

An Address for the Graduation Ceremony of 11 June 2006 on Behalf of the

Senior Class.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “We change whether we like it or not.” Not a profound statement from Mr. Emerson but simple, direct, and befitting for this culmination of so much more than just the end of high school.

Peers have joined our ranks, some for the first time, others after brief stints in other schools. We’ve encountered romance, which inevitably introduced us to drama. Friendships have been forged after a season of racing, a season on the field, the rink, or on the court. At Old Fort William we endured Onion Soup, a hearty serving of raw onions in a bowl of luke warm water and most recently found ourselves under the control of a rather odd bunch of councilors at Manitowish. Throughout these various adventures and experiences the class of 2006 has grown into what sits before you today.

In 1998, 30 of us here today, came to Marshall for the first time and made our way down the gauntlet of ever menacing 8th graders. Those were the days. We went out and bought trendy folders and binders, maybe even got a Duluth Pack because NOW, we were big old fifth graders.

I was curious to see how many of us here today were in that 5th grade class so I took a glance in my oldest yearbook and then felt like seeing who signed the back pages, but more importantly what they had to say; in short, everyone wanted me to, “have a good summer”. A few references to an inside French joke and one or two halfhearted suggestions we hang out over the summer. I think I got one girl’s phone number, which

to a fifth grade boy is like finding five dollars in the washing machine, most likely your sisters, but yours now.

As we grew up burning off some baby fat, our voices started to quaver in step with our minds and personalities until we found ourselves at the first middle school dance. These occasions, where everything meant something, that girl asked me to dance with her because she really liked me. It was also during that year as 7th graders that the class was split along the gender lines and all the girls went to Widji while the boys stayed back to learn all about why we'd soon be growing hair in places other than our head, and why it was a good idea to wear deodorant. When the girls returned for their own female education, the boys headed north and got a week of endless recess. Skiing across lakes or snowshoeing through the forest, I was lovin' it. We were like little bumper cars in our heavy snow pants and jackets. High-speed locomotion fueled by delicious breakfasts propelled us around open fields under the instruction of councilors telling us to attack each other in order to better understand the food chain.

We had just one more year in the younger half of the school and most of us wanted out, we neared the end and were cast into rolls for each English class's drama day production. Everyone had a chance, and not so much a choice to show off their acting ability for the rest of the school.

The following fall we started making daily use of the other entrance, the high school, the doors that would be used for the next four years. But this fall we arrived as all too mature freshmen ready for the rigors of high school and more importantly, drivers ed. We wandered through the school past each grades official hall until we finally arrived at our own wall of lockers. If the previous year had become monotonous that would change

THIS year. The music at dances wouldn't be strictly censored by overbearing faculty, and we'd try so hard to win the Spirit Cup during homecoming. Not knowing the seniors always have and always will ultimately win.

As we now progressed up the high school food chain and no longer just played with it teachers and councilors told us as sophomores it was very important to take this year's academic curriculum seriously. These were important years if we wanted to get into a good college and get a good job. It started here, this year. It hit home for me personally in American Literature. Gone were the days of talking rabbits and pigs running farms. We found ourselves in the realm of an infamous Scarlet Letter and the ever notorious Huck Finn. Finishing the year with The Grapes of Wrath truly we were in the big time now. In music rooms promotions moved us closer to the conductor and some of us returning to the stage were trying out for parts more independent than simply "chorus member two". And finally, able to ask girls to Prom and guys to Morp an all-new element was added to the simple formalities of dances.

The proceeding fall it was time to start thinking and practicing for the ACT and SAT tests. The fact that many of us didn't know where we'd like to go to college didn't matter. We were nearing the end by meeting our fate with where we COULD go to college. In keeping with the old expression, "It's darkest before dawn" we faced an onslaught of assignments and the whole academic side of school tightened the tension between peers who were trying to make it into or keep a favorable spot in a select percentile. While we all should have collectively been focusing on our studies through the winter A portion including myself found ourselves concerned with more pressing issues, mainly our Hockey team's progression to and through the state tournament. While

it may have ended prematurely we eagerly, and for good reason anticipated the next year. The year we've just completed.

For some this past year has been like the final book in an eight part series; For those who have joined our ranks more recently is has been little more than a sequel to some, simply a single edition. In any case we collectively reach the final sentence, concluding with a period that effectively is, each of us receiving a diploma. It's an end to what has become my best year at Marshall.

Made possible in part thanks to all our parents and guardians willing to make whatever individual sacrifices it took to send us here. On behalf of my class I thank them all for that. You've produced unique characters each one leaving their own rather large shoes to be filled by the upcoming class and to them I say good luck.

I wish to conclude by thanking the faculty and staff for all that they have done. From making meals that please our taste buds and fuel our brains to clearing snow on the coldest winters days. Finally a very special and sincere thanks extended to all the teachers who have challenged us and encouraged us every step of the way. You have prepared us for whatever path we now decide to take.

Thank you all.