



GRAB YOUR CAP AND GOWN

Graduation and Commencement

"Although I am really excited to see what the future holds for me, I know I will miss the people I met during high school."
-Amulya Pillutla '20

Class of 2020,

Over the past couple of years, I have written a short letter to seniors telling them goodbye and wishing them good luck as they leave for graduation. This letter has always been fun to write and a nice way to bring closure to the year. But it has always been a supplement to the final few weeks, in which I have had the final weeks to see kids in the halls, cafeteria, athletic events, and other activities to get a face to face chance to actually say goodbye. The letter was more a reminder of the interactions that made me want to go into education in the first place.

This year is different in so many ways. It seems almost daily that I go through a game of emotions from anger about the situation to sadness, from being happy that our kids are safe and sound to bitter that you aren't here to finish high school like you should. I think about how powerful these emotions are in me and inevitably stop, because graduation isn't about me. It is about our kids. It is about you.

I can't begin to tell you how sorry I am for this situation. I am sorry for every lost experience. I know in my heart that this will make you stronger and help you learn appreciate everything life has to offer. I just wish this lesson could have been learned differently. You will persevere through this. You have unforgettable memories from this and probably have made your relationships with close

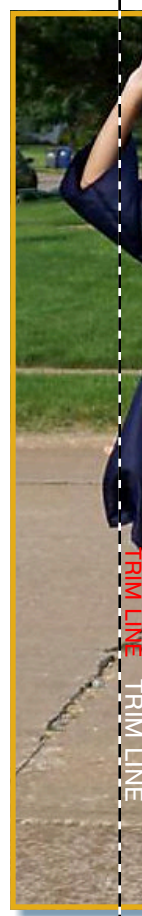
friends even stronger. This will pass and you will go to the next phase of your lives wiser and with a new perspective. And I know

you won't let the last few months of your high school experience define the 12 years spent learning, building relationships, and preparing for this moment.

I was glad I had a chance to see most of you, even for a few moments, during the filming of the virtual graduation. It was great to see so many of you and seeing you receive your diplomas individually. If we aren't able to host a live ceremony, at least you still have the opportunity to share this moment with your family and friends. But either way, I want you to remember you will always be a part of Spartan Nation.

I want to take the opportunity to thank you for all of the great memories you have given me over the past 4 years. I want to extend one final virtual high five, fist bump, "secret" handshake, and/or hug to each of you. Remember that the impact you have on our school has set the stage for future classes. Best wishes to each of you as you begin the next steps of your journey. As a wise man, Willy Wonka, once said, "We are the music makers and we are the dreamers of dreams." Never lose sight of your dreams and never forget the power you have to make the world a better place. Good luck, and make us proud.

Sincerely,
Mr. Erickson
Principal



Dilan Nair, Valedictorian

"Becoming valedictorian is an honor. I'm glad I get to represent my class through my diligence in school."

Aadil Manizor, Valedictorian

"I'm thankful to be recognized for my commitment to academics throughout my time spent at PVHS."



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A MESSAGE TO MY PEERS

As we grow...

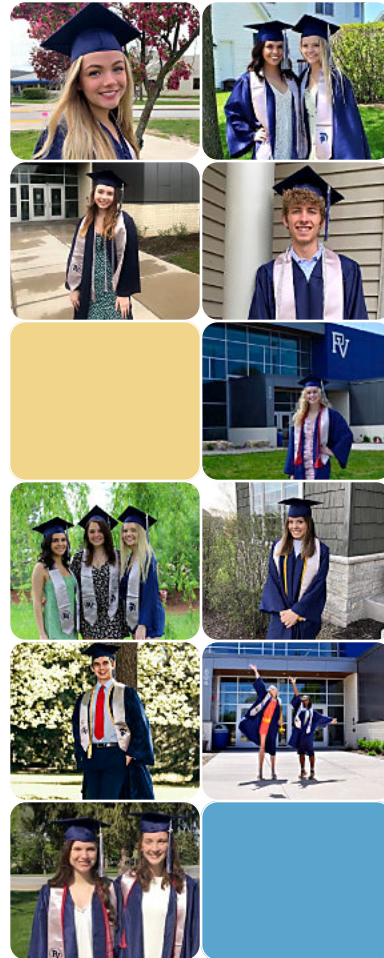
"I'm so grateful to have grown up alongside this group of incredible people. This graduating class has made me the person I am; I'm sure so many of us could say the same. I hope we are all able to leave PV satisfied, keeping with us the bonds we've made and the lessons we've learned as begin this next chapter."
- John Mandelin

With COVID-19 forcing schools around the country to close their doors, students began realizing what this would mean for their long-time graduation hopes and dreams. The May graduation ceremony, which was to be held at the Tax Slayer center on May 31, was canceled. To ensure students had an opportunity to sport their hard-earned caps and gowns and to commemorate the ending to their high school journey, the district planned a virtual graduation ceremony. During the last week of May, students put on their caps and gowns and went to the school in small groups, where they were photographed and videoed walking the stage and receiving their diplomas. The district then put together a complete virtual graduation video, which aired on KWQC TV-6 News on Saturday, June 6. At the time of this book's publication, the school was also hoping to hold a live ceremony, complete with face masks and new social distancing measures, outdoors on the school's football field sometime in July. Faculty and staff at the high school wishes all the best to our Pleasant Valley Class of 2020!



passed
with flying
colors

Twin sisters Eesha and Sakshi Lawande jump with friend and fellow senior Preksha Kedilaya as they celebrate completing their high school career together. All three girls plan to attend the University of Iowa in the fall in hopes of pursuing careers in the medical world.



imagine the dream

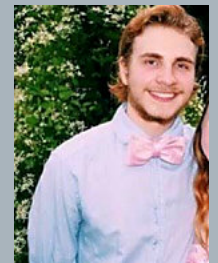
To commemorate the Class of 2020, the PVHS Choir chose to perform the song "Imagine" by John Lennon. Although they were unable to perform live, they performed during their end of the year banquet. The song held significant meaning, as senior Preksha Kedilaya explained: "We chose our song to be "Imagine" because it represents peace and unity in the world. This is a hard time for all of us, and we wanted the song to bring everyone together through music."

CHASING DOWN THE DREAM

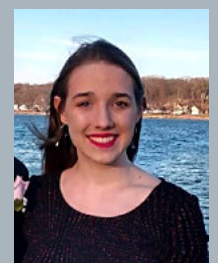
PV students dream big, knowing hard work and determination can get them anywhere. Here's how these Spartans are chasing their dreams.



Grace Sherman '23
"I dream to study pre-med in college."



Paul Malachuk '20
"I'd like to study physics through grad school and pursue a career in science writing or academia after that."



Alexandria Mamros '22
"Go to college and work as a gym teacher for high school and get married and have kids."



Margaret Hwang, Speaker

"It was an honor to get the opportunity to share what I gained from my high school experience with my peers. I am so humbled to have been chosen for this opportunity and will never forget it."



Aabha Joshi, Speaker

"I am extremely appreciative to my peers, the administration, and my teachers to have had the opportunity to speak at graduation. Although graduation was not what we had imagined, I am still so thankful for my time I got to spend as a student at PVHS."



Nate Martell, Speaker

"I was humbled to be nominated class speaker, and it meant a lot to me. It was a great way to cap off the school year in a not-so normal fashion. Giving the speech in front of a camera is much different than being in front of thousands of people at the TaxSlayer Center."



Prakruti Pancholi, Speaker

"I'm really grateful to have had an opportunity to speak at our graduation this year! I truly believe our class is going to extraordinary places, and I'll always be proud to be a Spartan."

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