

Principal Carmela Leonardi's Huntington High School Graduation Speech - 2010

It is an honor for me to welcome students, faculty, parents, family members and members of the School Board here tonight. Before I present my remarks I would like to take this opportunity to thank the assistant principal, Mr. Noce, all department administrators and deans for their work with students and their families. A special thank you goes to the teachers and support personnel who are committed to the success of every student at Huntington High School and continue to take a personal interest in their academic and social development. Our gratitude is extended to secretaries, security and custodians who work daily to support students, teachers, administrators and parents alike. Education is mankind's most enduring asset. Treasure it. Nurture it. Share it. And invest in a better future for yourself and for those who come after you.

It has become my practice, in preparing for this important event, to reflect on the qualities and gifts members of the senior class have displayed in their four years at Huntington High School. I would like to share with you just some of their achievements. Members of the class of 2010 continue a tradition of service to their community. In fact, many have devoted countless hours in support of organizations such as Hi Hi, Family Service League, Boys and Girls Scouts of America. Members of this class also led extensive fundraising efforts to help the victims of the earthquake in Haiti and "Stuffed a Bus" full of non perishable food to be used by local food pantries. The class of 2010 has gifted athletes who will be playing competitive college level Lacrosse. One of our seniors has also shown the kind of leadership in the International Key club organization to hold the

position of Lieutenant Governor at the State level and compete for an international post. What characterizes this group of seniors is also the fact that aside from being academically gifted they are also artistically talented. A larger number of the seniors before you took AP exams, played in band and orchestra and sang in chorus. More participated in plays, and were recognized for their work in the visual arts. Some lucky seniors traveled to Washington and were recognized by our First Lady, Michelle Obama, for the creativity they showed in a service project developed by their Fashion teachers Mrs. Singer and Mrs. Worth. They are for the most part artistic brainiacs who are following their passions at the same time that they intentionally pursue academic learning.

In these continued hard economic times, Huntington High School seniors considered all options before making their college selections. Almost all of our students chose to go to college, whether four year schools or two year colleges with excellent reputations.

And now some hard data about all that they have accomplished. Many of our seniors challenged themselves with Advanced Placement courses that have the potential of earning them college level credits. 116 seniors took AP exams. 56 took three AP exams or more with 1 student taking 6 and one taking 7 AP exams each for a collective total of 308 AP tests.

For this senior class, the college center processed 1,407 college applications. As of today the class of 2010 received \$ 7,714,930 in scholarship money. 90% of the 256 students sitting here today will be going to college. 2 % will attend career oriented programs, 1.2% enlisted in the military, 2.4% will be taking a gap year traveling to Israel and Greece before beginning college and 1% will join the workforce.

Students will be attending Dartmouth, Columbia, Cornell, all SUNY and various out of state public and private colleges and universities including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Virginia, University of NC at Chapel Hill, Carnegie Mellon University, Vanderbilt University, the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, Boston College, Georgetown, NYU, Fordham, Maryland Institute of Art, Nassau and Suffolk Community Colleges, Binghamton University, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Hofstra University, Parsons School of Design, University of Limerick(Ireland), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, St. John's University, Syracuse University, La Guardia Community College, Virginia Tech and the University of Michigan to name a few.

Some of the interesting majors they have selected include: Biomedical Engineering, Film and Televisions Studies, Nursing, Information Systems, Engineering, Visual Communications, Astrophysics, Environmental Studies, Fashion Design and Merchandizing, 3D Graphics and Animation, Music, Business Management, Sports Management, Psychology, Elementary Education, Music Performance, Music Art and Dance Education, Special Education, Spanish, Human Services, Social Work, Business, Accounting , Marine Biology, Photography, Culinary Arts, Forensic and Nutrition.

My wish for all graduates today is that they use their gifts and talents to get ahead in the world and to make it a better place for generations to come. It will not always be easy to do the right thing, but remember that doing the right thing is the only choice any of us have if we want to remain true to yourself.

Congratulations!