GRAND ALUMNI HOMECOMING

50TH ANNIVERSARY SPEECH FOR

RACQUEL SCHOENFELD

Hello everyone!! What a joy it is to be back here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ High School to celebrate this once in a lifetime 50th anniversary event!!! I graduated in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am so happy to see so many familiar faces, as I am reminded of the great times we shared as we learned our lessons together and became adults. I’m even happier to see everyone else, especially those of you who have joined us from earlier graduating classes! From our “most distinguished” graduate (**Name the person who graduated the earliest)**, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, class of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to this great class of 2012, this is really quite something! We’re so fortunate to have staff, teachers and former graduates representing a good part of the history of this wonderful school and all of you are a testimony to hard work, dedication, priceless memories, and the power of education. Some of the people who have graduated from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_High School and have gone on to make a name for themselves are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and of course \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It’s really a pleasure seeing you here.

For those of us who are returning today, it’s an opportunity to look over our shoulders to see how far we’ve come, reminisce about “the good old days,” connect with those who preceded us and paved the way, and share some thoughts with this year’s promising crop of graduates. For those of you graduating today, this is **YOUR** chance to take a good look at what an education from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ can yield and what it is possible to achieve- if you work hard, continue your education in the “school of life,” and always set goals for yourselves.

As I work and find my way in this world, every day I am more certain that any success I’ve had is thanks to the educational foundation I received here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. For those of you who may not know, after \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I attended \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ College and chose to seek career in the field of education thanks to those who inspired me throughout my high school career. Today I am a counselor in the EOPS program at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in California. (**Say a bit about the EOPS program and how you are inspired to encourage everyone to do what he or she can to get an education**) I believe in making education available to everyone and I have dedicated my career to doing what I can to assist students in setting and attaining their educational objectives.

I am where I am in my career because of the education and support I received from the teachers and the staff of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School. I’m sure every class has its faculty heroes and “stars,” and mine was no exception. (**Name one or 2 teachers present who inspired you and say something about each**). I remember Ms. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s class. Although most of my contemporaries may have thought \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, she allowed me to open my eyes and showed me \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I can say the same about my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ classes with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Imagine! I graduated \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years ago, and here we are, back in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and we are peers! I can certainly understand where they were coming from when they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and as an educator, I am privileged to be back in the company of all of these fine teachers whose purpose in life was to inspire and develop our minds and spirits.

I have many memories of our teachers and classes, but there are other heroes who have helped and guided all of us throughout the years. The school staff did a great job of keeping our records in order, seeing to it that we were fed and graded properly-(although some of us may have wanted to skip that last part!), and generally made sure all our requirements were fulfilled during our high school careers. I don’t think we really do enough to acknowledge the school’s support staff, so to all of you, on behalf of the alumni and new graduates, we thank you! The quality of faculty and staff at this school has always been impressive and I am sure that the current teachers and staff are made from the same dedicated and inspirational mold as those that precede them.

We are all so fortunate to have this opportunity to come back to our educational home and “family.” We are all connected to each other thanks to this school, and we will be connected for life. I know that now, as I live in California, when I meet people from my hometown or my school, I know there is a mutual, warm feeling that is exchanged between us. I know that no matter where I am, I am part of a wonderful group of people who have shared similar experiences and that makes us a family of sorts. Although many of today’s graduates may travel and settle in other parts of the world, know that you are not alone. You are connected to each other through the memories you have made and the lessons you have shared together.

A man named Harold Thurman Whitman once said, “don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do that. Because what the world needs are people that have come alive.” To all of our graduates today, really think about that. Think about what makes you come alive. Think about the contribution **YOU** want to make in this world, and think about the education you have received so far. For those of you going on to college, we all wish you the very best. For those of you who have chosen other paths, we all wish **YOU** the very best. If some of you have chosen not to continue your formal education at this time, remember that your primary purpose in life is to learn. From this point on, the world is your school and your experiences are your lessons. Be curious. Ask questions. Read about subjects that interest you. Maintain a healthy curiosity about life and you will see the rewards you receive. And remember-there is always the opportunity for **YOU** to teach someone as well. Never hesitate to share your knowledge. If we all do that, the world will be a much better place.

I thank you all for sharing this wonderful anniversary celebration with me. I am thrilled to have had the opportunity to see old friends and mentors and I look forward to seeing all of you again for the 60th and 70th and 80th anniversary of this fine school! Thank you!