

Good afternoon, before I begin I must say that this will be a new experience for me. Normally when I'm speaking I'm trying to contradict everything the person before me said, and I'm talking about politics. For once however, I agree completely with everything the previous speaker said, and I promise not to bore you with details of Bush's energy policy, the Iraq war, or who is going to win the 08 Democratic Presidential Nomination. Because today is not about debate, or rebuttals or politics, today is about the close of another season at Coram Deo Academy, and the beginning of a brand new season. It is about ending the chapter of the class of 2007 and turning the page to find a new and better chapter waiting for all of us.

It was on Wednesday, August 13th, 2003 that the high school chapter began for the class of 2007...oh, unless you were one of those *Tuesday/Thursday* people, in that case it began on Thursday the 14th. Today, 3 years and 9 months later, after about 380 days at school, and after riding in or driving my car from Keller approximately 18,240 miles to get to and from school, we have arrived at our final moments as students of Coram Deo Academy. It has been a long road, full of the usual challenges high school students face, as well as a few challenges unique to Coram Deo-there are few other schools where the students are cramming trying to remember the significance of the 7th circle of Dante's inferno, or parsing a 4th conjugation latin verb...in the subjunctive mood. There were many times (and they seem to be clustered in the senior year) that many of us felt the temptation to give up. But I stand here today extremely grateful for the high school education that I have received. Our parents especially deserve thanks for paying for our education, driving us long distances to school, and putting up with our complaining about homework or our stress the night before a big test. Here now at the end, we come away confident that we have the skills necessary to do what God wants us to do with the next chapter of our lives, and each life is as unique as the 36 individuals here on this stage. But I am going to risk the fallacy of hasty generalization and briefly glance at the past and possible future pages of our lives. In the class of 2007 we have the artists, those who eagerly took Mr. Terry's offer to do a piece of art for a test grade in apologetics, quite a different approach from some of the other students...like me...who simply wrote an essay. Then we have the athletes, those of us who fought with all the energy, sweat, and sometimes blood necessary for us to win games and most notably bring home the 6 man football state championship in 11th grade. We have the analytical engineers and mathematicians, whose favorite

activity during the break between classes was deriving the quadratic formula, or utilizing the fundamental theorem of calculus, yes we are geeks, and we don't care. And of course- my own personal favorite- those argumentative debaters, who are willing to, at any given point in time, discuss and debate any political, historical, societal, environmental, or economic issue. And those are just things we did at school. Outside of school we participated in music, playing the harp, the electric guitar, and everything in between. Some of our class cared for animals, working at a veterinary clinic, or taking care of birds. We started our own acting groups and piano studios. Some of us went on mission trips spreading the good news of God's love. Whether we ministered in Mexico, India, Brazil or even the streets of the inner city, we boldly let our lights shine out to those who so desperately need Christ.

We did all this in high school, and only God can fully comprehend what comes next. In the pages of our future we may be ministers, godly politicians and lawyers (yes there are such people), artists, dancers, teachers, entrepreneurs, veterinarians, engineers, doctors, missionaries, or whatever other callings God may have for us

And so now, as the beginning of that future we must prepare for life beyond Coram Deo, without the jeopardy theme music ringing before every period, without our classmates constantly interrupting us during the cross-examination round of a history debate, and without the regular trips to Starbucks to "study" or just hang out with friends. C.S. Lewis once said, "It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad." It is time for us to move on, to learn how to fly, and though we are sad to leave behind our family, friends, and teachers, we are excited to move into the great future that God has for each of us. But even as we turn the page into the future, so also is Coram Deo entering a new season as a school.

To start, this class has the honor of being the first class to spend their senior year in a building owned by Coram Deo Academy. This campus has truly been a blessing. If you don't believe me, let me remind you of the beginning of this year, when our shoes literally stuck to the floor of the Unity building and when only two of our classrooms actually had windows. By God's grace the future campus of this school will be something that far surpasses anything we imagined

We are all thankful for this new building, but the most exciting change coming to the school is an increase in school camaraderie and relationships. When we started high school in 9th grade the atmosphere was far from what it is now. Interaction between grades and days was very rare if you were on M/W, there wasn't even a senior class at school. For my fellow M/W alums and I, names such as Jonathan Rogers, Lindsey Sobolik, Andy Marshall, Hunter Grunden, and were just names, and although it was quite fun always getting to be the oldest class on Monday Wednesday, we never got the opportunity to learn or be accountable to those older and more experienced than us. Even relationships between M/W and T/TH were not formed until 10th or 11th grade. The new House system will give everyone, whether freshman or senior, M/W or T/TH, the opportunity to interact with and learn from their peers.

And now some words of advice to those who will follow us. Looking back on my years as a high school student I begin to see the point of all those seemingly endless homework assignments, quizzes, tests, timeline quizzes, projects, Progymnasmata papers, discussions, and lectures. Though it wasn't apparent then, all of those things were training me and preparing me for life beyond high school. And this can be said for all of the graduates here today. And now we face college, full of new challenges and new struggles, but we must face them as resolutely as we faced high school. To everyone here, but particularly to the freshman, sophomores, and juniors I would borrow the words of Paul and say: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. Coram Deo is a hard school. I will be the first one to admit it. But as Isocrates would say, the fruits of such an education truly are sweet. And through our education at Coram Deo we have each one of us drawn closer to the destiny that God has for our lives.

So I thank you faculty, staff, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Rector, and all of those who helped us get through our years here at Coram Deo. We will miss you, but will never forget how you taught us to live each day "in the presence of God". And now, my student congress experience is getting the better of me, so pardon me as I yield all remaining time to the floor.