

Jessica Isbell ~ Salutatorian Speech

Good evening family, friends, faculty, and fellow graduates! Today is a very special day for me, about forty other students, and all the people who have brought us to this point in our lives. Today, Friday, June 4th, is the day that the Hoosac Valley class of 2021 graduates!

Tuesday afternoon when I was called to congratulate me on being the salutatorian of my class, it was crazy how many thoughts went through my mind. Yes! Nailed it. First loser... Well hey, look at all these other losers sitting beside me. I'm only kidding, of course. Our class holds many great people that I know can go off and change the world if they wanted. Whether you are going off to college, going straight into the workforce, perhaps the military, or even just taking a gap year to figure your life out, each of you holds potential beyond measure. We're not going to be able to hide away behind a zoom screen with our cameras turned off for the rest of our lives. It's no doubt this year has been different, to say the least. Covid this covid that. Although it did give us a whole new slew of excuses. Slept in? Bad wifi. Bored in class? Camera doesn't work. Well something must have worked because here we all are today about to step foot into the next chapter of our lives.

With our class being so small, it's safe to say I could tell you a story about every single person sitting beside me. Whether it be good or bad is up in the air but I have grown up with all of these people and it will be strange not seeing the faces I've been seeing every day for the past twelve years of my life at college. Although I can't seem to shake Aidan Koczela off my back. See you at Westfield bud. I'm sure many of you are looking forward to that and some not so much but whatever the case may be, take a minute and think about all the memories we have made during our Hoosac Valley experience. From big events to those small side conversations we would get yelled at for, all of it has shaped us to who we are today.

It isn't every day you'll have a teacher like PA that will attempt to tap dance to get your attention. Or like Mr. Mahar who will blast Katy Perry first thing in the morning. Or like Mrs. Tucker who dealt with my homeroom and all our crazy conversations. Or like Miss Keefe who will advocate for us until the end. Or like Mrs. Reeves that would listen to us rant about anything and everything. Without all these teachers, our time here wouldn't have been the same and I'm grateful for each of them and more.

Now before we really get down to why we're all here in the first place- I really doubt you only came to watch me talk, I want to leave everyone with the last few lines of "Oh the Places You'll Go!" by Dr. Suess. I know this might sound familiar since it was just recently read to some of us by one amazing teacher, but here it is for everyone. "And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.) KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS! So... be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea, you're off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!"

Thank you.