

COLIN KREMUS

For those of us here on the field, and for those of you occupying the bleachers -- for everyone --, now is a time of unity, and right now more than ever -- it is a *precious* time. It is unique in that today's end and beginning meet, if even for just a moment. And since a moment is as brief as it is, why don't we put this one to good use and reflect?

To put things lightly, 2020 has had its fair share of upheavals. I'd be more than surprised if any one of us could've come close to predicting the litany of events that would befall our senior year, events that would also escort it to a close. Chief among these events, perhaps, was the arrival of the coronavirus (COVID-19) to the United States, forcing all of us to radically alter our social, personal, and, not least of all, our academic lives. To borrow the concluding words of T.S. Eliot's poem, "The Hollow Men," it seemed that high school for us ended "Not with a bang but with a whimper." Through the final months, everything seemed to fade into an indiscernible haze, the image of normalcy subject to an ever-intensifying blur. But today we gather here to restore that awaited image celebrating together the resilience we displayed while apart. Today we *mark* a conclusion -- we, the ones that bear the year 2020. A curious thing too,

isn't it? A year, that is. 219 young men and women seemingly defined by two repeated digits turned mantra.

This idea couldn't be further from the truth, however. We didn't happen on this field, all in cap-and-gown, by chance. We are here for a reason, and a good one at that. Not everyone has lived out the day-to-day, "boots on the ground," front line of our high school odyssey, nor even the more recent home front. But we have -- ups and downs included.

Whether it was discovering the diligence to complete a school day's work in the ever-enticing comfort of our own homes, finding time for our more personal interests, or trying to make sense of society's newest dilemmas, we have certainly carved out quite the unique experience for ourselves.

Each of us have some sort of idea of why we're here, and each of us has experienced and learned much on the way. The Class of 2020 has given its service to the community and beyond, expressed itself and its ideas with the arts, demonstrated its athleticism indoors and out, studied for tests and for trophies, and has with all of these things fostered a great pride.

Each of us can recall the individual weight we shouldered; most can do so fondly. On my end, for example, I, along with information from the core subjects, developed a pretty nuanced understanding of the intricacies of sleep deprivation, but that's a whole 'nother speech in itself.

As for this year's unfortunate developments, there are many who would be quick to console us in a display of empathy, but few are those who would truly recognize and commend our perseverance. Our identity comes not from the adversity that we are subject to. Instead, we are defined in how we address and overcome such obstacles -- and what a definition this class has earned for itself! We are a cohort of young men and women forged in the most intense flames the world's smithy had to offer, but this has only readied us for what is to come. 2020 will forever be bookmarked in the dictionary that is Delran High School. This year represents more than our transition into the greater world, though. The calamities of 2020 are just another one of life's tricks thrown at us -- not the first, and certainly not the last. Facing these is inevitable, though overcoming them is not. But let me assure you: Delran's Class of 2020 is better equipped than most to do just that. show it what for!