Lily Rodebaugh graduation speech

Good evening faculty, family, friends, and the class of 2026,

It feels like it was yesterday we were tiny kids walking through the halls of the grade school with our backpacks bigger than we were.

We found our names above the cubbies, where we hung our backpacks and stored both our gym shoes and recess toys. Then came middle school, where everyone seemed tall, awkward, and slightly annoying.

Eventually, we adjusted, found our rhythm, and learned how to survive the chaos of growing up.

By the time we reached high school, we had mastered the art of speed-walking to class, finding our friends in the cafeteria, figuring out how to get to class before the bell, and pretending we totally understood what was happening in math. Today, we are walking out of this building with much more than a locker combination or class schedule. We leave with memories, lessons, and relationships that shaped us in ways we're only beginning to understand.

And even though it feels like we're closing a chapter, the truth is this:

Wherever you go, take a piece of Orangeville with you.
Take the real pieces, the ones that matter, because many are already woven into who we've become.

Take the lessons we learned in class- lessons that went far beyond textbooks. It's in the resilience we built during seasons on the field or court, where we learned that quiet grit and teamwork matter just as much as talent alone.

Take the laughter we shared during lunch, the inside jokes that only make sense to us, and the moments that seemed small at the time, but now feel unforgettable.

These are more than just memories.
They're tools.
They're anchors.
They're reminders of where we started and how far we've come.
They're the parts of Orangeville that live in us now.
They're the foundation we will use to navigate the rest of our lives.

As we step into the next chapter - whether that's college, a career, the military, or something we haven't figured out yet - we carry Orangeville with us in

The way we treat people
The way we show up

The way we work
And the way we keep going even when things get hard and life becomes messy.

Because Orangeville taught us that community matters.
That people matter.
That showing up matters - even when you feel tired or unmotivated

To our parents and families, thank you for the rides, the cheers, the support, and for believing in us even when we were overwhelmed, dramatic, or convinced that one bad grade or game meant our lives were over.

To our teachers and coaches, thank you for continuing to push us to be better than we thought we could be, and for seeing potential in us long before we saw it in ourselves, and for giving us grace when we were definitely not paying attention in class.

And to each other - thank you for being the classmates that made these last four years memorable, even through the good days, the hard days, and everything in between.

As we move forward and map out our futures, I hope you look back at what got you to this moment- the late nights, the mistakes, the successes, the moments you thought you wouldn't make it through but did anyway.

Cherish them.
Learn from them.
Use them to build a future that is uniquely your own.

And when life gets overwhelming - and it will - remember the version of you that survived the hardest days here.

That person is strong.
That person is capable.
That person is the foundation for the person you are becoming.

So wherever you go - whether it's a big city, a new state, or a place you can't even pronounce, take a piece of Orangeville with you.

Take the kindness.
Take the work ethic.
Take the pride.
Take the memories of a community that raised you, shaped you, and believed in you.

Because no matter how far you travel, this place will always be part of your story. And you will always be part of ours. Congratulations, class of 2026!