

## Oration Speech - Robert Joseph '22

Good morning fellow classmates, faculty, Headmaster Seivold, board of trustee members, parents, and families. I am honored and blessed to stand here before you today.

As I contemplated how I would address my classmates for the very last time, I reminisced on these past four years and how fast they have gone by----as fast as the 400-meter dash. The 400 meter is one lap around the track and is broken up into four different parts. To run a competitive 400-meter dash, you must have a great start by sprinting the first 100, floating on the second 100, speeding back up on the 3rd 100, and, finally, giving all that is left in your tank on the last 100. In a 400, sometimes you may fail by not getting the time or place you want, but how you overcome this obstacle is what matters most. Your blocks offer you the support at the starting line to propel you into a quick and steady pace--just like the teachers who helped us transition to the start of our Upper Division journey and prepared us for the race ahead.

The first curve of the 400 represents our freshman year. It all began with our freshman retreat where we met many new faces, and throughout the year, we were introduced to fun Upper Division events such as Bucs Life, theatrical performances, exciting sports, entertaining musical groups, and an array of academic and cultural clubs. Though it was a challenge for us to make the transition, we adapted and relaxed as we headed into the backstretch of the 400, or sophomore year.

We began to find our individual interests and passions. We came together and had some great times, whether we were dancing the night away at Homecoming or laughing hysterically as our classmates stuffed their faces during the annual Thanksgiving pie-eating contest. In our second semester, COVID-19 presented an unexpected curve; we had to pick up the pace and face this obstacle together. We entered our junior year in person, worked tirelessly in our challenging classes, and began to understand the college process, together.

The next curve catapulted us into the final 100 meters, our senior year. We spent countless hours filling out applications and months anxiously awaiting decisions that would change our lives. But, now we're here, at the finish line, 100% of our class is about to cross this stage. No more watching performances in our all-school convos, no more 45-minute waits in the lunch lines, and no more senior skip day, which, by the way, what happens at senior skip day, stays at senior skip day. Now at the finish line, we will always remember the

hard work, dedication, and memories that kept us going throughout this race. To our teachers, coaches, administration, and most importantly, parents and families, thank you for giving us the best educational experience imaginable, and for encouraging us to always strive for greatness.

So I say not only to the class of 2022 but to everyone in the audience, have the guts to fail; while it may sound frightening, it will also be rewarding. You may fall short and not finish first, but it's your perseverance and strength to run the race of life that will define you. As the great Nelson Mandela once said, "sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great, you can be that generation." My fellow classmates, make the most of every opportunity because you never know which one can change your life, as Berkeley has forever changed ours. Grow, believe in yourself, stay disciplined, and always be grateful, but never settle for less. In this race, you don't get what you deserve, remember, you get what you work for. Thank you.