**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**GLEN WORTHY**

Ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, graduates, students, faculty, administrators, and distinguished guests, it is with much pride and a great sense of completion that I welcome all of you to the 2018 Commencement exercises here at James Hillhouse High School. An event such as this one is not new, nor is it rare, but each year it inspires a sense of anticipation, enthusiasm, and celebration. Commencement exercises bring together our community as we honor those who have done their best to earn this rite of passage and move on to find their place in the larger, broader world. This will be the last time... that I **KNOW** of, that this particular and unique group of people will be gathered together, in these surroundings, to acknowledge and celebrate these graduates, and graduates, today is **YOUR** day. You’ve done the hard work... it’s time to celebrate your accomplishments... (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**)... so **live it up**.... because it’s back to work... Or **off** to work... or on to new schools... very soon!!!

Our school crest bears the motto in Latin, “**FACIS BENE FAC QUOD**” (**Please make sure the saying is in the correct order.... I wasn’t sure... and please fix the translation as necessary. Thanks**). Translated, it means, “Do well what you do.” This holds importance on many levels and is not only kept in reserve to “quote” when you discuss school. I cannot impress enough the importance of striving for excellence and “doing well” in these highly competitive times in which we live. Every year, thousands of graduates enter institutions of higher learning or join the job force... and every year the competition is fierce. All of us... no matter who we are and what we do in school... at work... in life... must find a way to stand out, to be distinguished, and take pride in the quality of our work. The late Steve Jobs is directly responsible for the majority of “lifelines” sitting in your hands... or preferably in your pockets and purses... with **the ringers turned off**... (**It might be funny if you set someone up... someone in staff... to let their phone go off just at that point...and Wait for the laugh**). He said, “The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.” Can you **IMAGINE** if your iPhone wasn’t **EXCELLENT**? I mean we know some of the batteries are running out of power too soon, but really... it was Apple’s commitment to excellence that has done so much to affect and improve our lives and our world... and whether you completely believe that or not, Steve Jobs’ commitment to changing... and improving... our lives is consistent.

All of us here at James Hillhouse High are committed to motivating ourselves and **YOU**, our students, by pledging to, and practicing **excellence**... and while we may not yet be the **NUMBER ONE** high school in the country, the progress we are making as an academic community is impressive, encouraging, and should inspire each one of us. We’ve seen our college enrollment statistics increase from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_% in 2010 to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_% in 2014, and now, four years later, I am proud to tell all of you that of the total population of this year’s graduating class of 189 students, 143 of you have submitted an application to at least one college. That’s **76 PERCENT!** A total of 814 applications were presented to various colleges... and that means that technically, on average, each student sent an average of **FOUR** applications.... That’s an expression of **REALLY** getting the message and working toward **excellence**....and if any students are present from the graduating class of 2019, let it be known... the heat is on!!! Let’s **TOP** that!! Also, in 2017, we had thirty-two students move on to University of Connecticut after graduation, and I’m happy to say that this year, we’ve topped that with **THIRTY-THREE** students going on to UCONN. I speak for the entire staff and faculty when I say that we are very proud of you.

There were wonderful and tangible improvements and statistics in academics, as I’ve just mentioned, and we have a lot to be proud of on the athletic side as well... as you know, our indoor and outdoor track team (**teams ?**) are **STATE CHAMPIONS**!! Go Boxers !! (**Is the boxer the mascot for the track team as well? If not, don’t use this here.**).

We, the faculty and staff of James Hillhouse High School, are committed to the progress and success of every student that comes through these doors.... and while, in a perfect world, you would get your grades and win your championships almost effortlessly, that doesn’t happen in real life. It takes determination, curiosity, a commitment to one’s future, and a pledge to excellence to complete high school. **THIS** is your **FOUNDATION**. This is really just the beginning of acquiring the knowledge and tools you will need to **succeed**... **NOT JUST GET BY** in this world. I want to acknowledge each one of our graduates for the effort and hard work invested in making **YOUR** high school career exceptional. You now know what it takes... you have your base, and it’s firm... it’s time to now build a stable flexible knowledge foundation in order to keep learning... for your entire lives. Studies tell us that the concept of “ mascot” began in ancient times and was carried through the ages. Legend has it that our mascot, the bulldog (**is there an actual dog? Do you want to mention his name?**) represents loyalty, strength, intelligence, stability, and power.... all admirable traits, and all were planted within you in your high school careers.... now it’s time to take those qualities and share them in order to make the world.... and the future.... a better place.

Congratulations to all of this year’s graduates... thank you for teaching **US**... and with that we say, Onward and Upward... **GO BULLDOGS!**! Thank you all!!