BANQUET SPEECH

FOR

ARNITA MALLET

Hello everyone!! It’s great to be here as we celebrate twenty years of accomplishments and recognition of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Alumni Association. (**If there is anyone in particular you would like to acknowledge, do so here**). I would like to take a moment to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for inviting me to speak tonight. This is a really worthwhile group and the work you do has positive benefits far beyond the scope of what we see here tonight. There is a Chinese proverb that tells us, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” The scholarships granted each year by this organization are a wonderful gesture and go a long way in promoting self-sufficiency through education. They offer a tangible means to self-sustenance for our youth, but how many of us realize that these grants are ultimately priceless? By providing support to the student recipients, we honor our educational heritage, nurture the present, and insure a stronger future for our children and community, and ultimately our country and world.

William Wordsworth said, “Life is divided into three terms-that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future.” For the past twenty years, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has been making an immeasurable difference in the lives of high school seniors. We are proud do have sponsored (**give the number of scholarship recipients over the past 20 years**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ high school graduates and our contributions towards their education have totaled almost $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. That’s figures to be really proud of!!!

As I thought about this event and all that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ stands for, I started to wonder, “What was life like **way back** in 1993? We had no idea what social media was at the time…facebook?? What’s a facebook?? Is it a face? Is it a book? Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg was **only eleven years old** back then… even **HE** didn’t know what it was in 1993!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). And speaking of eleven year olds, none of us had any idea if we were smarter than a fifth grader… we just **assumed** we were!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Back then “Twitter” was the sound that birds made and if we heard about one hundred and forty characters, it probably mean the cast of the school play…including the chorus and orchestra!!

Times have really changed. The world is moving at warp speed and the days, months, years flash by. We are bombarded by information, stimulus, media bits and bytes, and now, more than ever, our youth must be prepared to inherit the future. Thanks to the selfless work and tremendous generosity of this group, high school seniors who would have otherwise struggled to attain higher education can continue to learn, grow, and contribute to a better future for all of us.

The power of knowledge is all around us. Our own education supports us to find the ways and means to make it in this world. Remember when you were a high school senior, exploring opportunities and avenues for continuing your education. And look at where you are today. We are all so blessed for the opportunities we’ve had along the wa. Now that we are at the point in our lives where we can recognize the impact and benefits, and the power of knowledge, it’s time to think of those who will follow in our footsteps. History and heritage have shown us that those who preceded us did the best they could to pave the way for the next generations. Now it’s our turn to give back.

Civilization has no choice but to evolve, and some may think it’s “Devolving,” but with your support, we have a shot at making this world a better place for the future. The English academician Claus Moser once said, “Education costs money, but then so does ignorance.”

I want to thank all of you for allowing me to speak today and I also want to acknowledge each one of you for the difference you continue to make in the lives of our young people. On their behalf, I thank you for your interest, compassion and generosity in supporting the future! Thank you all!