

Salutatorian Speech by Sam Rosso

It is my privilege to extend a heartfelt welcome to you, Bishop Burbidge, the Board of Trustees, Dr. Fedewa, faculty and staff, parents, family, and friends. Thank you all for being here to mark this special moment with our class, the class of 2014.

Since this ceremony takes place *this* weekend, one in which we look back and remember those who have died for our country, and in *this* Memorial auditorium, one named in remembrance of those very same people, it is appropriate to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I would also like for us to keep in our thoughts and prayers any service men and women at home and abroad.

When I remember my time at Cardinal Gibbons, academic lessons are *not* the first thing that comes to mind, probably to my parents' dismay. As memorable as the Gadsden Purchase or implicit differentiation or the present perfect subjunctive tense are...that's not what I'll be telling my grandkids about—hopefully. What I *will* tell them about are these people. These people are up on stage with me, the teachers and staff, and these people down in the audience, the class of 2014. Because they – the students along with the faculty – make Gibbons unique. Any school can educate you and make you a *smarter* person. But Gibbons truly teaches, and makes you a *better* person. I honestly feel like the school's battle cry of “faith service and leadership” is exemplified in our class. We exhibit these qualities every day; they are the ties that bind the Gibbons family.

The greatest gifts that Gibbons has given us are our classmates and the relationships we have with them, but I didn't always see this. I wish I had taken a picture of us four years ago during our first week trying to navigate the crowded hallways. Between our small bodies and large backpacks, it's a wonder we ever got to class on time, and some of us didn't. Four years later, it's 8 a.m. on our last day of school, and once again, no one can navigate the hallways. But this time is different. There are 300 seniors crowded into one locker bay, all lying down across the hall. Laughter, cheering, pounding on lockers, people taking pictures together. That's the Gibbons family. With everyone of all different social groups piled around each other and just enjoying our last day, it really hit me just how close this class has become over the years. Since I was busy thinking about this, I once again forgot to take a picture.

We're not all the same, but we're all united, and the love that our class has for one another is incredible. We support each other in class, clubs, sports, drama, dance, and music, sometimes all in the same day. It's a testament to our class's passion for Gibbons and for one another that there was a day last fall where students were on campus – physically at 1401 Edwards Mill Road – from 5 am to 11 pm. You don't stay at a place for 18 hours straight unless you truly love it. Even on “normal” days, if such a thing exists at Gibbons, there'll be students just hanging out and talking in the parking lot for hours after school with their friends. That's because Gibbons is about the little moments, the things you can't fully explain to your neighbor, or uncle, or even your parents. It is this special community that I would like to welcome you all to today.

The class of 2014 has certainly had some incredible times together, both good and bad, big and small. We've laughed together and celebrated together and changed together over these past four years. I know I certainly have. From the shy kid who begged his mom not to drive him in her car to freshman orientation because he didn't want to be a "minivan kid," to the slightly less awkward senior standing before you today, I can testify that Gibbons is a transformative experience. But we as a class have changed too. We didn't walk into high school as the scholars, athletes, and artists that stand before you today. We came as intelligent, athletic, and artistic people, but we emerge as lifelong learners, as state champions and All-Americans, as award-winning painters and sculptors and designers. Part of this transformation is owed to the support of our peers, of our family. At Gibbons, the change is for the better, because we change together.

If I had taken those pictures, of the crowded hallway freshman year and the crowded hallway earlier this month and compared them, many of you would have a hard time recognizing yourselves. Back then we were a group of unknowns, just 300 kids in white polos. Now we're a sea of color, and laughter, and life. We're a family. We're the Gibbons family. I missed my chance to take those pictures, but I don't want to miss it again today, during this special moment in our lives. So, my fellow classmates, I hope this picture will remind you of the little moments, and of how you've changed in the past four years, and of the Gibbons family. Thank you.

take picture