

CHAPARRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Temecula, CA

June 11, 2010

Thank you, Principal Gil Compton, for your kind introduction.

Congratulations to the Great Class of 2010 of Chaparral High School.

Congratulations and thanks to the parents, family, and friends –

They will continue to need your support as they now venture into the world whether they go on to college, join the Armed Forces, or enter the American workforce

My baby girl, Kelly, now an accomplished plastic surgeon – veteran of a summer internship at JPL as a high school senior - and one of my chief mentors and counselors gave me wise advice for my address to you today – “...short, not too serious, tell them times will be tough, but it’s worth it!” (Now that I’ve delivered her message, I could sit, but I won’t.)

Members of the Chaparral Class of 2010 - what an extraordinary time this is in your lives and the life of this great nationally ranked school. Thank you for inviting me to share this

special day with you. Your time at Chaparral has been highly successful and this year has been highlighted with significant achievements:

- CIF Football Championship
- Southwest League Champions in Boys Soccer, Boys Basketball, Girls Swim
- Individual Awards
 - Arlens Zeqorlori - CIF Champion of Character Athlete of the Year
 - Alison Gamble and Johnny Diaz, Outstanding Athletes of the Year

Your outreach and special programs impress me:

- Seniors logged 42,988 community service hours in this year.
- All four classes logged 76,413 hours total
- You have comprehensive exchange program with Temeculah sister city Voorburg in the Netherlands
- You hosted a Korean teacher exchange, whereby 6 teachers came to our school from Busan, Korea and spent several weeks observing our teachers in their classroom

- You hosted several Dutch students through a Dutch exchange program, whereby students came from Holland with their teachers and spent some time in class rooms with host students
- You hosted students from Melilla Spain

Since last July, I have had the privilege of leading the government agency whose charter is as expansive as it is essential to modern life. As we stand here today, more than 200 miles above us six astronauts are working night and day aboard the International Space Station. Astronauts from America and Russia - all part of a sixteen-nation global partnership are working on research that can extend human presence in our solar system, develop new methods of delivering medicines to patients suffering from cancer and other threatening diseases, and other technologies that can protect the lives of astronauts on other space missions but also protect firemen and first responders - new imaging technologies for the early detection of diseases like breast cancer and diabetes.

On April 15th – about two months ago – speaking at the Kennedy Space Center, President Barak Obama reminded us that some 49 years ago, President John F. Kennedy came before the Congress

and challenged NASA and the American people to a bold and risky goal of sending humans to the moon and bringing them safely back to Earth. Five years later, the first Saturn V prototype emerged from Florida's Vehicle Assembly Building to start testing the moon rocket that would achieve his goal. And eight years after his speech, Neil Armstrong, Mike Collins, and Buzz Aldrin flew the quarter million miles to the moon to achieve that goal in a triumph of the human spirit and of American ingenuity. For 21 hours Neil and Buzz conducted the first moonwalk. Following their successful return to Earth, five more crews walked on the moon and brought back rocks and soils that we continue to study and test today. But here's what President Obama asked us: Was that historic Apollo 11 mission the end of something, or the beginning? Are we the heirs of Neil and Buzz and inheritors of their spirit of exploration, innovation, and risk taking, or do we lack the courage, the wisdom, and the vision to continue their journey? The answer to these questions lie not with my generation but with yours. For your generation will be the one that will either turn away from great challenges, or will follow in the footsteps of your fore parents. You of the Chaparral Class of 2010 will either settle for remaining affixed to Planet Earth and maybe continue to work in low Earth orbit

or you will choose to venture into deep space to explore the rocky surface of an asteroid, to visit the mysterious moons of Mars, even land with your robotic co-explorers and probe the iron rich soil of the Red Planet itself. I believe one of you here today may be among the first colonists to cross the millions of miles of space to begin a new chapter in American and human history.

Your parents and I have faith in you, but you must have faith in yourselves. What you achieve today can open the doors to exploration and discovery for tomorrow, but your education must not end when you leave here today. Accept the challenge and responsibility of leadership in whatever you choose as your profession and live your lives with passion

I'll leave you with the thoughts of a 12 year old African boy, Nkosi Johnson (- 2001), Kwa Zulu Natal, SA.

“Do all you can

With what you have

In the time that you have

In the place that you are”

