

Good evening to every proud Eunice family member present here tonight.

Young ladies, esteemed governors, colleagues and valued friends – you are all honoured guests at tonight's celebration where we bask in the unique tone of Eunice's collective voice.

In his book, *A Maverick Heart: Between Love and Life*, Ravindra Shukla writes that when people of similar frequencies come together, output is not a simple sum of individual work, but rather a manifestation of exponential effort.

Eunice is home to many voices that come together to create a beautiful blessing in perfect harmony. May the clarity of each unique voice enhance your appreciation of our collective song tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen.

An array of voices can harmonise to form a beautiful song. It resonates beyond limit, because the Master of authenticity and unity, our God, composed it long before our cornerstone was laid in 1875.

The excellence that we celebrate tonight echoes favour, diligence, commitment and purpose.

Many a lyric starts in the natural melody of speech. On 17 January 2018 30 of our Academic Board Medallists shared with us the notes of the life stories that ultimately secured their compositions. Uduakabasi Edem echoed our motto: 'She conquers who conquers herself' in saying that our ladies' individuality is their biggest power; Caela Venter added that we must be fearless in the pursuit of what sets our souls on fire and Bernelee Kritzingler said that the essential element of success is invisible to the eye and that we should put our hearts into everything we do.

Their messages inspired us to find our own voices, igniting in our daughters the passion to pursue continuous growth. Tonight, we celebrate the fruit of their sustained efforts to pursue purpose-driven lives.

Ladies, you have made it clear that you make use of all opportunities to produce a perfectly-balanced tone that resounds your holistic well-being. You competed In 405 sports matches and In 50 cultural events hosted and 86 outreach opportunities offered throughout the course of the year. Your kindness shone through in the mindful conversations you had during 3575 hours of community service and your messages of hope resonated through every donation made to those in need.

Michael Dell said that it is through curiosity and looking at opportunities in new ways that we map our path. Your journey along your life path in the past year, is living testimony of Dell's words.

Matric class of 2018

The term valedictorian is derived from the Latin *vale dicere* ("to say farewell") and is used as a global academic title of success. Tomorrow, the school will assemble around the fountain of wisdom and life and you will walk down the stair case where Eunice's ethos is displayed. You will ring a closing bell to mark the end of the many hours spent in the surrounding school buildings – the place that has moulded and shaped your success. Our theme for the year: 'Be the voice', reflected your mission goal, to lure us all into a space where we could discover our own voices and communicate our personal beliefs.

Your voices established a platform from which the Eunice voice could travel through a collective medium. The Inter-School Spirit Cup for 2018 is proof that our unity resounded far into the Bloemfontein community. It is your legacy, and for that I thank you tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen. Surround sound creates an all-encompassing listening experience that enhances meaning.

Your support gives meaning to our daily pursuit of excellence.

I would like to thank all stakeholders of our school for contributing to the richness of our repertoire.

Dear parents. You give enhanced meaning to our motto. A study done by the Stanford University of Medicine revealed that a mother's voice is instrumental in helping her children to develop the essential skills needed to thrive in an environment of high expectation.

Thank you for reinforcing our vision and for supporting your daughter in everything she does.

It is because of her self-belief that she is open to all-round guidance that stretches far beyond the confines of your home and our school borders.

Eunice's voice is clearly not only an accumulative vibration, but a melodious composition of the untold promises embedded in our school's traditions and founding ideals: That our daughters be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.

To our partners: our educators, administrative staff members and support staff who ensure that the scene is set for so many distinctive Eunice performances.

Colleagues. Thank you for believing in our brand. Thank you for being intentional in your pursuit of excellence and for extending yourselves beyond the parameters of mere text-book teaching. Eunice cannot uphold her standards without your ability to acknowledge triumph and adversity; and to cater for first generation learners in an ever-changing world.

Allow me also to thank our families (some of them present tonight). We share all our Eunice family experiences with you and you embrace them as your own. Thank you for: keeping us grounded, for motivating us, and for providing the security that gives us confidence to fly.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Our extended family includes a vibrant team of ladies under the leadership of Mrs Alit van Rensburg, who creates a true sense of home at Eunice House. Thank you for always encouraging a positive atmosphere, especially in the things that mean most to our boarders.

Members of the Senior Management Team and Academic Committee:

School management has evolved into a very dynamic, but often unpredictable duty. Thank you for executing your professional purpose in such a personal manner. You enhance our sense of rhythm and set the tone for operational efficiency.

At the heart of this team stands a vigorous duo: my Executive Team: Mr Leon van Rensburg and Mrs Mag Marais. These two exceptional managers keep their focus on the all-encompassing value of education and they always put our school and learners first. They busy themselves with solution-based administration and pursue every goal we set. Thank you, Ma'am, Sir for your unwavering loyalty to me and to our school.

Ladies and gentlemen. Please allow me to honour a key member of our Senior Management team: Dr Don Paine. Sir, I salute you for your exceptional contribution to Eunice Excellence over the past 29 years. You unlock potential on so many levels and bring joy to so many lives.

You only have to look into the eyes of a colleague, resent learner or past learner who reminisces over her fairy tale moments in your presence, to fully comprehend the impact you have made and the gratitude of those whose lives you have touched.

Your 'Hip hip hurray' birthday moments in the staff room are offered to celebrate our staff, but will forever salute your Eunice voice. The Robyn Williams' 'O Captain, my Captain' scene inspired a generation. His students honoured him for his intellect and compassion by standing on their desks while reciting Walt Whitman's homage to Abraham Lincoln.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen... Dr Paine. In lieu of tables on which to stand: Hip – hip... (audience: hurray). You inspire us, Sir.

Ladies and gentlemen. Very few artists flourish without promoters. And very few schools excel without a committed group of official parent representatives. My sincerest gratitude to the members of our Board of Governors for their selfless service to our school community. Your presence at school activities and your focus on effective Governance is highly appreciated.

Mr Adendorff. You have been involved in School Governance for the past 10 years and have led the Eunice Board for the past 2 years. Your attention to detail and your focus on principles of ethical Governance direct the Eunice School Governing Body with distinction. We appreciate your vision for Eunice and your unrelenting passion for education. Thank you for that, Sir.

Dear Mrs Cindy Harris. You have danced with us for the past 8 months. Your energy is contagious and your smile a welcome sight on any given day. Thank you for supporting the High School in everything we do. For understanding where our little ones are heading and for wanting only the best for our young ladies. It is an honour to have you as the Principal of the Primary school and a member of our team.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Your daughter's voice determines the nature of our collective sound. That sound already reverberated beautifully when we awarded 304 certificates and 30 trophies at our 2018 recognition assembly. Tonight 511 ladies will receive awards with 134 of them stemming from achievement on a provincial level, and another 80 on either national or international level. Be inspired when they step on stage tonight.

It symbolises the starting point of the next phase of their colourful journey.

I conclude with the words of Richard Llewellyn, the British author of the aptly entitled book: How Green was my Valley. He wrote:

'Sing, then.

Sing, indeed with shoulders back, and head up so that song might go to the roof and beyond to the sky. Mass on mass of tone, with a hard edge, and rich with quality, every single note a carpet of colour woven from basso profundo, and basso, and baritone, and alto, and tenor, and soprano, and also mezzo, and contralto, singing and singing, until life and all things living become a song.

O, Voice of Man, organ of most lovely might.”

Vincit qui se vincit.

May the voice of Eunice be the most beautiful sound you will ever hear. I thank you.