

Good afternoon, Northridge class of 2008. I'd like to say, congratulations! Our senior year is over, and our futures are just around the corner. I also want to thank all of you for influencing each other, and influencing me to reach this point throughout the last few months. This has been a tough year, but we've made it through, and now it is time to turn and face the oncoming future. Some of us know where our futures are leading us, some of us don't. As long as we stay strong in our beliefs and have self confidence, continually pressing forward, we will reach new heights. Someone in this class may even be the next president of the United States. Enough about the future, however. This is our day, our time, and our moment to shine. When we walk out of here, diploma in hand, and begin our celebrations, where will our thoughts be? Will we be focused on the all night party, or will we be deciding which college to go to, which job to take, or how our lives will go now? Mahatma Gandhi is quoted to say "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." I would like to share a small poem written by Shel Silverstein.

"The Oak and the Rose"

An oak tree and a rosebush grew,

Young and green together,

Talking the talk of growing things-

Wind and water and weather.

And while the rosebush sweetly bloomed

The oak tree grew so high

That now it spoke of newer things

Eagles, mountain peaks and sky.

"I guess you think you're pretty great,"

The rose was heard to cry,  
Screaming as loud as it possibly could  
To the treetop in the sky.  
“And now you have no time for flower talk,  
Now that you’ve grown so tall.”  
“It’s not so much that I’ve grown,” Said the tree,  
“It’s just that you’ve stayed so small.”

I’m sure many of you have heard this poem before, its one of the few serious poems Mr. Silverstein has written. The point of the poem is that while the rosebush grew prettier, her thoughts stayed small and shallow. The oak grew tall and although she may not have been the prettiest thing alive, she grew up and out of the “flower talk phase.”

I hope that instead of being like the rose, shallow and small, we can be like the tall oak tree, open minded and better then before. Something everyone can do, every day is a new day, and a fresh start to try something new. Kurt Vonnegut said, “Do something every day that scares you.”

I’d like to thank all of your once again, especially my friends and family for all the help and encouragement they’ve given to me, all of my teachers for putting up with us through all these years and still pushing us to pass, and you students for making it this far.

“The future lies before you  
Like a field of driven snow,  
Be careful how you tread it,  
For every step will show.”

Vince Hicks  
3rd

Not everyone will remember everything you've done, but those you've really touched won't forget you, guaranteed.

Congratulations knights. I'll see you on the other side.