



## EUNICE HIGH SCHOOL

Good evening honoured guests, respected governors, esteemed colleagues and valued friends of Eunice.

Many a parent, learner and educator dream about being part of an institution of our caliber – and it is with tremendous pride that I reflect on yet another exceptional year in the history of our dear school.

Merriam Webster defines dreams as a series of thoughts, visions or feelings that happen during sleep.

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight I thank you for igniting our individual and common dreams by putting thoughts into action and by displaying remarkable and sustained assertiveness during this whole process.

The theme we choose for any given year drives our vision for the forthcoming year.

Our theme for 2016 was “Ignite your dream”.

True to Eunice’s standards of excellence, the quality of YOUR dedication and commitment to Eunice, enabled us to execute that theme beyond the shared vision that we have for our school and our lives.

Dreams become reality at Eunice and the achievements that we honour tonight are notable for their excellence and the quality of enthusiasm about our future.

Ladies. You are the stars of the evening, because you understand that effortless perfection does not exist. Your exceptional achievements echo your determination and loyalty to yourselves.

Green is the colour of life, renewal and energy associated with growth and to say that you aim for success beyond the realms of ‘green and gold’ has proven to be an understatement in many ways.

Young lady, you have proven that every day is the first day of the rest of your life!

And your accolades, a steady starting point for what will follow.

Matriculants of 2016.

Eleanor Roosevelt said: “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” More recently JK Rowling stated that we do not need magic to change the world as we already carry all the power we need inside ourselves because we have the power to imagine better.”

Matriculants - I say to you, on the eve of your final adventure as South African scholars and Eunice ladies: “Go conquer the world because you have been taught to conquer yourselves.”

May you meet life’s great adventure with the knowledge that your roots are firmly anchored in a school that is more than just a place of academic excellence – a school that extends far beyond the obvious requirements expected from educational institutions in today’s challenging times.

Go out there and exude a spirit of enthusiasm, passion, excitement and joy. That same spirit that embodies our ethos of camaraderie, femininity, respect, service and style.

Thank you, members of the RCL, for embracing 360-degree leadership skills in the execution of your duties. You understood your commitment to Eunice’s vision, you honoured your pledge to serve your peers, and you expanded your circle of positive influence into the community.

Swalica, Sjandé, Nienke and Dimpho – you led by example and supported your team members to extend their skills to the benefit of Eunice’s growth. May your journey as executive heads enable you to experience even greater heights in the years ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen – please also allow me the opportunity to thank the team without whose contribution, Eunice’s success would be impossible: my esteemed colleagues.

We set out to develop our learners’ core characteristics. Characteristics which are crucial to the development of self and the ability to conquer life’s challenges. And that you did.

You opened up the brave new world of possibilities and helped our learners to hear and understand their own voice, passion ... grit. And for that I am truly thankful.

Eunice hones in on the magic educators have at their fingertips: the ability to make a difference to another person’s life.

As W. B. Yeats said: “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

You seized the prerogative to be the spark that ignites your learners’ creative thinking processes. Thank you for sharing good practices with each other, and for scheduling thinking time in your busy curricular and extra-curricular programmes to develop your teaching methodology in your quest to help your learners unlock their full potential.

Thank you for teaching our ladies that they can grow as high as they reach, go as far as they seek, see as deeply as they look and be as much as they dream.

You offer so much more than just academic enrichment. You educate, inspire, guide, support, develop and most of all - you empower our youth to become the front-runners they are all meant to be.

Thank you to the Admin and Ground staff who ensure the functionality of our learning and teaching environment. You strengthen our hands in every possible way, enabling us to focus on the task at hand.

My sincerest gratitude to Mrs Eunice Strydom, Mr Wium Adendorf and Governors, Mr Leon van Rensburg, Mrs Mag Marais, the Senior Management team and Mr Pat Uys for their support and commitment to Eunice Excellence.

I admire and thank you for recognising and addressing the needs of every Eunice learner, staff member and parent through your sound management and sustained governance.

John Lennon said that a dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality.

Thank you for making Eunice’s dreams a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen. A very fine line exists between fantasy and consensual reality.

The privilege we have tonight – to celebrate the reality of your daughters’ achievements - cannot be taken for granted.

We honour her for her exceptional ability to achieve her goals in this environment of high expectations.

And I honour YOU as parents, for giving her the support, time, effort and unconditional love required for her to transform her dreams into reality.

We celebrate our shared commitment to her optimism, faith, hope and confidence, because these are the things that ultimately lead to our collective accolades, such as Eunice garnering the prize as Top Performing Public School in the country for achieving a 100% pass rate for the 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and for

- attaining a 100% Bachelor’s rate in 2015;
- being recognised as the Top Achiever in the Free State in 10 subjects;
- being included in the Allan Gray Circle of Excellence Schools for the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year; and
- being included in the Top 10 list of best value for money schools in South Africa.

We also celebrate an array of individual op achievements – many of which are at International level. This propels me to ask the question: Is being victorious the result of a conquest, or is it a state of being?

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Is it something we do or achieve and then it is over, or does being victorious lie in a mind-set – an individual Code of Conduct that we wish to ascribe to in our quest to be successful, integrated beings?

Eunice has taught me that the latter leads to a greater sense of accomplishment as we transcend into living the life God intends us to live – achieving our full potential.

Our top achievers in different fields exhibit the willingness to expend intense effort over long timespans in the pursuit of their goals.

They prove that success relies on the acceptance of personal responsibility and the vision to see demanding tasks as opportunities.

Your daughter's achievements are proof that persistence is key and most of all, that achievement striving is valuable in a person's attempt to improve on what may already be regarded as the greatest victory on the highest level of performance.

The second of February marked the start of my second season as Headmistress of Eunice – a school like no other where fulfilment of potential is the order of the day.

Eunice's school motto is not mere words – it is the driving force and inspiration behind our every intention.

Physically and intellectually demanding days drive us and make our conversations about future prospects intensely meaningful.

I see the fulfilment of potential by young adolescents as a step - not an ultimate destination.

These young adolescents ignite dreams by

- knowing in which direction they want to keep travelling.
- They focus on what they really feel they want to do and have potential for, and
- they push their own boundaries.

Each day they go a little further than expected to see what is, in fact, possible.

Ladies in green - You are remarkable.

Ladies and gentlemen: Their curiosity fascinates me and creates a Eunice vibe that paves the way for potential to grow beyond expectation.

And to learn and develop within this realm of possibility is an absolute privilege.

Wayde van Niekerk recently posted on his Instagram account entitled *Waydedreamer* that people plan their paths, but the Lord secures their steps.

I thank my Heavenly Father for each and every blessing He bestows on our school community. He does secure our steps and for that – above all – I am thankful.

I praise him for every one of the 553 learners walking across this stage tonight; every one of the 253 ladies that received merit certificates at our recognition assembly; and every one of our 850 Eunice ladies who ignited dreams in 2016.

We started the year off with a very special Board Medal Assembly where I quoted John Quincy Adams. He said that if your actions inspire others to dream more, they

- learn more,
- do more and
- become more.

Honoured guests, governors, colleagues, parents and special ladies: Let us cherish aspiration and share our gift and ability to sparkle wherever we are. And let us conquer wherever we go.

Vincit qui si Vincit.

I thank you.

Mrs Z de Wete  
Headmistress