the number one hit when we were freshman. The things we listened too...

Money can't buy us happiness, Can we all slow down and enjoy right now, Guarantee we'll be feeling alright. Money drives most of our decisions today and

it is probably how you decided on what you are doing after high school. We all need money but it can't buy us happiness. Our happiness isn't found in green paper bills but in our family and friends. They keep us happy. Our friends and loved ones are more powerful than anything money can buy. Keep your money close but keep your friends closer, I guarantee you'll be feeling alright.

This is the time, this is the time to be more than a name or a face in the crowd, this is the time, this is the time of my life. That is David Cook's number 10 hit in 2008 and, for me, it describes high school perfectly. High school has been the time of my life. I have had the greatest memories during my time at Penn Manor. These memories are my most valuable possession from my time at high school. I have learned thousands of math problems and memorized dates for history tests, but it's the memories I made while learning that are most important. High school is everybody's opportunity to stand out and be themselves. Although our class is the class of 2011, and I truly believe we are one group, we are also a class of individuals. I applaud all of you for being your own person and still finding room to love and care for each other. You are all leaders in your own right and that is truly admirable.

I want everyone to close your eyes and think about your time in high school. Is there a song that comes to mind? To the Grandparents in the audience – How about *Catch a Falling Star* or *Jail House Rock*.

[PAUSE]

Parents and teachers – Michael Jackson’s Thriller, maybe “Summer of 69”, or “Free-Bird.” What song reminds you of those fun loving, carefree days of high school?

[PAUSE]

You will always remember that “high school musical” in your mind. To the class of 2011, *I know it’s hard to believe but you’re gonna miss this, you’re gonna want this back, you’re gonna wish these days hadn’t gone by so fast. These are some good times.* Now open your eyes and *take a good look around, you may not know it now, but you’re gonna miss this.* Congratulations Class of 2011 on this verse of your life. Remember *there’s a spark in you, you just gotta’ ignite the light and let it shine, just own the night,* JUST OWN YOUR LIFE.