

KENDAL COLDREN

Well, here we are. After missing 3 1/2 months of school, not knowing if we'd even be able to gather together for this commencement ceremony, here we are today. Sometime many years from now, this will all seem so superficial. We'll have jobs, families, and wonderful lives outside of this building that has been our home for the last four years. It won't seem so life-ending that we missed out on this year, rather we will cherish the countless moments we got to share together as a class for three and three-quarter years at DHS. This class is truly a family, it's sad that we have to say goodbye to these memorable years in Delran, but it is certainly one that we can look back at and feel proud.

Recently, everyone has been talking about how strong the Class of 2020 is -- born during the aftermath of 9/11, experienced former Governor Christie's postponement of Halloween due to Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and now graduating during a global pandemic. Quite frankly, I'm wondering why our class is only being recognized now, during this Covid-19 situation. We were simply born into this story of survival? We had no choice about any of those things happening, and yet we are praised for our strength and sacrifice. But what about all of the

wonderful things this class has done consciously, ourselves, and by choice?

Our class is different. Always has been, always will be. I'm sure we all remember the picture that had been painted for us from the moment we stepped into the building. We were described as rowdy, loud, and hard to manage by many. We were doubted. But we truly were, and still are, amazing. Think about all that we've done. We have raised thousands of dollars over the course of four homecoming fundraisers, we won division titles, sectional titles, we have student athletes on All Division, All County, All State, and All American teams. We have state qualifiers in countless sports, we have a state and national champion Golden Regiment, we welcomed a foreign exchange student junior year, we have won science fairs, we have aced science league tests, and we have worked countless hours at countless jobs while finishing our senior year. Trust me, I can keep narrating our accomplishments -- we had two athletes become 1000 point scorers in basketball, and students who have won awards for their volunteer service, their filmmaking, and their art at county, state, and national levels. We advocated for and began to build a new Fabrication and Innovation Lab that has received much recognition. We came together to create an amazing first-place homecoming skit, we

have students who became certified as bilingual, and lastly we took our AP tests from home. Our high school journey has come to an end. Now, our post-secondary plans include: attending colleges or universities, entering the military, and joining the workforce.

Graduating during a global pandemic is a part of our story, but it's certainly not all of it. We put our hearts into everything we did, and every single person here has accomplished something astonishing during his/her time at DHS. For that, we should all be praised and commended. We are strong, we are capable, we are remarkable -- but we always have been. So, when you leave here today, unable to do things in a way that feel most normal or deal with setbacks as a result of this pandemic, please remember these obstacles can be overcome. We've done it before, we can do it again. Keep going, Class of 2020. You are strong, you are brave, you are exceptional.