

Hello everyone. Thank you all for being here today. On behalf of my class, I would like to begin by giving a special thank you to the parents, staff, and administration out there. Your dedication certainly has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated.

As my classmates have touched on in their own speeches, the pandemic has heavily impacted our lives these past two years. Despite the administration's best efforts, our high school experience was far from normal. However, I do not wish to give the politicized virus any more attention than it has already received. Rather, I would like for you all to come back in time with me and reflect on what we learned these past four years.

First, let's head to 2017. Besides for being the year that Fortnite was released, 2017 also had the significance of being the year our high school careers began. Freshman year marked a point in our lives where we could no longer be merely considered children: we began to care a lot more about our appearance and social-standing instead of what game we'd be playing during recess or how many Pokémon we had on our DS's. Freshman year as a whole was exciting, new, and most importantly, served as an introduction to the next three years of our lives. In 2017, 2021 seemed impossibly distant.

As a sophomore, school became much more serious. Dual enrollment classes were offered, career-path choices had to be made, and the daunting SAT loomed in the near future. Throughout the year, I came to the conclusion that Mrs. Thomas must hate trees, with how many pencils I went through taking her notes. In this year, many of us began to drive, opening a whole new domain of freedom - and releasing terror onto the roads. Overall, sophomore year served as an important stepping stone, preparing us for our final two years. Still, 2021 seemed impossibly distant.

During junior year, I think that my classmates and I did the most maturing, or at least something like that. Most of us were employed in some manner, and we began to seriously consider our rapidly-approaching futures. The reality that we were already in our final two years of high school was one that was difficult to acknowledge. Nevertheless, 2021 was still a year away. On a somber note, junior year also marked my first year without Profesora Miller. As many of you probably know, she passed in March of 2020. Profe was always incredibly supportive, and she certainly knew how to get the best out of her students. Descansa en paz, profe.

In 2020, we made it to senior year. In senior year, 2021 came. And it came fast. As freshmen, many seniors and staff informed us that the next four years would go by quicker than we could imagine. Unfortunately, they were not wrong. 2020 and 2021 were a blur: a blur full of scholarship essays, college applications, and preparation for the next part of our lives. Personally, senior year marked the moment I realized that you needed to start a charity and perform cancer research in your free time to have a chance to get into an Ivy league school.

With senior year now behind us, I am quickly realizing how much I will miss my time sitting in the library with Mrs. Stevenson (or Patti, as everyone but Cam called her), finding ways to convince Mr. Leo to let us have a free day (that wasn't very hard to do), or setting things on fire in Mrs. Lundin's class. Thank you to everyone here at GHS for shaping our class into what we are today. The lessons you have taught us and memories you have instilled in us will be with us forever.

However, it is now time for our next milestone. For some of us, that is postsecondary education, and for others it's the beginning of professional life. Regardless of what path we take after high school, the last four years are evidence enough that with the right people around you,

you can accomplish a lot in little time; although I never achieved my dream of becoming a professional Fortnite player, the class of 2021 has accomplished quite a bit. In front of me we have multiple track and field record-holders, talented musicians, decorated athletes, and most importantly, tomorrow's professionals. Congratulations class of 2021. Here's to the next four years.