

## 2015 Salutatorian Speech

As we gather tonight to celebrate our graduation from Providence Academy, I am reminded of how much we've been through together. Seventeen of us have attended this school since kindergarten, before this building was even built, and when classes were still held at Mountain View Baptist Church. We are the last class that experienced that time at Mountain View, and we are honored to have been a part of Providence for this long. Not only do we enjoy the friendships we've had since kindergarten, but we also love the friends we've made as new students have joined our ranks throughout the years.

Looking back on all we have seen and done, I can't help but laugh at some of my favorite memories—all those times during recess in elementary where we played that epic game on the bridge of the playground and pegged each other in the heads with soccer balls. Or the first time we actually had our own lockers in seventh grade and didn't have to walk in two lines behind the line leaders to go to lunch. Or in tenth grade when someone decided it would be a brilliant idea to keep a goldfish in an old fish tank in John's locker. We've had many brilliant ideas like these over the years, but most of them I think I'd still be too embarrassed to admit.

Yet besides all the things we've done, we all made it in one piece. The road to where we are tonight has been a long one filled with scores of setbacks and roadblocks. But we have had many people to help us along. Our parents listened to our complaints and then gently encouraged us to keep going. Family surrounded us and demonstrated God's love to us even when we felt tired or selfish or frankly overwhelmed. Coaches have pushed us to try our hardest and accept any challenges that come our way. Pastors have mentored us and prayed over us every step of our journey. Teachers have impacted us in ways we're only now just beginning to recognize. This year, we wrote that infamous thesis that has to be between twenty and forty pages long. But

before Dr. White could even assign this, we had to learn how to write a research paper in tenth grade, and to do this we had to learn how to write a “paragraph in a half-half” in eighth grade, and before that learn how to write a sentence in second grade, and before that learn the alphabet in kindergarten. Every step of the way, the teachers have given us the building blocks which we will use the rest of our lives. For that we are grateful.

The process to get to where we are today has been a long one. Sometimes painful, often funny, always instructive. But we **are** here. I’ve loved getting to know all of you over these thirteen years, and I wish you the very best wherever the Lord may take you.