



OBHS Class of 2018

Principal Ms. Sharon Lasher

Good afternoon and welcome. Welcome parents, grandparents, family and friends. A warm welcome to the Board of Education members, Dr. Seinfeld, Superintendent of Schools and Dr. Mulhall and Mr. Cipriani, Assistant Superintendents. Welcome to my colleagues Dr. Vacchio principal of the Vernon School and Mrs. McElwee principal of the Roosevelt School, my outstanding assistant principals Dr. Peter Rufa and Dr. Lara Gonzalez as well as other fellow administrators, teachers and staff of the high school. I would be remiss if I did not publically thank Dr. Peter Rufa for all he has done to make this graduation day so spectacular. Thank you Dr. Rufa. Also, we extend our best wishes on your new position as an elementary school principal in a neighboring district; you will be missed. Special thanks to Scott Lyle and our entire custodial staff for all they have done to prepare our grounds for this beautiful ceremony. Our congratulations go out to Scott Lyle who is officially retired as of yesterday, and to Pete Diaz who is retiring this year as well. Thank you both for your many years of service to Oyster Bay High school. And most important, thank you Mother Nature!

So, onto the class of 2019! This group holds a special place in my heart. Many of the students here were part of my first college trip with Oyster Bay High School. That trip was memorable for many reasons. Yes, it was wonderful to see so many of the schools we visited for the first time. It was even better to see them through the eyes of our curious and excited 16-17 year olds, many of whom were on a college campus for the first time. But for me, it was so much more. These kids, your children and family members, welcomed me with open arms. We shared many, many hours together on a bus (more than 30), sought out and visited many Starbucks across the east coast, played games together at Dave and Busters and truly bonded - way better than we could have during the school day. For me, this was an opportunity to get to know the kids outside of school, but what surprised and pleased me the most is that they seemed truly interested in getting to know me. We began to develop a personal relationship that we knew would last through three more years of high school and hopefully beyond. They learned a little more about me, and me about them. And, to this day, those relationships still exist, at least I think they do! Why am I sharing this? Because personal relationships are often the key to success. The staff, our students and maybe even their families, have heard us talk about our educational goals here at the high school:

rigor, relevance and relationships. While we know our classroom teachers do a great job with rigor and relevance, the relationship part involves us all.

Oyster Bay's own Theodore Roosevelt has said, "*The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.*"

The Class of 2019 has shown me that they truly know how to get along with people and I for one, am grateful. Earlier this year, I read an article entitled, Students Learn from People They Love. It showed how one teachers vulnerability regarding his personal life made him more than just an instructor to his students. In return, they were kind, respectful and made a difference in his life, when his intention was to make a difference in theirs. If college is your next step, make that extra effort to get to know your professors and instructional staff. They want to know you. If you are entering the workforce, get to know your employer and coworkers.

Developing personal relationships make working relationships so much better. And, when you leave a job or a school. don't burn bridges. This means that regardless of circumstances, you should always maintain your dignity and reputation and leave every job and school on the best of terms, since you never know who you will meet again.

As you can see, there are many teachers here today. Many are here as a result of a personal invite from a graduating senior. These are teachers

they may have had at TR, Vernon or in the HS. They have maintained a relationship with them and wanted them to share in their high school graduation. Continue to develop these personal relationships with your peers, your teachers, your employers, your future colleagues and coworkers. More so today than ever, you just never know who you will see where, whether in person, through others or on social media.

From a town known as Oyster Bay Long Island....

I began my two previous graduation speeches with these words, and I feel as though I must say them again. Those words are more than just lyrics from a popular song. I know they mean much more to all of you and now to me too. Some of you have been here for six years while others joined the class of 2019 later on. Regardless, I have quickly learned how much you appreciate where you live and where you learn. Oyster Bay High School is truly a hidden gem among Long Island schools and your accomplishments and experiences reflect that.

To the families of our students, I would like to thank you for being our partners over the last six years. I believe our combined efforts have produced the intelligent, passionate, insightful, caring and compassionate young men and women sitting here today. Together, we have made them

college and career ready. They are ready to get out in the world, make their own good decisions and learn all they can in a kind and caring way.

To the Class of 2019: Your accomplishments are outstanding. And, this is just the beginning! You have demonstrated the importance of teamwork, setting goals, hard work and never giving up. And most importantly – kindness toward others! The opportunities you will have to be a part of our world's changes are endless; grab them and go to the places we know you can. I have been truly blessed to have been your principal for the last three years. Stay in touch, keep us apprised of your journey and be an active alumnus of Oyster Bay High School. You have made me feel welcome, respected and valued. You have shown me understanding, warmth, compassion and kindness. You must never stop learning, never stop growing, and never stop dreaming. And always remember, when faced with any situation or decision, choose kind and be respectful. I beg you all to make our world a better and kinder place for all. Thank you and congratulations!