

Krista Schemitsch – Salutatorian Remarks – August 8, 2020

Good afternoon administration, faculty, family, friends, and the Class of 2020.

Adaptation- the act or process of changing to fit one's environment. Remember, it's that topic we learned in Biology on Darwin and those finches. Adaptation- a crucial factor in our lives when normalcy- the concept we subconsciously rely on when we picture our future- fails us. We live in a world that's erratic, where nothing is guaranteed, unlike the normalcy that we experienced for most of our four years at Molloy getting detention if you pass the Lion's Den without a lanyard or hear "Go Stanners" at the end of every morning announcement.

The normalcy we use to picture our future with didn't consist of going to school online, wearing a mask when in public or even sitting on a couch with your parents staring at me on a screen to graduate. But this is the reality we have faced the last few months and the future we need to adapt to.

I say all this not to sound like a pessimistic realist but due to what we are experiencing you all deserve a speech void of fabrication and because I want what I tell you next to be taken as an unhyperbolized statement: In the world we live in, the future we experience will never be the future we planned; however, the past we experienced has molded us to be able to adapt to changes in normalcy we will face.

In the fall of this year our future seemed as though it was already paved. We all convinced ourselves that the treacherous beginning of senior year that consisted of banging our heads against the wall we called college applications would be alleviated by a carefree second half of the school year. The future promised to us was that of endless memories from senior trips, spirit week, prom, and even graduation. Well, never have I heard the universe say "sike" louder. The memories of the last couple months from senior year instead consist of many zoom calls, birthday drive-bys, and Joe Exotic Tiger King. It definitely was not the future we had planned to say the least.

However, because of our four years at Molloy we already knew the art of acclimation: freshman year we conquered new experiences and opportunities learning to study a lot more than in middle school, play 2048 on the iPad without looking suspicious and be ready for anything when playing Rodgeball, sophomore year followed where we became more steady on our own two feet, then junior year or what I like to call high school's era of the great depression brought upon by standardized tests, and finally senior year where the unpredictable occurred changing our plans completely but what we were ready to encounter due to those three prior years.

Ever since we were freshman, we were the Class of 2020, the best year. It's painfully ironic the year 2020 did not give us the 2020 vision to see into how the pandemic would completely blindside us turning senior year upside down. However, regardless of how our senior year's future came into fruition it is now a part of our lives that has had a tremendous impact on us and our perspectives of the future: These past few months taught us not only about ourselves, but about our necessity to be with others. It taught us how much better our daily lives are because of the people who are around us.

Think about a memory from the last four years: maybe it's your team's celebration after a hard fought win, or the glance of relief you shared with a classmate after you didn't fail that calculus test, or even the eruption of laughter your friends shared practically every day. Think about that memory, and then think about the people who made it so important to evoke. That's what we learned to miss those last couple months.

Now think about another memory, but this time one from when you were home during quarantine: maybe this time it's your family celebrating after you got into your college, or even your little sibling barging into your room when you were trying to take an AP exam. Those are the people we've learned will not always be right next to us but will continue to support us no matter the distance. The people in our lives are the constant that provide normalcy even when the world around us has completely changed. They are the ones that enable us to adapt to situations without losing who we are.

It's unsettling to think high school is now a part of our past. But that now means it defines some part of who we are giving us the means to address the future. The class and year of 2020 has and will continue to have an impact on you throughout the rest of your life. Just to remind you of the powerful influence our grade has had on each other and the school I would like to recall some of our best moments: our respectably bad ranking during spirit week, the infamous shushing during lunch that got us kicked out of the cafeteria, the entire thanksgiving feast that occurred, the burst of noise that arouse every time Ms. Murdocca went on the microphone and last, but certainly not least, the random items of food that never failed to go airborne across the cafeteria that I am proud to say on behalf of my fellow graduates occurred without arising any suspicion.

The Class of 2020, as you can probably tell from what I just told you, has so much potential. We were born in the aftermath of 9/11 and are graduating during a pandemic, so it goes without saying that we have adapted to excel in unordinary times. No, we will not be walking across a stage as our classmates watch, but that does not make our graduation any less significant than years past and on top of that we may have now avoided getting yelled at by our mothers to put on the cap for a photo opt with our friends.

Now it's on to the next phase in our lives...college. Just like the last couple months of senior year, college will not present itself the same way we always pictured due to the circumstances we are now in, but it will be another memorable experience which will further shape who we are. The only thing we know about our future is that we can't be sure of what it holds. Nevertheless, it's the past, that has taught us how to adapt and defines who we are at this moment guiding us as we approach the unknown. From the past we take with us those experiences we've had and lessons we've learned. The past has allowed us to create our own normalcy through our personal growth over the last four years, the people around us who give their support and the ability to have fun along the way.

Fellow graduates, congratulations! I would like to wish you all the best as you embark on the next stage of your life and thank you for contributing to the past that helps us to be who we are. Remember class of 2020, let the world not just see us as the class that missed our moment, but because we've learned to adapt be the ones forever creating better moments for the world.