

Salutatorian's Address – Class of 1967
May 1967
By Loretta Keller

Parents, school board members, faculty and friends – on behalf of the Senior Class of 1967 I welcome you tonight. You have come to listen as we speak and express a little of what is in our hearts. We are glad that you have come to share this time with us. It is such an important time for this class of 1967. Tonight is the night we graduate. We have anticipated this event for twelve years. We've hoped for it, and planned for it. But now that graduation is here we meet it with mixed emotions. Suddenly after years of being protected from the world, we are now entering the world with nothing to shelter us except the things we have learned the few years that we have lived.

Within each and every one of us there lies some potential to achieve success. For years those of you who have loved us have strived to install within us those qualities that we will need in the world we are now entering.

Many of you sitting out there tonight have been fulfilling roles. Many of you as parents have fulfilled the most important role of all. You have cared for us and loved us at times when we were unlovable. When we came to you discouraged, you gave us the encouragement and determination needed for us to go on. When we came to you with a sad heart, you cheered us. You have given us love, security, and happiness that no one else could give. Parents, it is you who should receive the honor and the congratulations upon our graduation tonight.

Many of you, as teachers, have contributed greatly to the formation and development of our personalities and character. You have inspired us to set and attain higher goals. You have punished us when we needed it – praised us when we deserved it. You have explained arithmetic, basic sentence patterns, cooking terms, atomic theory, and countless other things. You have helped us develop and express our opinions and outlooks on life. There is very little you have overlooked in preparing us for life in the world.

The rest of you here, as friends and relatives, have served as a daily example to us. We have been able to depend upon you for guidance and support in all our endeavors as a class.

Twelve years ago, all of the seniors here tonight entered school for the first time. We were frightened by the very prospect of facing all those people alone and without our ever-present mothers. But eventually we became accustomed to the routine of school and "all those people" became our friends and classmates. With our friends and classmates, we proceeded through twelve years of work and play. Our teachers and parents were kind to us and protected us. They exposed only a little of the world to us at a time. As the years have been passing, the door to the world has been opening. Many times we strained to look ahead to catch a glimpse of what lay beyond, but the door was never open wide enough. Tonight, we as a class stand on the threshold of an OPEN door. IT is tonight that we can step through this door and into the world some of you have lived in for many years. By stepping through this door we say many things. We are saying goodbye to all our classmates who have grown very near and dear to us through the years. But we are also saying hello to new friends, ones that we will make in college or just in average everyday living. Perhaps we will even find a greater friendship than we have known in the many years of school here at Ryan.

At moments like these, when we want to say the most – we sometimes say the least. There is very much in our hearts that we cannot possibly express tonight. But surely those of you who have experienced graduation know some of the emotion within us. The senior class does sincerely bid you welcome – but in a sense it is not we, the seniors, that welcome you – it is you that welcome us. By your presence here tonight you are welcoming us into your world. How young and inexperienced we must seem as we stand before you tonight! It is true that we have much to learn. Our education will not cease just because we have completed high school. We have as much to learn about the world as we had to learn about school twelve years ago. We invite your love, guidance, patience and prayers so that we might make this world and society better. We hope that you will share our enthusiasm and determination as we, the youth of today, the adults of tomorrow, strive to make our dreams come true.

The Senior Class of 1967 has assembled before you for the last time. This evening we extend a sincere and heartfelt welcome to all of you here who mean so much to each and every one of us.

Thank you.