

2014 DRHS Graduation Keynote in Verse “A Better Place”

Intro

To **day** is graduation day,
When **students** go their separate ways.
You'll **spend** some time up on the stage,
Then **in** your lives will turn the page.

I **love** you all. I think you know
To **each** of you I would bestow
Much **happiness** and true success,
A **life** for you that's truly blessed.

So **here's** some thoughts to take with you
As **you** embark on something new.
So **listen** closely and you'll hear
Of **things** I learned that I hold dear.

Education

If you **have** little, as I once did,
Don't **think** your future has a lid.
To **prosper**, get an education.
Im**prove** yourself; it's your salvation.

Dive into your chosen studies,
And **learn** some things with all your
buddies.
With **education** you will rise
To **lofty** heights and win the prize.

As**pire** to greatness, strive toward an ideal.
And **go** for it with lots of zeal.
Don't **settle**; always strive for more.
You **can** be great, I know for sure.

Hard Work

To **achieve** your goals, here's what I say.
Work real hard, but take time to play.
Set your goals and then go get 'em.
When **you** have problems, just don't sweat
'em.

Find your passion, what you love to do,
And **find** out what you're good at too.
If **you** can bring the two together,
Your **life** will turn out that much better.

If **you** get knocked down, get back up.
Don't **let** your problems cross you up.
For **if** your goals are crisp and clear,
To **achieve** them, you must persevere.

At **times**, you'll have to sacrifice,
And **sometimes** have to do things twice.
You may even face some strife,
But **that's** okay, it's part of life.

Use Your New Freedom Wisely

You'll **have** new freedom along your way.
Choose **wisely** what you do and say.
Be **responsible** with your freedom.
For **if** you're not, you'll just have bedlam.

Do what's right and heed the call.
Lend a hand when someone falls.
Get a job and earn your pay.
Give **thanks** for what you have each day.

Stay away from alcohol;
Don't get into a drunken brawl.
For if you do, you may find out
You'll get no job, and then you'll pout.

And don't do drugs, for if you do,
There may not be a job for you.
Keep your nose clean and you'll find
That jobs await of every kind.

And Facebook – well, that's quite a stage,
Employers look there, just to gage
What kind of person they might hire,
And which employee they should fire.

Anything you put online
Is there forever, you need not whine.
Be careful what you choose to show
If you want your career to glow.

Integrity

And now, here is an exercise
For all of you who are so wise.
So every student in the crowd
Please, now, say your name out loud.

[Pause to say names out loud.]

When others hear your name so clear,
Will they think good things, or jeer?
Will they think you're quite a thinker?
Or will they think you're just a stinker?

Integrity is where it's at.
If you don't have it, you're just a rat.
Twice when I worked as an actuary
Clients asked me to lie, but I was wary.

I refused and I was fired,
But I would rather be admired
Than lie and cheat for foul intention.
What happened next, I'd like to mention.

Both clients in a year came back.
Their business plans were out of whack.
The lies they'd told came back to bite.
And they were in an awful plight.

I helped them get out of their jams
And put the "truth" back in their plans.
I think those days they learned a lesson.
Integrity is quite a blessing.

Conclusion

So now I'll close my little ditty.
I hope you liked it, and thought it witty.
Please go and be a force for good.
I hope you will; I know you should.

The world is full of problems sure,
I hope you fix them, not make more.
I've loved the time I've spent with you,
And now you're on to something new.

Pursue your passion, work real hard.
Keep your nose clean; don't get scarred.
Keep virtue foremost in your mind.
And I am sure that you will find

You'll be successful and at peace,
Your problems, they will surely cease.
So now I bid you go with grace.
Go make the world a better place.

Earl Whitney
Peggy Whitney
June, 2014