

## HEAD BOY'S PRIZEGIVING SPEECH

I wrote a speech and then a week before I was due to deliver it they said, you've got cancer. They said if you don't get any treatment you'll be dead in three weeks. And they told me that I wouldn't be able to come and deliver this speech here tonight.

But luckily, that speech isn't about what is to come - it's about what an amazing year it has been. And you didn't really expect me to write a whole new one from my hospital bed did you? It started like this:

"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

Bernard of Chartres compared us to dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants. He pointed out that we see more and further than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision, nor greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature and knowledge. Thank you Christchurch Boys' High School for the height you offer.

Tena koutou katoa. Good evening everyone, I am Jakob Ross Bailey - Senior Monitor of 2015.

To all the fine young men who have gone before me, and to the fine young men sitting before me, thank you for supporting me as your Senior Monitor this year. Yes, at times I have wondered whether I deserved this job. At times I have doubted I could get it done to the standard I thought it should be done to. But despite my fear, I have never stopped striving to be a leader who did not let you down. And consequently, I am grateful for what you have given to me in return. I want to share with you all some words which I hold particularly close to heart, words which meant a lot more to me this year than they ever could have before. "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

This job would not have been possible alone, and consequently I must thank a massive team. Firstly, to my deputies, Sam and Jesse. You have been solid and inspirational, strong where I was weak, and an amazing source of support. I always felt you had my back, and that made every day so much better. To the Monitors of 2015, I owe all of you so much. I treasure the connection I have had with each and every one of you. Thank you for accepting me into a group which I could have so easily not been accepted into, for giving me a chance, for the brotherhood that we have had. Maybe the best thing that this role has given me is a connection with you all I wouldn't have had otherwise, and it means more to me than you will ever know. As I said on Monitors Camp, you are all exceptional people of outstanding calibre, each and every one of you will go far, and I have learnt things from all of you.

I must acknowledge the sturdy leadership and support I have received from Mr Hill and the solid guidance received from Mr Fraser, Mr Williams and Mr Dunnett through this year. It has been at the core of how I have conducted myself this year, and at times I would have been very lost without your guidance. You have all taught me much, and I will carry it through life with me. Thank you for the opportunity you gave me, I hope I have done you proud.

I want to acknowledge the support I have received from, and sincerely thank the Old Boys. In particular I thank you Terry Donaldson and Jim Blair for being men of fine character who encouraged me to walk beside you, and I have been honoured to do so. The Old Boys helped me to grasp what 130 years of history means in action. What it means to value tradition, to appreciate our rich history and to comprehend the mark the Old Boys have made on the worlds of the military, the arts and culture, commerce, law, community service and sport. I have been privileged to be supported by these wise men who spoke softly about their accomplishments, and gently of how much we have to learn and to offer - and about the responsibility that comes with that privilege. And these are the words I wrote before they sat beside my hospital bed. Thank you.

Sadly, it has been both a short and long few years but here we are now, ready to move on men. We've worked hard to get to this point but haven't done it by ourselves. As guys we become the type of men we are, not overnight, but as a result of our decisions, the choices we make, and those who surround and support us. And it is those people we need to thank.

To our teachers, thank you for sharing your talent and knowledge, and the occasional movie. What you did for us often went beyond the call of duty. You took the time to explain assignments, repeatedly because we weren't paying attention. You allowed us to come to you for extra help when you could have chosen not to. You put in effort to make lessons more interesting so we wouldn't just tune out. You demanded excellence from us whether or not we wanted to give it. And even to a bunch of teenage boys, it didn't go unnoticed.

To our parents, thank you for supporting us in more ways than it's easy to reconcile. Not just this year passed, but for the last 13 years of school. Every day you dragged us out of bed, made sure we were semi-fed and clothed for school, herded us out the door. You helped us with homework, paid our class fees. You came to our various events, attended our sports matches and worked with the school as required. You commiserated over our daily dramas and were there for us, but you also gave us enough space to become the men we are today.

To those sport coaches who provided us with strong counsel and guidance, thank you for making school about more than just classwork. Through our sports, we've learned how to power on through adversity and give it our best effort, win or lose. We learned the importance of discipline and good sportsmanship, and how to work closely with others to achieve a common goal - and had a lot of fun doing it.

As you heard earlier, my middle name is Ross. I was given it not long before I was born because my 'great' uncle, Ross, drowned in Sri Lanka. Mr Ross Bailey was a Christchurch based kidney transplant surgeon working for the Asian Commission for the Global Advancement of Nephrology. He was known for making a serious difference to an extraordinary number of people's lives back when organ transplants were an amazing feat, and all humility aside, was

the best in the world at it - a true pioneer, the first person to perform a kidney transplant in New Zealand. He was also an Old Boy of Christchurch Boys' High. He came from a working class background, the only one of his siblings to go to university and he went on to save numerous lives because, well, he could. Because he sought higher things. His funeral saw the Cathedral in the Square bursting at the seams with people he had helped. He had done so much in his short years giving life to the dying. He dared to make a difference. A graduate of CBHS, from a working class background putting *Altiora Peto* into action.

Now we can't all save lives by transplanting organs. But we can make a difference in our own way.

Christchurch Boys' High supports academic, cultural and sporting success, and as a school we are exceptional in each and every one of those fields. But we can't all be the best scholar achieving straight excellences or the best sportsman in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV, believe me. While we can't be the best at everything or even at times, even anything, what we can choose is to have moral strength. Moral strength is another of the Boy's High values. I wrote about this before I knew I had cancer. Now I have a whole new spin on it.

Moral strength is about making a conscious decision to be a person who doesn't give up, when it would be easy to. To be lesser because the journey is less arduous. Jim Rohn said 'Let others lead small lives, but not you. Let others argue over small things, but not you. Let others cry over small hurts, but not you. Let others leave their future in someone else's hands, but not you. Of course doing this will mean at some point we may have to face our fear of falling short. Fear of looking like a fool. Fear of not being enough. Being Senior Monitor meant facing these fears, most often daily'.

But none of us get out of life alive so be gallant, be great, be gracious, be grateful for the opportunities you have. The opportunity to learn from the men who have walked before you and those that walk beside you.

CBHS, I have been absent for 3 weeks – could you please stop sending my mother texts asking if she knows where I am every morning. That aside, I have missed you all. For the last 5 years I have been proud to be a student who attended Christchurch Boys' High School. And from today onwards for the rest of my life, I will be a proud Old Boy, giving back to those before me, as they have given to me.

My challenge to each of you, and to myself, is to continue to grow, to develop for the better. The future is truly in our hands. Forget about having long-term dreams. Let's be passionately dedicated to the pursuit of short-term goals. Micro-ambitious. Work with pride on what is in front of us. We don't know where we might end up. Or when it might end up.

Some of us will not cross paths again. Some of us will likely be seen on TV. Others in print. Some of us will also probably end up in prison. I have thoroughly enjoyed growing up with you all. It has been an honour and delight to share these years with you. I know that as I look out at all of you, I will measure my time here in the friendships I've enjoyed in these last years. Some were pretty casual and others were much closer but I'll remember each one fondly, as I'm sure you all will too. And when many of our high school memories begin to fade, that's ultimately how we may measure the time we spent here, not in the classes, or the lunchtimes,

or the exam results or years, but in the friendships that we made and the times we shared together.

And so here we stand. Our rule is over and it's up to the next class to step into our shoes and take over. I hope that those of you who follow will carry on a proud legacy. May the lads that follow benefit from the school's work to replicate the hall and the community spirit that undeniably comes from sitting together, as one, strength and character of this mighty institution combined.

I don't know where it goes from here for any of us - for you, for anyone, and as sure as hell not for me. But I wish you the very best in your journey, and thank you for all being part of mine. Wherever we go and whatever we do, may we always be friends when we meet again.

Altiora Peto lads