

Salutatorian- Cayley McCollough

As I look back on my high school career and you look back on your time at Cabot High School, think about how far we all have come. It makes me proud to reflect over what I have achieved, and I know many of you can say the same. But individual success does not define me and should not define you. It is what we do with this success that will determine the person we are to become.

Up until now, our high school career has been full of many challenges. While some brought nervousness, others brought excitement, and for the most part we have learned to grow from these experiences in order to better ourselves. Even though we might not have been victorious in everything we attempted, we have developed into a united class instead of a group of individuals.

Before we are able to begin the journey on which our new life will take us, we must first establish what we are aiming for. Determine what you are passionate about and strive for it. Preparation is a key step to achieve your dreams. High school and graduation are the first parts to this achievement, but it does not end here. We need to keep preparing, keep learning, and keep working toward the goal that is set before us. We must also not let others' plans and opinions get in the way of our own ambitions. In order to truly succeed, we must venture from the paths of others and create our own. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail."

Venturing from the paths of others is quite admirable; however, it's also a tough road. Blazing a trail takes a lot of work. You have to be up for the task. The Bible tells us to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us." Going the distance means knowing that life isn't a sprint. It's a long distance run. We have to have fortitude, and a goal in mind. We have to have resiliency for when the going gets tough.

Dream big, but remember that it's not just about dreaming, it's about doing. And many times, that means doing for others. The rungs on the ladder to success aren't people that we step on to rise in the world. We have to be able to see the world and the big picture God has painted us. We must be able to reach out to others less fortunate, and help those in need. It's when we do this that our true character shines.

Graduating high school is our first big accomplishment. But let us not lose sight of all the successes that lie ahead. We can set our sights on another graduation---perhaps college or technical school. The success of landing that first job, that first apartment, the first car we buy for ourselves. For some, there will be marriage and children, and houses, and PTO and family holidays. We can know that tonight, we are on the threshold of all those successes, and know it all began here. Tonight, when we turn the tassel.