

DR. CHRIS MULLIS- BOARD WELCOME

Thank you, Dr. Cowlshaw, and good morning to you all.

On behalf of the Providence Day School Board of Trustees, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome families, friends, faculty, and staff to our 2018 Commencement and to add my congratulations to you, the outstanding Class of 2018! As a graduate of Providence Day myself, I also welcome you to the family of Charger Alumni.

Graduates, this is a very special point in space and time for you. As a PDS trained astrophysicist who helps people design their best possible futures, please allow me to share a small piece of advice. Live and thrive in the present, but no matter if you're 18 or you're 68, always make sure your future is bigger than your past.

Although it has been nearly three decades since I walked across this stage to receive my diploma, my pride for and excitement about our school has never been stronger.

One of the great sources of this pride and excitement is you, the Class of 2018. Your successes have been well documented: an array of impressive college destinations; triumphant performances on the athletic fields and dazzling performances on the stage; and of course, sustained daily excellence in the classroom. You are also the class that boasts a U.S. Presidential Scholar and two

Morehead-Cain scholars—that is a trio of awards that is unlikely to be matched by any high school, anywhere.

Despite all of your accolades, Class of 2018, I think you may be remembered for a different reason: as the final senior class to study in the West Wing and the first senior class to leave your mark on the new Academic and Gateway Centers. As a Board, we are proud of the role we have played in the transformation of our campus, not just for the brick and mortar of the buildings themselves, but for the potential they have to transform the academic lives of our students, starting with you, the Great Class of 2018!

A driving force behind the new campus that we now enjoy is today's Commencement speaker, Mrs. Cathy Bessant. As the National Chair for our \$27 million campaign, Cathy led the effort to not only build the Academic Center, DeMayo Gateway Center, and Parking Deck, but also fortify Providence Day's endowment and annual fund, thus insuring our financial health for years to come.

In her "day job," Cathy serves as the Chief Operations and Technology Officer for Bank of America. Cathy is the highest ranking woman at BofA, leading a team of nearly 95,000 professionals in more than 35 countries.

In addition to her stewardship of our Charging Forward campaign, Cathy co-chairs Novant Health's \$60 million campaign for a new heart and cancer treatment center; she has chaired the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and served on the boards at the Foundation for the Carolinas and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Cathy has been awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine by the State of North Carolina, the Distinguished Service Award by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Charlotte Business Journal.

Beyond the Queen City, Cathy serves on the board directors of Zurich Insurance Group and the advisory board for the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. Go Blue! Working at the intersection of technology, business, academia, and government, she recently led the formation of The Council on the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence.

Continuing on the national stage, Cathy is ranked number 1 among American Bankers "Most Powerful Women in Banking", highlighted by OUTstanding as one of the top ten "Leading LGBT+ and Ally Executives" in America, and was recently named among Working Mother Magazine's "50 Most Powerful Working Moms", joining women such as Melinda Gates, Reese Witherspoon, and Beyonce!

As you may know, it's that "Mom" part that really brings Cathy to us today. With husband John, Cathy is the mother of one Providence Day graduate, Meredith Clay from the Class of 2014, and one very soon-to-be graduate, Hayden Clay, from the Class of 2018. Cathy has been an integral part of every aspect of our school. She is incredibly smart, incredibly driven, and incredibly caring. I am so proud to introduce to you, Mrs. Cathy Bessant!