



Michael Betts
Student Body President

My fellow Whirlies,

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "A man can not go forward unless he knows where his past lies." This statement is paramount when looking at the lives that we, as the class of 2007, have really begun for ourselves. Although extremely different people, we have the one strong bond that ties us together, comprised of the four years we have learned, educated, served, and celebrated at Grimsley Senior High School.

I remember the first day of freshmen orientation almost as though it were just last week. I had the opportunity to sit with other newcomers and redefine myself as a new person in a new school where only a handful of students knew who I was or what my history said of me as a person. Many

of us had the same feelings that we were going to start afresh because of Grimsley's history of grooming its students. I remember that day and reflect upon the thoughts racing through my mind.

Winning Mr. Gasparello's almost impossible game of Simon Says, although trivial in the grand scheme of things, initiated my steps toward active involvement within the Grimsley community. I relished the moment of victory for my fellow teammates (the Green Team, by the way!) and me. It was an experience that, believe it or not, acted as an anchor for situations that occurred later during my high school career. That moment put matters in perspective, showing me how much I loved helping others to succeed, how much I was valued, and how well I could actu-

ally follow directions (even after years of being told that I couldn't because I talked too much). At that particular time, I officially decided to accept Grimsley, and it decided to accept me; consequently, we students eventually all converged into one body with a mutual acceptance of others.

So now, we begin to reminisce of days past, from freshmen year to this year, and of the lives we collectively touched. Remembering vividly what we soon took for granted, the new walkways come to mind; our freshman year was the first year they were open. For many of us, we viewed our time on campus through rose-colored glasses. The year of 2003 was the only year in the last four when we did not beat those individuals who live on Alma Pinnix Drive. Even so, we remained gratefully proud of Grimsley, which is the way students should feel about their school. Senator John Kerry conceded at lunch the day after the presidential election, and the small minority of Republicans on campus felt as though they directly made that happen. The year fast-forwarded like a high-speed amusement park ride. Suddenly, we were no longer the lowest tribe on the totem pole.

We were sophomores. The year was 2005. Although current events were soaring with news of Iraq, many of us did not talk about global issues until we returned from

winter break, upon hearing the tsunami in Southeast Asia devastated the lives of thousands. We, as a student body, recognized a need and went into overdrive to provide an answer. After raising \$12,500 for the cause, we certainly felt better. Not even a complete year passed before we felt compelled to organize yet another fundraiser. The Katrina mayhem struck, and FEMA completely dropped the ball. As always, the Whirlies, with the support of Lowe's Home Improvement Centers, came running to the rescue. Raising almost \$30,000 jointly, we knew our efforts certainly made a difference in desperate people's lives.

We referred to the year 2006 as a rush towards 2007, for 2006 brought about the beginning of the end. We started making college visits and became serious about taking the SAT, ACT, AP, and IB exams. We realized soon we would be freshmen on college campuses. I must admit that of the past four years, we have had the most adversity as a senior class. The celebration of a new school year was crushed by unforeseen warfare. Day one of the 2006-2007 school year started like all of the rest, except there was this small group of people new to the school, and some who were not, who danced on stage to a song from the hit Disney movie "High School Musical." The Great Whirlie Race actually had a declared winner this year, and

international relations seemed to be going somewhere with Saddam Hussein now having a lawyer. It was not until the middle of the week, of the middle of the second quarter, of the middle of the first semester that we had our first speed bump. The man to whom the Class of 2005 dedicated their senior Grimsley-Page T-shirt, "We'll stomp all over you... and your flower beds," left his position as principal.

Gasparello's departure brought about a very eerie Wednesday morning, followed by an official announcement Wednesday afternoon that "effective immediately," he will be Principal on Special Assignment..." We, as friends, family, and students were hurt, but after some time, we rose to our feet and refocused on our academic goals. Instructional Improvement Officer John Eldridge assumed the position of interim principal. Parents and teachers were relieved by his presence.

Barely two weeks later, Eastern Guilford burned to the ground. Guilford County's population was devastated, but once again, Grimsley jumped at the opportunity to help others. We collected almost \$3500.00 in less than one week to show our support for the Wildcats. Before the winter break, we learned District Office would possibly name a new principal by the time we returned, but no word came. February arrived, and all the "Early Decision" seniors knew where they

would be attending college.

All seemed well until the evening of February 27. Our carefree attitudes about life were instantly snatched away upon learning that senior Trae Whitsett died in his sleep from pneumonia. We all heard in different ways—at soccer games, by phone calls, and text messages. As we returned to school the next day, our hearts remained heavy; there seemed to be no way to overcome our grief. Trae was one of us, many times the reason some of us even went to class. We grieved together, prayed together, and went to the funeral and burial grounds together. The following week we remembered and told anecdotes of the funny ways Trae made an impact on our lives. Through the remembering, we began to heal. The Lady Whirlies, the girls' soccer team, other sports teams, and even Prom were dedicated to the long standing memory of Trae.

Now we are all standing at the Crossroads of decisions trying to decipher which path is the right one. For some of us, we will leave and never think twice about from where we came, and for others, trying to detach ourselves from Grimsley will be like separating water from wetness. All in all, as we travel our own ways and become who we were meant to become, we must never forget our past because without it, we can never have a plan for the future.

Dear Senior Class,

The time has come to accept the reality of graduation; the future is upon us. Grimsley was great, but what awaits us is even better. This time in our lives is not the end, but rather the beginning. I would never suggest we should forget Grimsley, though, for we should remember the emotional ties we shared here.

Life doesn't wait for you; your life is a work in progress, so live it to the fullest. We have waited so long for this moment, and now that it is upon us, what will we do? Most of us will attend college; others will enter the workforce, and some

may even go to war. Have we already set our career aspirations? Do we even know what field of work interests us?

As this past year has drawn to a close, we must realize it is time to follow or create new paths, but the journey will certainly be difficult. How can we even imagine where we will be in five years or even ten? Will we maintain our friendships? Will we miss home? Will we enjoy our new surroundings? I cannot read the future, so I, along with my fellow classmates, can only wish for the best. After all, I have heard life is more about the journey than the destination.

Throughout my life

thus far, I have experienced many ups and downs, just as all the members of the senior class have. Life never seems perfect in the good times because we always want something more to satisfy ourselves; indulgence is sweet, but it is not everlasting. When I feel down, I seek any way I can to improve my disposition. I remind myself and you that we must live for today; otherwise, our lives will pass by before we realize these times will become mere memories.

I sincerely believe that this class has the potential to achieve greatness if its members would only take the time. We are a class of dreamers, artists,

schemers, and innovators. There are very few limitations to hold us back, and we should take full advantage of this opportunity.

I urge this class to maintain its integrity and creativity.

I leave you with the following: Have faith in yourself, and take each step one foot at a time. You should have fun, but expect to make mistakes along the way. If you encounter difficulties, remember that life is all about pulling yourself back up again.

Remember Al Pacino's leading character in the 1983 film "Scarface"? Tony Montana says, "Anyone can accomplish anything; the world is yours."

Evan Plomaritis
Senior Class President

