

Cami Burkett

“Our Story”

Good evening.

As I was preparing my ideas for my speech, I came across a quote that really inspired me, and I'd like to share it with you. “Life is like a book. Every person, place, thing, event- it all has a place in your book. Whether it be a word, sentence, page, or chapter- it's all somewhere in our book and it becomes the story of our lives.”

When I thought about this quote, I realized that it is true. We all begin our first chapter, only knowing our families. Your siblings and cousins are your best friends. The highlights of this time are library hour, Summerfest, tee ball, and playing at the park.

Then, school begins. This is the chapter where you walk into a different, yet exciting new world. Our goals here were to not lose an M&M or get moved from the banana to the blueberry table. However, here you meet so many new people. Although this wasn't realized at that young age, these people become such a huge part of your story. Together, you share many fun elementary school days, such as field trips, Halloween parades, chorus concerts, and track and field days. These new people have now become your best friends.

The next chapter begins as you enter middle school. Friend groups change with new sports, clubs, and classes. Now you have pep rallies and school dances. As much as this phase can be difficult- it prepares you for the next part of your life – high school.

Each students' priorities change as high school approaches. Each sporting event, concert, or play is for your community and represents your school. You begin appreciating every little

moment because of how quickly this time goes. Our grade realized this with our many field trips and continuous support of one another. We grew closer as a group, whether it was cheering together in the Herd, going to farm shows, dancing at proms, or chasing each other with water guns, all with the guidance of our group leader being our president, Chance Simmons.

Although these times were fun, I'm excited to follow everyone's new chapters. We will never forget all the memories because they have written our stories. All of our coaches, peers, friends, and teachers at Portage have built our books. Most importantly, each relationship here- good or imperfect- has taught us lessons and prepared us for our futures. We've learned to accept and respect one another, regardless of our differences.

I would like to end this by saying thank you to this community for filling our stands, bleachers, and auditoriums with support. Thank you to our teachers that have done way more than just teach us- whether it be a joke or a sweet Teams chat before a big event. Thank you to our administration and school board for keeping us safe and making the best decisions for us. Thank you to our families, coaches, teammates, and friends who have cheered us on to make it here and contributed their time to help us succeed.

Most of all- thank you to the Class of 2024 for allowing me to meet my forever best friends. Congratulations and good luck on your next chapters in life, and remember to always enjoy writing your book. Thank you.