

Good morning Headmaster, Staff and students,
and a special good morning to the incoming headmaster Mr Fenner.

I am truly honoured to speak on behalf of the leaving scholars of 2008. I remember several years ago I was sitting where you are and Taiki Yanigishima, dux of the college delivered a very fine speech on behalf of the scholars. I thought to myself: "Wow. That would be cool to speak to the school as a leaver like him." What I didn't realize is that writing my speech at midnight last night would not be quite so great.

It was only two months ago I was a student at King's, however already my time here is part of my past. When I came to Kings I wasn't from a prep school like many of the boys and I didn't know a single soul. On the first day as I walked up the long drive towards the chapel past those magnificent oak trees I still wondered if I had made the right decision to come here. But before long the camaraderie at Major, the inter-house sports days, and the enthusiasm of the teachers assured me it was the right choice. My years at kings have been truly wonderful. The vast opportunities provided at this school are invaluable especially during these formative years of our lives, and I'm sure they will have a lasting impact.

Although the five of us stand here as successful scholars of King's College, it is simply not enough to be solely academic. The real measure of one's success is not how many tangible achievements they have to their name. It is how well they have fulfilled the vision of founding headmaster Graham Bruce. In his words from 1896 it is the pursuit of the best all round education it is possible to achieve. Our education is so much more than what has been learnt in classrooms.

I have fond memories of the inevitable fatigues we all get, the muddy Burma trail up at Ahuroa, tramps for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, messing around in major house with the boys, and trying to blow up the chemistry labs in pursuit of academic endeavour.

Undoubtedly rowing was one of the most rewarding things I got involved in at Kings. It is the ultimate team sport. The brotherhood is unmatched. It made me fitter than any other sport could have, and I will perhaps never again be as fit as I was during the peak of the season. The discipline, mental grit and strength of character it engenders, equip rowers with tools they will carry for life.

We were at first just the bunch of boys that had never played cricket, could barely hold a tennis racket, and we were not enthused about running round in circles for athletics. And so naturally we gave rowing a go. But over time the hours of training and early mornings paid dividends. The crew grew stronger as did the camaraderie and brotherhood amongst us. We gave everything to win the Maadi cup and came tantalisingly close to doing so.

As for in the classroom, my philosophy has always been to think, to question and seek more knowledge. I have always enjoyed having an active participation in class, asking lots of questions, and keeping the teacher on their toes, even if sometimes it was just to catch them out.

I am indebted to the teachers who have been inspirational and those who have allowed me to explore what is outside the confines of the set syllabus or offered me further opportunities as has happened particularly in the sciences.

Amongst other things, Mr Kelley asked me to pass on some exam preparation advice for you all. But I'm not sure my techniques will work for everyone. As far as I'm concerned there's no big secret. What I can tell you is that first and foremost it helps to be passionate about the subject. Personally, I've never really been a fan of writing out revision notes for two reasons. Firstly I find it hard to read my own appalling handwriting, and secondly it seems such a hassle to write out what's already in the books or handouts. But if that works for you then that's great. What worked for me was just reading the textbooks. I did learn the hard way though that if you want to get 'A' grades in English it will not suffice to read the online summaries of Great Expectations or Katherine Mansfield, and here you might want to put pen to paper and write the odd practice essay.

Just because the majority of you will have university entrance by the end of year 12, do not sit back and slacken off. Set yourself further goals as I did and embrace the challenge that the full A Level qualifications offer. I am proud to be unashamedly academic and to have achieved 8 'A' levels in total. Furthermore I encourage you to give the NZQA scholarship exams a go because whilst life is sweet at school, at university my student loan is looming. In addition the final year is an opportunity for leadership and giving something back to the school.

For me personally, 2008 was a year of 2^{nds}. My house Major came 2nd in athletics. The 1st VIII rowing crew I was a member of placed 2nd at Head of Harbour, and then later a gut-wrenching 2nd at Maadi. I captained the 2nd XV to a 2nd placing in Auckland. I got Silver at the International Biology Olympiad and our team was 2nd at the International Young Physicists' Tournament. 2nd in House netball and 2nd in House debating and 2nd in house rowing. And finally in academics; I came 2nd by getting proxime accessit. But the memories I take from my breadth of involvement are **second to none**.

Always stand up for what you believe in. Always strive to maintain your integrity in everything you do. But don't forget to nurture your sense of humour and have fun along the way. These will serve you well.

If you only take one piece of advice from me today it is this: Challenge yourself to get involved in all facets of the college life, be they academic, cultural, sporting, spiritual, or leadership. Seize every opportunity and make the most of what is on offer here. Give everything your absolute best shot.

One last thing. On a personal note I would like to wish all the best to two of my siblings who have started King's this year; Megan and Luke. And if you see a miniature year 9 version of me today, be sure to wish Luke a happy 13th birthday.

Virtus Pollet

Ben Paterson

17.2.09