

Speech by Mrs Karen Schandy, Chair of the Board of Governors

Her Majesty's Ambassador
Ian Duddy
Members of Staff,
Parents, Ladies and Gentlemen
Students

It is so nice to be here once in yet another Graduation Ceremony. This is the 50th Year of Graduation Ceremonies in 110 years of the School. During the first 50 years there were only prize giving ceremonies, but it was the generation 1968 the first to have its Graduation. Yet, this is a unique and special occasion for you, your families and your teachers.

This has been a very busy year, challenging as always, and ever changing as education is. Congratulations to all of you.

Thank you the Head Girl and Head Boy for your speeches, it really took me back to the years when I was in your place.

I can feel it and see it in your faces, the satisfaction of a job well done and the emotion and anxiety towards your future and the beginning of a new stage in your life. It is true that a whole new world is before you.

In preparing my words, many fond memories came tumbling into my mind, of the day when our Generation graduated and of the years that followed.

I will not speak now of how were my days at School, and I certainly do not know what will be of you in the next say, 30 years, but, there is SOMETHING I do want to mention and that surely applies to you, even being several generations younger.

Since my days at School, many things have changed referring to buildings and premises. The School grew in capacity and service, new ways of education, new programmes.

This building, without the PS Schor Auditorium of course, and some other changes, was practically the only building together with the Junior School building, standing in this place. There were only two year groups from 1st to 4th Year Liceo, and now there are four groups, with the addition of 5th and 6th Year Liceo.

But, over the years, one thing remains the same. The **essence** of the School remains unchanged. The vision and the values imparted since its foundation, 110 years ago, are still vivid and latent.

The values and traditions of British culture together with the Uruguayan culture, have been transmitted since the first days.

One thing that has not changed, is the potential this School has sown in all of us, to those in the School in the early 1900s, to our generation and certainly to yours.

You would not believe what you are able and capable of achieving as from now. How high and far you can reach, channeling the knowledge and strength inside each one of you. You can't imagine the strength and potential you acquired not only academically but also as human beings. Your responsibility is to take advantage of all your knowledge together with the values learnt. Today is "**the day**" where you are going to make your option for your future life, I would say, it's the beginning of the rest of your lives.

The world is full of challenges, as well as full of opportunities. This world is smaller each day and highly competitive. Today it is very easy to reach remote parts of the world due to strong communications' development.

You are highly prepared to face the competence, confronting your knowledge and capacity with them. It is not by chance that British education includes sports and performing arts.

This gives you the training to work as a team to play fairly and the opportunity to share with others, something you will continually experience in your future. Triumphs come and go but, as in School and in sports, you are prepared to stand up and try again, do your best and continue striving for excellence.

Quoting Confucius: The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.

Perhaps today it is too early for you to ascertain by yourselves how much the School has given you. It is too early for you to know how capable you are, but I am sure that you will know, once you start building your destiny and start walking your future life.

You will not be alone, you have the tools and the Know-how, all what you have learnt inside these walls, all your experiences, sooner or later, will come out. Don't forget the Schools motto **PERFICE "do thoroughly"**.

You will no longer have the teachers leading, assisting and advising you. It is now your responsibility and the time for decisions.

It is now the time for leaving crutches and start walking through life by yourselves with the tools acquired at School. I have no doubt that you will continue developing to your maximum.

You will remember your days at School with a smile, you will remember the staff, the buildings, the fields, and you will realise that the School is not the bricks and mortar, it is you. It is the sense of belonging. It is the values learnt, the personalities that led you and taught you.

The School is with you, in you, in your heart, in your senses, in your mind, and you will be capable to appraise, in a sincere and complete way, all what you have learnt and how much of you was moulded inside these walls. Do not forget the values learnt at School of respect and justice, tolerance and solidarity. It is not just feeling them or thinking about them, it is having the attitude and being committed and responsible for your actions.

I would quote Sir William Shakespeare in Hamlet where Polonius says to his son Laertes
"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man"

If you are honest and straight forward, you will be trusted.

Last but not at all least, thank your parents they have been beside you all these years. Honour their effort by taking the best decisions and continuing to excel.

Congratulations to all of you, we wish you the best in your future lives.

Thank you.