

Corey Sossong

## Looking to the Future

Hello, friends, families, teachers, and administration! Thank you for coming out tonight to see the PAHS Class of 2021 graduate. We greatly appreciate all of the support that you have shown us throughout these years of school. We really wouldn't have made it through without you. When I began brainstorming for this speech, I really could find the way that I wanted to sum up 14 years of experiences and learning in just a few short minutes. I came across a quote from President Thomas Jefferson that I believe is important to hear. He said, "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." I feel that this quote can be applied to all of us today. With us beginning nearly brand-new lives, we can let our desires for the future control us rather than anything we have done in the past. An advantage and a disadvantage of coming from a small school is knowing just about everyone. It can be hard to not use people's pasts for or against them. That's the beauty of graduation though. You can move on and completely recreate yourself to be the best for the future.

Looking back at all these years, I have so many memories and friendships that I will keep with me for a lifetime. Everything from elementary school recess

and the yearly trip to Lakemont Park all the way up to playing under the lights on Friday nights and all of the fun times messing around in the metal shop. There are countless more great experiences that I had with this group of classmates.

Collectively, we were never considered the smartest, most athletic, or even the most disciplined class, but we never let a reputation stop us from accomplishing some great things and defying the expectations that were placed on us.

The Covid Pandemic has taken a toll on just about everyone in the last year. Losing school dances, field trips, pep rallies, and more things that you expect to get as a high school junior and senior really forced us to be resilient. Switching to online school made us to adapt to circumstances that no one before us has had too. It has been extremely tough, but we did everything we could to make the best of a bad situation. That is why I know that there are many great people in this group who will excel in any future endeavor, no matter what obstacles life will throw at them.

I know that I will cherish these friendships, close or distant, for the rest of my life. I would like to give one last thank you and congratulations to the Class of 2021.