**Osbourn Park High School Tradition Stands the Test of Time**

High schools often have traditions to go along with the more common things, such as having a teacher speak to the graduates and throwing caps at the end of the ceremony, and Osbourn Park High School's 'watch story'  tradition is all its own.

The watch story was something that originated with former Osbourn Park principal, Timothy Healey, who has since become the associate superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability.

In the beginning of the 2010/11 school year, a student approached the new principal and expressed sadness that they wouldn't be able to hear Healey's story at their graduation.

As a result, the current principal,  Neil Beech didn't let tradition die at this years's  OPHS graduation ceremony, held at the Manassas high school Friday night.

"Now, in the spirit of good customer service I have a watch story to share with you," Beech said. "It's not the same watch story but it has a similar message; and more importantly, it has Mr. Healey's blessing."

Beech went on to explain that his watch was given to him by his ailing mother when he was a freshman in college and that he's worn it to every important occasion since, including Friday night. Beech felt that as his first year as OP's principal came to an end, he was graduating with the class of 2011.

Similarly, the valedictorian, Lindsay Baldovin, made sure she too came prepared with a  watch story.

"Because I've heard Mr. Healey's watch story three times, it's just something I looked forward to hearing at my own graduation," Baldovin said.

She promptly took out her own reversible Phantom Menace watch and explained that she got it from Burger King.

Baldovin also talked about her favorite moment of high school—an anecdote of a recent dentist visit when she was waiting for the nitrous oxide to kick in before she got a filling. She said the whole time she was waiting, she was doing calculus in her head.

"This was the best moment for me, because it was when I was able to see how much school had really impacted me," Baldovin said. "I was even able to remember antiderivatives while laughing gas was taking over my body."

Baldovin was followed by the teacher chosen to speak at graduation by the class of 2011, Matthew Hoffman, an English teacher who has been with the school for eight years.

Hoffman began his speech by talking about the movie "17 Again."

"With great regularity Hollywood turns out these movies," Hoffman said. "They seem obsessed with the idea of returning to the youth of high school. On the condition, of course, that those who do get to keep their adult perspectives and experience. As if that would somehow make it better. I've always thought that would make it far worse, to know exactly what I was going to have to go through, having already experienced it."

Hoffman expressed in his speech that being a teen is hard, and he doesn't think anyone would want to go through it again.

Prior to his big graduation day speech, Hoffman said he rarely saw a class as ready to laugh as 2011.

"In one of my AP Lit classes, a group of kids had taped literally dozens of pictures of a Hollywood personality in my room during lunch," Hoffman said. "When I came back to the room, it took me a second to figure out what everyone was laughing at. Apparently, I look like Christopher Nolan. I didn't know if I should be offended or not, or upset at all, but I laughed along with them and took it as another example of this class's good natured and affable attitude."

After all the speakers were done, the graduates ended the ceremony joining Beech in saying, "Once a Jacket, always a Jacket" and flocked to the field where they threw up their caps.

"It's just a big huge relief, and I know that I'll be able to enjoy my summer and not worry about summer work for AP courses, " said graduate Erika Zwiren.

And others felt happy, but admit they would miss high school.

"I spent like four years here, so it's had a big impact on my life," graduate Trevor Richardson said.

Still, others were much more excited to leave and not look back.

"I'm really excited, glad to be leaving high school and moving on," said graduate Ellen Manley.