

GRADUATION  
SUNDAY

8:00  
May 26th, 2002

Good evening, parents, family members, friends and prospective graduates. On behalf of the board of education, administration, faculty, and staff of the Big Bay de Noc school District I would like to congratulate each of you for meeting the criteria necessary to receive your diploma.

The milestone you have just accomplished can never be diminished. From learning how to tie your shoes in Kindergarten....(or in my case 7<sup>th</sup> grade) to factoring the quadratic equation, all were important in building the academic foundation upon which your future will rest. Even more important are the human relation skills that you have acquired. This could not be done without the socialization of a formal education or without the sacrifices

your parents have made to raise you to respect yourself and respect the individuals you come into contact with. Most of all that foundation could not have been built without all the effort you have put forth over the last thirteen years.

It has been my good fortune to be able to live in several communities in Michigan over the course of my career. Let me say unequivocally, the students who attend this school are head and shoulders above anywhere else I have worked, with regard to the figurative size of their **heart**, their **confidence** in being able to initiate a simple hello to an administrator in front of all their peers, and demonstrating doing the right thing even when no authority figure is watching. Even though my wife, kids and I are close to 400 miles from our hometown, we have been made to feel at home here.

Thanks to you, graduates, for leading the way this school year and making our family feel welcome and appreciated.

Yogi Berra, baseball player, coach and master of the malapropism once said, "You can observe a lot just by watching." What I have observed is a group of people that I am proud to have served. A group of people who can, should and probably will be successful in whatever field they choose to enter. A group of people who displayed genuine patriotism and real tears when our country was attacked by terrorists last fall. There may very well be an erosion of values among some of today's American youth. There is however, no shortage of high quality, responsible and respectful citizens being produced by the collective communities that make up the Big Bay de Noc School District.

I wish you all the luck in the world as you step into the next new, fresh and somewhat frightening stage of your life.

There is one bit of advice to leave you with. **Whatever it is you choose to do with your life, make every effort to do it**

better and with a more positive and proactive attitude than anyone else could possibly do it.

Finally, it is incumbent upon me to pass along an old Irish blessing.

“May the road rise to meet you and may the wind be always at your back.”

Thank you