

## Ruffing Montessori Graduation Speech

Good evening everyone, for those of you whom I do not know, my name is Matthew Stefan. I have the honor and privilege of speaking tonight on behalf of Ruffing Montessori School's Alumni Council.

The Alumni Council is charged with upholding the values that Ruffing stands for and remaining actively engaged in the life of the school.

Tonight, the Council is excited and pleased to welcome the members of the class of 2019 into the alumni community. In a few minutes, you, the class of 2019, will be handed your diploma. As this exchange occurs, you will officially become alumni of the school, joining a network that expands the globe. Find comfort knowing that you will always be able to find people who understand you, who connect with you, and who will support you no matter where you go, because of this bond that you share.

Tonight is the start of the next chapter of your journey. You may feel excited, sad, hopeful, or anxious as you sit here tonight, I know that I did when I sat there; just three years ago. Here, you have grown, you have learned, and you have become active and engaged citizens of the world. No matter where you go, the things that you have learned at Ruffing will be a part of you. Ruffing will always be a part of your identity, a part of you that has been cultivated by experiences, dedicated educators, and a diverse group of peers.

Hold this part of your identity close to your heart. Be a proud member of this nearly sixty year old community. Ruffing will always be a part of who you are, and we, the school and the members of the alumni community, will always be here for you.

Dr. Maria Montessori once said "we shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe, and are connected to each other to form one whole unity". This quote stands out to me amongst others, as it captures the very essence, I believe, of the Ruffing community and experience. Just as the school has shaped and grown you into the people that you have become, you have truly impacted the school as well.

I know and trust that Ruffing will always walk with you in the coming chapters of your life.

As you sit here tonight at this liminal time in your life, take the time to reflect. Reflect on what you have given to this school, and, critically, what it has given to you: a preparation and perseverance for the real world. A confidence in your own shoes. But think about something else too. This chapter of your life is closing, it truly is the end of an era. But that is not all, for it is also the beginning of the next chapter, something much greater. As you move on in life be eager, curious, and passionate citizens and students of the world. Remember your roots, but embrace your future.

Ladies and gentlemen, please help me in welcoming the members of the 2019 graduating class into the Alumni community. Congratulations to each and every one of you.