



thank-yous. I couldn't have done it without you. To my teachers at Springbrook who were so understanding of my constant absences and so supportive of my efforts, thank you. To my friends who came through time and again, thank you for the pep talks, the hours of listening, and for just being the special people that you are. To my parents for standing behind me, for taking phone messages, for keeping the gas tank full, for plain putting up with me, thank you. To Pete, who has throughout my very short transition period given me sound advice as well as warnings, thank you. I would also add that tonight's program is a very novel one. The first time in three and a half years I can remember your ever following me.

"To everyone who has welcomed me to the Board of Education, thank you. I look forward to working with all of you. I mentioned the trials and tribulations of the campaign trail. For visiting just over half of the Montgomery County secondary schools since February, however, I learned much about the workings of our system, the diversity of student concerns, and the expectations MCPS students have of their student Board member. They expect much, and I will make every possible effort to address the needs and concerns of the 49,000 students whom I represent. Their probing questions, impressive awareness, as well as the genuine seriousness with which most approach the direct election have won my respect. I feel honored to have their faith and will never esteem my position lightly. One more word about the direct election process and then a brief look ahead. I was elected by a very large turnout of voters. Sixty-one percent of all eligible students cast a ballot on May 30. Every year we increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the direct election process in existence since 1982. This year much was made of specific instances in which election regulations were ignored. You should realize that in the past no regulations existed to be ignored. With the continued and staunch support of the Board of Education and the school community in future years, our election process, the only one of its kind in the country, will become one of which we can all be unequivocally proud.

"Now seems the appropriate time to announce that I am jumping right into my responsibilities as a Board member, but in three days I will board a plane heading for Tokyo and pass the better part of the summer as an exchange student under the auspices of the Japan/U.S. Senate Scholarship Program. Perhaps I will study the Japanese educational system. I know I will return with renewed energy and a fresh perspective in August.

"My hopes for next year are to improve communication with students, to explore several specific issues in depth, in addition to keeping up with all Board of Education issues ranging from negotiations to bids for contracts on tomato soup. Although I have discussed little else this past semester, I must at least mention issues of great concern to students and of great interest to me: peer counseling, improved channels for staff evaluation, equity from school to school in policy implementation, to name just a few. You will hear more from me on these topics as the year progresses. Now with attention focused at the national, state, and local level on excellence in

education, I consider the Board table an exciting, privileged place to work. As we ask fundamental questions about our schools, I hope to insure that the student viewpoint is considered as we formulate answers. Thank you for coming tonight, and I appreciate all of your support."

Re: Presentation of Certificate to  
Outgoing Board Member

On behalf of the members of the Board, staff, students, and citizens of Montgomery County, Dr. Cody presented Mr. Robertson with a certificate of appreciation for his year on the Board of Education.

Re: Remarks by Outgoing Board Member

Mr. Robertson read the following into the record:

"I can't say I am unhappy to be here tonight. Tonight marks the end save for, as you mentioned, one more meeting and another two after that. Tonight marks the end of a year of my life characterized by too much sitting, far too much paper, and too little sleep. But I do have two regrets. The first centers on my year of service to the students of Montgomery County. A recent statement in the Washington Post that I have spoken out less effectively than my predecessors doesn't concern me so much, though it is true. I simply haven't needed to be as vocal about student concerns because the rest of this Board usually shares them. This Board of Education has allowed the student Board member to drop a defensive posture and to be an equal. I have rarely disagreed with the majority of the Board and have often chosen not to chime in simply for the sake of chiming in. For that I thank all of you.

"My regret is that I did not take full advantage of my position, different I think than that of my predecessors, to be a staunch advocate of students. Students are less confident about self advocacy than are parents and teachers and other members of the MCPS community, who are always self confident about self advocacy. Too often student rights are trampled by insensitive people with authority who are either ignorant or defiant of applicable policy, regulations, or laws. Too often students are intimidated by the system and unwilling to begin a grievance procedure. A truth exemplified by the fact that only 2 percent of the appeals that reach the Board ombudsman are from students. Don't get me wrong. I don't think there is a crisis in the school system. Far from it. We have an excellent school system and excellent people in it. But in my 11 years in this system as a student, in MCR, and on the Board, I have occasionally encountered an attitude of 'students should be seen and not heard.' I think that is an unfortunate attitude because I firmly believe that students have a lot to offer in the school system with help and input in the policy making that the Board does and also cooperation in the classroom. Respect begets respect.

"This Board of Education has done a superb job in mending fences with

most elements of the community, particularly with students, and it has been a true privilege to be a part of that. But the belief in equity and fair play that I believe these seven Board members and Dr. Cody share with me needs to be spread constantly throughout the system through committed word and deed. Having worked a long time with Jacquie, I know she understands this, and I know she has the ability to be a superb advocate of student rights and view- points, an ability she has already demonstrated in MCR. My only advice to her is while it might make more sense to keep a low profile when you have no axes to grind - and you seldom will with this Board, it is an unfortunate fact that you owe it to your constituents to be more outspoken than I have been.

"My other regret is more upbeat though a bit perverse. I think I actually regret leaving. This year has been a tremendous learning experience for me, easily worth the school year that I, for all intents and purposes, have missed. It has also been truly enjoyable and at times downright fun. For that I owe a great deal more than I can ever repay to a tremendous number of people. That might sound like a lot of hyperbole but it is more like an understatement. Thank you to all the Board members, Dr. Cody, Dr. Pitt, Dr. Shaffner, and Mrs. Wood, for your friendship and respect at the Board table and away from it

"Thank you to Ann, David, Lillian, and Midge for all your help and for being so kind when I walked into the office not really sure who I was and certainly not very clear as to why I was there on that particular day.

"Thank you to Tom Fess for being my friend and confident and tour guide in those exotic places like Frederick and Gettysburg, to name a few.

"Thank you to all the staff in MCPS who have helped me and who are some of the most caring and competent professionals I have ever known in my short life. MCPS is very lucky to have all of you, and I certainly could not have made it through this year without your help.

"Thank you to Mike Michaelson, MCR, and MCJC for constant and undemanding support.

"Thank you to the principal and all the teachers at my school for their understanding when I wasn't there and for remembering who I was when I came back.

"Thank you to all of my friends for keeping me sane.

"And, finally, thank you, Mom and Dad, for your constant understanding and for not making me cut the lawn this year.

"Jacquie, I commend you some of the finest people I have ever known but I pity you for the work you face. Best of luck though you probably don't need it."

Re: Remarks by Board Members

Dr. Shoenberg, Mr. Ewing, Mrs. Peyser, and Mrs. Praisner extended words of welcome to Miss DUBY and thanked Mr. Robertson for his service on the Board of Education.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 8:40 and invited members of the audience to a reception for Miss DUBY and Mr. Robertson.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw