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Faculty, family, special guests. I would like to begin by first extending a **heartfelt** thank you on behalf of the class of 2010 for joining us on this monumental day. We **could not** have made it this far without **your** support and encouragement.

My fellow classmates, here we are, right where we started. Four years ago as we entered this auditorium and sat in on freshman orientation day, we opened a new chapter of our lives, filled with questions, rattled with nerves, driven with excitement. On that day, we were told to look to our right, and look to our left.

Four years ago, we saw unfamiliar faces. In those faces, however, we saw the **personalities and possibilities** that would embody our tenure at Archbishop Williams. I ask you now, just as we were asked four years ago, look to your right, and look to your left. The once unfamiliar faces have come to life, untold stories have been shared, and those strangers have become friends.

So much has happened in our four short years. **Together** we have sat in classrooms, **together** we have prayed at liturgies, **together** we cheered on our sports teams who have become league champions, state champions, and national champions. **We** worked together. **We** became one. **We** became a team. **We** became the class of 2010.

Together we faced adversity, and together we **transcended** that adversity. On April 24, we remembered the three year

anniversary of the death of one of our classmates. Patty Shea was a young lady with a **tremendous passion** for life. She was a friend to some, but a **friendly face** to all. That day still lives in my mind like it was yesterday. No matter how well you knew her, you felt the impact in that day. In mourning her loss, we formed an unbreakable bond that helped define the class of 2010. She may not be with us today in body, but I **firmly believe** that she is with us in spirit. I'll bet she is watching us from heaven with the biggest smile right now. For me, one word encapsulates my years spent here... that word is **friendship**. Friendship has given my years meaning. Friendships that have made me laugh, made me cry, cheered me up, calmed me down: Friendships that have lifted me to be a better person... **a better friend**. As I look around, I see those friendships. Not only friendships with each other, but with our faculty, our administration, our lunch room staff, and one of our best friends. Sophomore year, we welcomed Dr. Mariano into our school as President and he has taught us to live looking for the good in people. For **three** years, he has called us **his friends**, but the pleasure was all ours.

For me, standing on **this stage** right now holds **tremendous** value. Four years ago, I stepped on this stage for the first time and I found people that I now call my best friends- people that I call **my family**. I spent **countless** weeknights laughing with them, singing with them, crying with them, and loving with them. In the process, the most eternal bond formed. Together we did **eight** shows on this stage; A stage that we will **always** call **our home**.

As I stand here now, giving my ninth and final performance in my home, I stand alone, but I know all of the friends that I have made, all of the memories that I hold, all of the times that I cherish are with me. **Together**, my fellow cast mates and I have made an indelible mark on this stage; a mark that says that **we were here**. As this stage has become my home over these four years, I ask you to think of the special place that has become **your** home. It could be a classroom, a sports field, or maybe **your** table in the cafeteria. When you think of that place, remember the people that you shared it with.

There, my fellow classmates, is where **you** have made **your** **mark**, where **you** have met the people that live **in you**, where together, you say **“we were here.”**

I have a picture on my desk. The picture is of a close friend and me. In the bottom corner of the picture, she inscribed the frame with three words... **“Always and forever.”** Today, I can't help but see the **extraordinary significance** in those words. I ask you to think about the friendships that **you** have made. Be thankful for them. Yes, today **can** be seen as a goodbye, but **those friendships** will survive...**“Always and forever.”**

Our friends have shaped these four years. **Our friends** have shaped who **we have become**. As time pushes us forward, we must not forget that. We must not forget them. We must not forget that, **together**, we **are** the class of 2010...**“Always and forever.”**

This will be the last time that we sit as a complete class. After tonight, we will take **separate** paths, pursuing our **separate** dreams. Know this- As a class, we have succeeded. We did it together, as friends, and dare I say, **as a family**. Some graduation speeches end with something to the effect of “We made it”.

I, however, would like to end on a different sentiment. As we walk across the stage and become the newest graduates, let's not just rush out of here. Let's take a moment, **one last moment**, to be with our classmates. **Together**, let's say, **we were here**.

Congratulations Class of 2010.