

Class of 2019 Farewell
by
Sophie Rasmussen

I'm Sophie Rasmussen, the senior class president, and I was tasked with saying goodbye to York on behalf of my class.

I want to thank you all for coming to celebrate this day with us, because I know that the reasons we've all gotten to where we are today are sitting in the audience right now. I, as I think many of my classmates would if they were speaking instead of me, have to thank especially my parents for being my biggest supporters. Whether it was zooming around town to buy supplies for a big project coming up or just generally making sure I was on the right track, you were always there for me, and I'm grateful.

I think I speak for everyone when I say that the York teachers have made our experience here ten times better. They push us to try new things in the classroom, but their role in our lives doesn't stop with academics. They support our efforts outside the classroom as well, no matter how successful we are- I'll always be grateful for all the times Mr. B has congratulated me on a fantastic soccer game when I know I'm- well- less than fantastic. I can't tell you how many times my teachers have asked how I'm doing or whether I need help with something, and I think we take it for granted sometimes, so I want to take this opportunity to say thanks.

I know I haven't been around for very long, but my time at York has been the best 4 years of my life so far. I still remember the sense of fear I felt on the eve of my first day of freshman year. I had gone to a small school before York, and I knew my high school class would be much bigger than I was used to. To make things worse, I didn't know anybody who would be in my class. However, my fears dissolved after about five minutes when several of my new classmates included me in a conversation they were having. I don't remember what it was about, but it doesn't matter- it was then that I realized how easily I could feel at home here. Four years later, I've formed solid bonds with many of my classmates, and I didn't know any of them before I came here. Putting my closest friends to one side for a minute, our class is a good group, and I've never had an interaction with any of them where I felt left out. 'Welcoming' is one of the best words I could use to describe the Class of 2019, and I could see that from my first day.

Another word that describes us well is 'passionate.' I see our competitive side during spirit weeks when we have some of the best participation on dress up days and try our best to crush the juniors in volleyball. However, I'm also proud of our passion in academic and extracurricular activities. From Belle winning a prestigious award for her hundreds of hours volunteering for the aquarium to Connor getting to swim for a D1 school in college to Tom releasing his own song and getting 4,000 plays on Spotify and Apple Music, it never fails to impress me how much energy my classmates have for certain pursuits, and as I graduate I like to think they've instilled some of this in me.

One of the best things York has done for us is encourage us to try new things. I think that the classic joke that Athletics teams are the only ones at York that make cuts is so important. If the soccer team had been selective in my freshman year, I definitely wouldn't have been able to play, but since all I had to do was sign up I got to try something I'd never done before and make memories I'll keep with me forever. York also invites anyone to join most of the musical ensembles and plays. I have a friend who had never sung before freshman year, but after having the opportunity to join choir with no experience he has grown to love it. I didn't have the confidence to join the debate club until after I had to do my sophomore speech in front of the entire school, but I was pushed out of my comfort zone and now debating is one of the things I'll miss most about high school. None of us knows where we'll be five years from now, but by extending all these opportunities to every single student, York has prepared us to face the future with an open mind.

In the past few weeks, my friends have been making fun of me because apparently I've been saying "this is the last time we will... [insert York memory]" dozens of times a day.

Although I confess that our last time buying food from the lunch truck wasn't as big a deal as I said it was at the time, I was hit with a wave of nostalgia when I realized it was my last time getting in trouble for laughing too hard in the library, wildly missing a goal in soccer, hearing the roar of applause that follows a sophomore speech, or watching people sing along to 80s music in the Commons on a Friday afternoon. Classmates, since this is my last time speaking to you as your president, I just want to say how proud I am of each and every one of you and how grateful I am to have been a part of the Class of 2019. I now invite you take hold of your tassels with your right hand and move them over to your left side- congratulations, we've graduated.