

My association with Wasatch High School takes in most of my life. I first attended my older brothers' athletic events as a small boy and was so excited to enter the halls of Wasatch on my first day as a freshman student. My four years as a member of the student body were incredible. To steal a quote from Taylor Baird: *"Wasatch High School was the center of [my life.]. Where [I] had the best moments and the worst times. Where [I] learned who [I was] and what [I wanted to] be. In its rooms, a Michelangelo was discovered. Down its halls, the wrestling champion walked. There, the crowd cheered for the home run. Wasatch has been home to many, and many more will come."*

The good times, the personal growth and the fond feelings I experienced drew me back. I returned a few years later to coach, teach and eventually ended up as part of the administration. During this nearly 40 year period I have had a front row seat to witness the remarkable progress that has taken place. This earth that we live on was designed to be a place of progress and Wasatch High has been no exception. Although excellent from the beginning each decade has made her better and these students seated behind me are the best of the best.

They are the community's greatest gift to the world. Students your cumulative talents and potential as the class of 2011 is the best Wasatch High has ever produced. This community has chosen to make education its top priority. You are the result of that priority.

This valley was once known for the thousands of sheep produced here and shipped to market from the Heber train station; our own Wasona in 1939 pays tribute to a strong mining industry that produced hundreds of millions of dollars in gold, silver, copper, lead, and zinc. In my own childhood I clearly remember the dozens of dairy farms that dotted this valley.

As these industries have faded in volume and importance, education has only gotten stronger, clearly becoming our top priority. The residents of this community have sent a clear message to the world; committing their time and resources to a state of the art high school that has allowed our students, including the graduates of 2011, opportunities and experiences never seen before. This great school with even greater teachers, staff and students stands as a testament to the importance this community places on an educated mind and a keen intellect.

I am humbled and amazed each year at this time as our community comes together under the direction of the Wasatch Community Foundation to provide every graduating senior who asks with a scholarship of some kind—sending them a powerful message of—“we believe in you.”

Graduates as we consider the potential impact that your class will have on the world it is awe inspiring. Each one of you has the ability to change the world we live in for good. Be courageous. Go forth with confidence in your skills and abilities for they are remarkable. Most discoveries that have had a significant effect on our world have been made by young people, not much older than you.

Graduates, be prepared to work hard and persevere. As you expect to excel you must also expect to work. Intelligence, talent and potential are nothing without hard work.

There is no evidence of high level performance without experience or practice. No one is born a CEO, an investor, or chess grand master. You will achieve greatness only through an enormous amount of hard work over many years. The good news is that you are not hostage to some naturally granted level of talent. You can make yourself into whatever you want to be. Greatness isn't reserved for a preordained few. It's available to each of you.

Graduates, after today's graduation, like you, I too will be moving on. After 13 years of being part of the Wasatch High School administration—the last 5 as your principal—this graduation exercise will be my final official act. I will be moving to the Wasatch School District Office where I will begin work as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. While I am very excited about this new challenge and very grateful for the opportunity, I am also saddened at the many wonderful people and activities I will be leaving behind.

To the teachers, coaches, advisors and other adults at Wasatch High: I honor you, respect you and love you. You are amazing! You do more for less than any other segment of society. I will always feel a reverence for what you do and how you do it.

To the students: You inspire me, impress me and never cease to amaze me. I am absolutely astounded at your level of talent, dedication and excellence. You motivate me to do better. You not only say expect to excel you live it every day.

So long my friends, and so long to my dear old Wasatch High. I will forever be—your biggest fan.

Members of the Wasatch County Board of Education and Superintendent Shoemaker, I certify that the candidates for graduation here presented have met all standards set forth by the Utah State Board of Education and the requirements for a Wasatch High School diploma. I present to you the Class of 2011.