

working with them, too, in the coming year. And finally Kurt, whose enormous shoes, and I mean that literally as well, whose enormous shoes I have to fill, I want to thank you for showing me the ropes. He has done a tremendous job establishing the significance of a directly elected student Board member, and I hope I am a credit to him.

As I said, this is also a good-bye speech. I sent an open letter to all secondary schools during the campaign informing students that if I am elected I would miss the first 55 days of my term. Indeed, I leave for Japan tomorrow afternoon, and I will not return until August 23. However, I have made arrangements with MCR, the county student government organization, to insure that students are present at every regular Board meeting, and I will keep abreast of developments during my absence. I do not expect my trip to Japan will adversely affect my ability to serve as an effective Board member at all. In fact, I think that the broadened perspectives I will bring home from Japan at the end of the summer will make me more effective.

I look forward to a challenging, interesting, and hopefully productive year as a Board member when I return. The time-consuming superintendent search is over, and the bulk of the school-closing issues appear to be behind us. Public attention, and unfortunately political rhetoric, too, promises to be focused on public education throughout 1984. Finally the new superintendent and the Board have shown an interest in the broader questions of public education and its role in Montgomery County. All in all, we certainly seem to be poised to take a far-reaching look at the very fundamentals that guide our school system. Even the routine issues like budget and collective bargaining promise to take on new meaning in the coming year. The Board will need courage and vision to chart the future course of our school system. I am honored to be a part of this process and hope I can rise to the challenge. I will certainly try. I will have another challenge to face as a school board member. I face the challenge of adequately representing my 50,000 constituents. This is especially important because student issues are no longer the simple cut and dried issues they once were. Students no longer need to fight for basic rights or against dress codes. Instead they must seek the optimum allocation of what are increasingly limited resources to ensure that they are receiving the best education they possibly can. Students no longer have the luxury of taking simple stands on what are essentially moral issues. Instead they are forced to make value judgments about what is important to them and what is not. The existence of a student on the Board of Education is vital to aid students in that process. I take on this position with the full awareness of its importance, and I dedicate myself to the dual tasks of soliciting student views and concerns and representing them effectively at the Board table.

Re: Presentation of Certificate of
Appreciation to Retiring Member

On behalf of the members of the Board of Education and the staff of

the school system, Mr. Ewing and Dr. Andrews presented a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Hirsch.

Re: Statement by Retiring Member

Mr. Hirsch read the following statement:

I don't think I'm going to surprise anybody here when I tell you that the tone of this statement is going to be a little markedly different than the statements of my four predecessors. My term, obviously, has been a unique one; marked not as much by sharp disagreement between the student member and the Board majority, but more by an overriding sense of *deja vu* and schizophrenia. Not one issue, except possibly the awarding of the tuna fish supplier contract, during my term came to the Board just once. Weighted grades, facilities decisions, health education, smoking areas, like proverbial cats, would die and then come back to haunt me. Again. And again. And again. Granted, I think the current Board majority has made its share of bad decisions. The difference, however, from my point of view, is that those decisions are made out front with the students' best interests as the foremost factors. Gone is most of the divisiveness and game-playing that derailed us as a Board for several years, in my opinion.

It is my belief that this point in MCPS history is going to mark a crossroads. The Board is really left with an open agenda. The prospect of the Board actually being able to discuss education and not buildings or budgets or buses is a very exciting one to me. To do this effectively, though, you'll have to put aside politics, personalities, egos, and for god-sakes filibustering. This Board, working as one, could do great things for our students. They're counting on you to do it.

I want to state outright that I hope nothing that I say here tonight comes across as bitter or resentful or unhappy about my having served. For some perverse reason, I have enjoyed my full year of service on the Board. While I could have done without facilities decisions and other controversial topics, the year has been a fascinating and incredible learning one for me. When I started my term, Mr. Ewing wished that I may "live in interesting times." This curse has lived with me throughout my term, and good times, bad times, or indifferent times, it has been interesting. A few special thank-yous that I want to make tonight.

To Jon and Traci and Jon and David, thank you for laying such an excellent foundation for me. It is thanks to you guys that the student seat has worked, and someday it will be thanks to your legacies that these folks finally decide to give us a vote.

To Ann, Lillian, Midge, Mary Lou, and Larry, thank you for helping me, understanding me when I had no idea of what I was talking about, and guiding me through a maze of Board policies.

To my Dutch-uncles, Tom Fess and Mike Michaelson, thank you for your

wisdom, support, perspective, warnings, humor, and unsolicited advice. While my foot occasionally did find its way into my mouth, you did, many times, save me from expensive dental work.

To the many MCPS staff members I have worked with, thanks for your expertise and your endless patience when dealing with my silly questions.

To my family, thanks for putting up with me, loving me, advising me, and living with what must have seemed like eight Board members for the past year. By the way, I actually may be home for a complete dinner tomorrow night.

Probably, most importantly, thanks to my friends for getting me here, for not listening to stories about the Board, and for reminding me that seventeen years old is too young to start acting middle aged.

I have no words of wisdom or advice or deep messages to give you in my leaving. I do have an observation that I may or may not subscribe to. It is one that Mark Twain once wrote. He said that in the beginning God made fools. That was only for practice. Then he made school boards. Well, I don't think my leaving the Board will stop me from being a fool in the future, but I have enjoyed being foolish with you guys over the past year, and I thank you.

There is one more thing I wanted to say. I am not the only person who is lucky enough to be saying goodbye to you tonight. As you know, Superintendent Andrews and I will be riding off into the sunset on his motorcycle together on July 1. One of the best parts of working with the Board over the past year has been dealing with Dr. Andrews. Obviously, I do not always find myself agreeing with him, but despite disagreements, my respect and admiration for him is always endless. There is no doubt that the bottom line with Dr. Andrews is always the welfare of the students and that is admirable. In the course of one's youth there are always a few adults that one chooses as role models. Dr. Andrews' integrity, perspective, kindness, and sense of humor are models that I will always keep throughout my life. It is my pleasure now to do a little turning of the tables, and on behalf of the Montgomery County Board of Education to present Dr. Andrews with a certificate of appreciation.

Re: Statements by Board Members and
Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Peyser congratulated both Kurt and Pete. She said she had enjoyed knowing Kurt and working with him this year. She said they had disagreed on occasions but throughout it all she thought there had been a real friendliness and a real openness which was something she valued. She said she had been fortunate, in fact, to have worked with three outstanding student Board members, and she was looking forward to this year with Pete. She wished Kurt luck in college, and she said that from everything she had seen from Pete

she knew he would represent the students very well.

Dr. Cronin stated that it had been a great six months working with Kurt. His grace, warmth, and humor had been very sustaining. He said that Kurt among the other student Board members definitely deserved a vote and was a credit to the students of Montgomery County and, most especially, a credit to his parents. He thanked them for lending Kurt to the Board and Pete's parents for lending him to the Board. He felt that Kurt was very well prepared for college. He said that Pete had a very tall order to live up to because the past Board members, especially Kurt, could be awesome. He said that he knew Pete had the qualities in him which could lead him to be equal to these people.

Dr. Shoenberg said he would like to thank Kurt for a number of things. One thing was having been an outstanding roommate through a couple of conventions. He commented that he had read that Brown University led the nation in accepting the smallest percentage of its applicants. Two out of 19 were accepted which surely argued their good judgment in having found Kurt. He said that Kurt had had the remarkable good sense to pick the spots when he spoke, and when he spoke to speak beautifully and precisely to the point. He hoped that Pete would pick up some ideas in Japan. He hoped that Pete would bring back the ability to find some quiet and inner peace for which Japanese were well known.

Mr. Ewing read statements from Mrs. Shannon and Mrs. Praisner. They both congratulated Kurt on his term and gave welcome to Pete. Mr. Ewing explained that they had subjected Kurt to something that most student Board members had not really had to go through. This was a repetition of issues and a fairly substantial change in colleagues. He would leave it to Kurt and to history to decide whether that was an improvement or not. This did confront Kurt with the necessity of getting to know two very distinct and unique sets of colleagues. He thought that Kurt had dealt with all of the confusion that attended some of the changes in a remarkably adult kind of way. He said his only concern about Kurt was would the world be full of challenges that would be so easily met that he would not have any challenges to meet in the future. He was sure that the answer was no, but it was a nice thing to have to worry about. He thought Kurt had done a fine job, and it had been a great pleasure to serve with him. He noted that the student Board member had had to deal with a Board that was intransigent about the student vote. The student Board member had to get along with the rest of the members and still represent the students. He was sure that Pete would be able to both represent the students and continue to "bug" the Board about the student vote. He thought Pete was one who understood well how to cope with differences of view and deal with complexity. He thanked Kurt and Pete for the contributions they had made already and all the other student Board members for the outstanding job they had done over the years.

Dr. Andrews reported that he was the one and only superintendent who could say he had the privilege of working with all the student Board

members in existence up to this point. He said it was a very pleasant evening for him. He had no doubt that Pete would continue in this tradition of superior student representation. He said that Pete was extremely able, and he was just as nice as he was able. He commented that when he heard people like Kurt say what they said it was important to say whatever opportunity he might have had to influence student members on this Board he learned far more than he ever taught. He had learned to keep his ideals in the forefront, and he learned to try to be as nice as he could in dealing with all kinds of people. He said that they were indeed blessed in Montgomery County by knowing these young people. He said it had been a rare privilege with Kurt because he had been a rare person.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 9 p.m.

President

Secretary

EA:mlw

