



**Abigail Lusco
(Valedictorian)**

Parents, teachers, administrators, friends, and the graduating class of 2021: good morning. It is an honor to have received this opportunity to express my gratitude and reflect upon the experiences of our last four years together. Although our senior year was anything but ordinary, we still managed to make it through and we now get to embrace this day which is truly ours. We made it.

Looking out at my class at this moment, I am reminded of a quote from Andy Bernard: "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days, before you've actually left them." This quote from many of our favorite television shows, *The Office*, seems quite fitting for our class's current situation. Four years ago, as freshmen, we couldn't wait to be seniors. We couldn't wait to dress up with our friends for Homecoming week, to cheer each other on in the student section, to dance at the senior Prom, to go on our senior camping trip, and so much more. We were even excited to have lockers in the senior hallway and be able to skip to the front of the lunch line without getting in trouble. Now as we're here receiving what we have spent so much time working for, all I want is to go back and tell my younger self to just slow down; enjoy the time you have with your friends now and stop longing to skip past these four years. You might just miss out on experiences and memories to be made with these wonderful people around you. You might miss out on these opportunities to have fun

before the stress of being an upperclassman sets in; before you have actual responsibilities as a student; before you have a new scholarship due

every other week; and before you have to start deciding what the heck you're going to do with your life. Our beginning years of high school offer so many chances to grow and find out who we truly are, although I believe we're all still doing this today, and I think most of us were so anxious to get out of here that we forgot to take those chances.

So many of my favorite moments happened within the halls of Grant Union, surrounded by my fellow classmates. I remember mornings spent huddled around lockers, trying to socialize before the bell rang for first period. I remember constantly complaining about how many reading points we had (or didn't have) as we rushed to find Sparknotes for books that we procrastinated even starting. I remember frantically studying for Mr.

Lusco's unit tests the period before we had to take them, comparing scores right after to see who did the worst (it was usually Parker), and never quite learning that it would take real effort to pass. Although we dreaded some of these moments, they bonded us together and gave us experiences to share. They helped us develop skills that we didn't even know we would need at the time. I will also remember the more fun times like jamming out

to Ms. Dougharity's old people music during class, celebrating victories with teammates, participating in Spirit Week, and always annoying Mr. Lusco during his lunch break. I will always remember the bouts of laughter and abundance of inside jokes that our class has compiled over the years. I will never forget the feeling of getting dressed up to go to my first high school dance, the rush of playing my first varsity game, or the excitement of knowing you only have one day of school left.

While reflecting on these memories, I can't help but kick myself for not cherishing these moments sooner. Because this year, everything we looked forward to doing had to be done six feet apart, with a mask on, or not at all. I believe we take our high school years for granted; I know I did. We spent years looking forward to being seniors and all the excitement that comes with it, but now our year has come and gone without all this fun we were promised. This is not to instill pity or to say that our administrators didn't do all they could to make this year as normal as possible; truthfully, we were quite fortunate to be able to attend school at all. I tell you this to encourage you all to live in the moment and not take this life for granted. know it sounds cliché, but you never know what changes are coming or what you could be missing out on if you're constantly looking to surpass time. So learn from our mistake; recognize that these are the moments you will long to relive years in the future. Make the most of this time you have now with the people you love. After all, you never know when a global pandemic will come and turn your life upside down.

There are so many people that have impacted me during my time at Grant Union. I'd like to thank my friends and family for supporting me and always encouraging me to achieve my goals. You have pushed me to be a better person, and I am grateful. Thank you to Mr. Gerry and our other leadership who did their best to make this year better. I'd like to thank my teachers, Mr. Miller, Ms. Dougharity, and Mrs. Behrens for their effort in making me a better student. Thank you Ms. Shelton and Mrs. Wright for all that you've done for our class. Thank you Devon Stokes, for constantly pushing me to be the best version of myself. I'd like to express my gratitude to our wonderful little community for their constant support during

this odd year. Finally, thank you to my fellow classmates for these years that have allowed me to grow and develop as a student and person. I cannot wait to see the directions we all go, and the paths we choose. Now is our time to show the world what we are capable of, and the influence we can have. Congratulations to the graduating class of 2021!



Noah Blood



Quaid Brandon



Sophie Brockway



Bladen Burril



Kristin Cantrell



Levi Carpenter



Will Carpenter



Chloe Churchheus



Trevyn Coalwell



Kenna Combs



Leah Comer



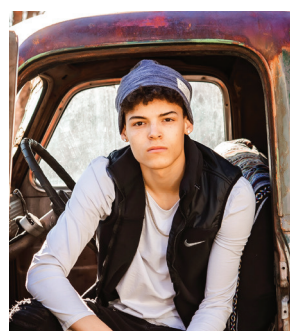
Michael Dille



Roger Gearhart



Christian Glimpse



Jordan Hall