

Thank you!

My name is John O'Connor, Principal of Christian Brothers High School and it my pleasure welcome you to the One Hundred Forty First Commencement of Christian Brothers High School celebrating the Class of 2017. It is without a doubt an honor to be standing up in front of you this evening and celebrating with you the lives of these wonderful young men and women as they get ready to begin their next journey in life. I would like to thank the parents and guardians of the class of 2017 for being the first teachers of our graduates. You have truly made this evening possible. Your encouragement, support, and sacrifice are greatly appreciated. We often talk about the Christian Brothers Family and we can do that because the strong families you have formed make-up the foundation of our school family. Thank you for your tremendous support and encouragement. I would like to thank the grandparents for their wisdom of the ages. You have helped raise several generations and have helped in various ways support these graduates. Thank you for your unconditional love. I would like to thank the teachers at Christian Brothers High School. They have worked extremely hard to challenge our graduates to give their very best- they have supported each student with care and concern - and they are the very best. Thank you for their patience, their guidance, their creativity, their wisdom, and their love of learning. They are great teachers and wonderful people. I would like to thank the counselors for the time they have spent meeting with you and helping you get ready for your next stage in life. For their compassion, empathy, encouragement. For being great listeners and nonjudgmental. I would like to thank the Campus Ministry and Christian Service Directors for giving our graduates many beautiful opportunities to grow spiritually during the school year. For their creativity, positivity, and enthusiasm for what they do. I would like to thank the staff and administration for all the work they have put in (day in and day out) to ensure the safety and well-being of our graduates. I would like to thank all our coaches for spending long hours developing and mentoring our graduates. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to take this time to thank the Class of 2017 for being an outstanding class academically, spiritually, artistically,

and athletically. It is truly amazing what you have accomplished this year and I am blessed to have been part of such a wonderful group of high school graduates.

You have had an amazing journey these last four years at Christian Brothers. You have learned to care for another and to follow your passion. You have Entered Christian Brothers High School to Learn and are now ready to Leave To Serve. You have shared your gifts and talents with the entire community and we are better for it. I have seen your passion to excel this year in the classroom, on the stage, on a canvas, on athletic field, court, pool or track, and in the Oak Park community and beyond; helping those less fortunate than you and giving back. One of the greatest gifts you can give is that of yourself and I have seen it over and over again. You should be incredibly proud of yourselves and the mark you have left on the hearts of those teachers and coaches entrusted to your care these past four years. Imagine the impact you are going to make on this world. The gifts and talents that are in this room this evening are like none I have ever seen. Take the Lasallian Core Principles you have learned over the past four years and live them out each and every day. Live out your faith in the presence of God. Respect all persons and continue to have Concern for the Poor and Social Justice. The world is in desperate need right now of what is good, right, and just. Inspire those around you to be the best person they can be. I guarantee that each one of you will leave your mark in this life and have a substantial impact on the world.

I appreciate the leadership and guidance you have displayed this year. Hopefully, you have learned a few lessons over these last four years that will help you be the leaders we know that you are. Whether it was the words of wisdom from your outstanding teachers and faculty members, from John Wooden and the Pyramid of Success, or from the "Shooting Stars" that were read over the PA every morning, CB has tried to instill in you the knowledge, attitude, beliefs, and wisdom that will help you in your life long journey.

I finish my thoughts this evening with these words:

May love and laughter light your days and warm your heart and home. May good and faithful friends be yours wherever you may roam. May peace and plenty bless your world with joy that long endures. May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours.

May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and the rains fall softly upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

And now your final "Shooting Star" of your high school career comes from a quote from Steve Jobs:

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition."

Again, welcome to the graduation ceremony and enjoy the rest of the evening.