



REGINA DOMINICAN

THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY CATHOLIC SCHOOL FOR WOMEN

Good morning, administration, Board of Directors, faculty and staff, students, parents, and graduates! It is June 4, 2005, in case any of you were pinching yourselves to see whether this really is graduation, and the Class of 2005 is alive!

I remember walking into this auditorium four years ago, and listening to Sr. Joan tell us that we were alive. At the moment, as I recall, we regarded it as a statement of the obvious, but I think most of us were too scared to say anything.

Looking back, it doesn't seem like such a trivial thing anymore—being alive. We were alive then, and we are alive now. It seems like such a simple thing to say, but it's my belief that being alive here at Regina has changed us profoundly.

We've lived through four years of high school together. That's saying a lot! We've lived with each other's talents and abilities; with each other's moods, good and bad; with each other's pet peeves, the annoying things that make you want to scream and the kind things that make you want to hug that person.

And, in those four years, we've accomplished more than we ever even knew was possible. The road downstate, for example, has become very familiar, with the basketball team, WYSE, and Poms all making the finals. Our class has garnered more awards than I, for one, even knew existed, awards ranging from sports to academics to community service to the fine arts. With all the certificates we've brought home, we could single-handedly keep frame-makers in business.

Of course, it isn't awards that we'll remember most when we think about high school. It's things like Kairos, or Prom, or the musical senior year or the last game of the season. Or things even more ordinary, like Mr. Nelson telling us about "Jimmy, Chuck, Chuck, Jim" or the smell in the senior lounge. Actually, come to think of it, that might be something it's better to forget. But it's still part of our experience — something we've been thinking about more and more as graduation has been getting closer and closer.

I've heard two schools of thought about graduation. One is the usual, sentimental "I'm going to miss all you guys so much what will I do without you" school, and the other is the "I can't wait to get out of this place" school. Most of the senior class seems to be card-carrying members of the second school of thought. Except there are times when the sentiment seems to be more of what Mrs. Hayes would call a "yeahbut" — yeah, we'll miss all you people, but we really need to get out of here! Or conversely, yeah, we need to get out of here, but we'll still really miss everyone.

In the musical *My Fair Lady*, Professor Henry Higgins sings a song called "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face." Some of the lyrics are: "her smiles, her frowns/ her ups, her downs/ are second nature to me now/ like breathing out and breathing in." I think, subconsciously, that's how we feel about each other. Even if all we are to each other is a familiar face, that means more than you might think it does. Next fall, we'll probably all be longing for a familiar face.

Sometimes I think that we, like Henry Higgins, don't realize how much of a good thing we have until it's gone. Being at Regina and being with our classmates has come to be routine, almost boring by now. Everything here is so familiar that we want something new, something different. But familiarity and predictability have a lot to be said for them. It's nice to know exactly where everything is, which clocks are slow, which teachers will let you get away with wearing Birkenstocks, and how best to get by while still having free time. Just think — we'll have to figure all that out again next fall (except the Birkenstocks part).



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Before you walk out those doors to get ready for next fall, I have two challenges for you. The first is to remember. To remember everything — not just the things you would remember any way, not just Kairos or Prom or this ceremony, and not just the really awful things like the time when you had two projects and three papers and a test all on the same day and you had to stay up until 4 in the morning, and not even just the stuff you learned in the classroom — everything.

Well, almost everything. I want you to remember the people: the good times, the bad times, and the blah times in between. If you don't remember everything, none of the stuff you do remember will mean as much. Also, you won't be able to learn from it.

That's my second challenge to you. When you do remember everything, use it to make yourself the best person you can be. Learn from your mistakes, yes, but it's just as important to learn from the things you've done right, from the things you've discovered about yourself these past four years. We've had a great opportunity — one of the best — to learn about ourselves and to have fun while we learn. By taking advantage of it, we not only give credit to ourselves, but to all these people who have helped us learn. If we do well, we honor them. Indeed, by being here today, we have already taken a significant step in this endeavor.

And as I look at us now, I know that we're well on our way to being the best. Keep doing whatever it is that you're doing, because it works. You all make me proud to be alive with the Class of 2005!!

- Hilary Boussein