

## COMMENCEMENT SPEECH –Nicholas Lai – CLASS OF 2023

Good evening graduates, family, friends, faculty, students, and alumni. Before I begin, I would like to say thank you to Mr. Gabram and the rest of the staff for letting me speak at this event. It is a privilege to stand in front of you tonight, representing the greatest class in Kenston history, the Kenston Class of 2023! I stand before you all as a proud graduate, representing the future leaders of this world! Now, I know what you're thinking: Oh great, another serious graduation speech for a serious occasion with some serious words of wisdom. Don't worry, I'll try not to bore you. Just like a bad breakup, I'm going to try and keep this short ... No promises!!!

In the 13 years I've been at Kenston, I have accumulated a lot of advice from my parents, teachers, coaches, peers, and many others. Today, I want to share three pieces of advice that I believe everyone in this room should do every day. Number one is to smile. There are many things we can be happy about in this world. Even at Kenston, there are things that made us happy. From participating in different sports teams, musicals, school dances, and so much more, we've all experienced so much we can smile about. Also, take a moment and smile about all of the little things in life. Smile about being able to enjoy Taco Tuesdays or that overpriced latte... And if you're telling yourself that you weren't happy at Kenston, change your attitude. You get what you put in.

The second thing I want you to do is love. Love has the ability to transform our lives and bring us immense joy and fulfillment. No matter how open of a person we are to this world, we all want relationships with others. The first thing I want you to do is to love your family, especially your parents and siblings. Stay close to them because no matter how much grief they give you, they still love you and want to experience the joys of life with you. I also want you to find love. To be in love and to fall out of love is a process which we keep experiencing until we find the one. No, love does not mean posting each other on your social media story and going to prom together ... None of my peers have been in a serious long-term relationship. Sorry if I offended any of you. You have not had to experience grocery bills, taxes, and what your parents sometimes regret having, kids,,, basically actual adult life ... However, I do

believe in the Disney princess endings. Call me naive, I don't care. Besides finding your future spouse, I also want you to continue to love your passions. Continue to be involved with the activities you did at Kenston and do what makes you happy. However, I know for certain no matter what you participated in and no matter what hobbies you pick up along the way, you all will become soccer mom's and dad's, so get that Honda Odyssey ready!!!

Finally, the last of the three things I want you to do and probably the most important is to be accepting of others. Not just who they are, but their opinions and beliefs as well. The world is a changing place and we are experiencing many social changes in our lives today. We have preconceived notions about different people just based on their beliefs and background. There's some friction between us not only as a school but as a community because of a difference of opinion. That means you have to respect people who think Pasta Wednesday is better than Taco Tuesday, even though they're wrong. I want everyone here to not judge the people based on their beliefs and background but on their character. The things that they believe in and the places they come from are nothing compared to the person they are. Some of us will be incredibly lucky to meet these people. We might have already found them at Kenston. It might have been in a class where you knew no one, but you ended up with so many new friends just by talking to others. If you judge people only on their beliefs and background instead of sitting down and assessing their character, you might miss out on someone who could really help you in the future. Yes, that also means Michigan fans!!!

My final statement I want to leave you with is this. Life is full of people afraid of making the first move. Don't be scared to just go for it, whether it would be reconnecting with someone or trying something new. You don't want to look back and regret that you wish you had done something. Remember time is limited, so always smile, love, and be accepting of others. As Mr. Tripi says "Set your goals high, but enjoy .the journey".

On behalf of all the seniors, thank you to everyone who has helped us get to this point. To the teachers, we may have driven you crazy on some occasions but words cannot describe the impact you have had on our lives. No, I didn't

forget about you parents, I guess you also did a lot... From sacrificing your time to drive us to practices, to making our projects at 10 o'clock at night, we truly appreciate everything you've done for us.

Thank you all for letting me speak today. For everyone who didn't listen, if you have taken nothing from this speech, the one thing I hope you remember is that you should always have a Taco Tuesday in your life. Good luck to all the graduates and I'm excited to see what you all accomplish. Thank you all again and God bless. Go Bombers. O-H! !