

HEADMASTER'S ADDRESS : SPEECH NIGHT 2011

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen and Boys, welcome to the annual Grade 12 Speech Night. I would like to welcome tonight's Guest-of-Honour, Dr Max Price, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. I trust, sir, that your visit to our school will strengthen the good relationship between our institutions. My compliments are also due to those learners whose achievements will be recognised this evening.

Several initiatives are currently underway in national and provincial education. The most significant is the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which provides for modifications to the curriculum. Several extensions to the conditions of service and responsibilities of school leaders are envisaged for next year.

As usual capital projects have taken place or will occur at the school this year. A new Mathematics Room to commemorate Mr "Tickey" de Jager, legendary master at Rondebosch, was opened in March. The garden in remembrance of another legend, Prof I de V Heyns, is to be opened later this term. For both these projects we are indebted to members of the Old Boys' Union for their financial generosity. Negotiations and efforts to establish our own Astroturf for Hockey are still underway.

The results achieved by last year's matrics in the National Senior Certificate Examinations were once again a source of pride to us. For the third successive year the pass-rate was 100%. An endorsement figure of close to 93% was gained. The class of 2010 achieved a record number of Subject Distinctions, 414, and the school was again placed in the top ten schools in the Western Cape for Senior Certificate results. Our best candidate, Daron Golden, was placed ninth on the Western Cape ranking list.

In the course of 2011 Academic performance has continued to be the main priority. RBHS achieved very good results in the National Life Sciences Olympiad ; earned second place in the provincial Minquiz Competition ; and came overall second in the annual UCT Maths Competition.

Ashraf Moolla has been a shining light in scholastic competitions. He has again been selected as one of six to represent South Africa in the International Maths Olympiad. In addition, Ashraf was awarded a Bronze Medal in the National Computer Olympiad and, together with two other Rondebosch pupils, was placed in the top 100 of the National English Olympiad.

The Cultural life of the school remains strong, with recognition afforded to the school in a number of pursuits. In Debating the Senior Team won the Western Cape Provincial Tournament, from which four of our participants were included in provincial teams.

It has been a remarkable year for the Musicians. Our String Orchestra was awarded the prize for Best Senior Orchestra in the Cape Town Eisteddfod. The choral event, “A Mass for Peace”, in which Rondebosch participated along with RGHS and SACS, was well-supported and widely acclaimed. At the Grahamstown Festival seven of our musicians were selected for the Standard Bank National Schools Big Band.

A high number of learners have participated in the varied sports programme that is offered. In the summer term the Cricket teams proved their strength, producing good results. The term ended on a high note with all fourteen teams defeating Bishops. No fewer than fourteen players at all levels have been chosen for Western Province teams for year-end competitions. The school’s Waterpolo is a force with which to be reckoned and good results have been recorded by most teams. The First Team again won most of its matches and reached the quarter-finals of the SACS Tournament at the resumption of the summer season in October.

The swimmers once again won the “A” Gala trophy. In addition to several Western Province selections one boy was chosen for the SA team for the Commonwealth Youth Games. Tennis and increasingly Rowing are respected opponents at a high level. Our recently regained depth in Athletics was evident in the Triangular contest where we triumphed in all four relay events.

Numbers involved in winter sports activities are very pleasing. I am heartened by the pride the boys show in their teams and their sports. The Hockey 1st XI scored some significant victories this year. The Under 16A Team, however, was the team of the season. This team was unbeaten in league matches and also the knockout tournaments. Two of its members were selected for the SA Schools’ team for U16s.

Rugby enjoyed a successful season with there being much talent on display in the junior levels. The First XV did well. The team won five of its six games against the Southern Suburbs boys’ schools and all its matches at the Cape Schools’ Week.

For the second year running the First Squash Team was the runner-up in the National Schools’ Final. As has become the custom in recent years, a short Soccer season took place at Rondebosch over the last five weeks of the third term. Many boys approached the game with enthusiasm and both senior and junior teams acquitted themselves well in matches and tournaments.

The school has undertaken out-reach and service projects on a fairly wide scale this year. The Interact Club, under the jurisdiction of Rotary, has had another good year of community involvement. They have upheld the tenet that is more fulfilling to serve others than themselves.

Leadership receives much attention here too. I would like to pay tribute to the School, the Boarding House and other House leaders, as well as those who have taken roles of leadership in other pursuits.

Excellent work has been done by the school's staff over the past year. My thanks go to them for their loyalty to RBHS.

We are grateful to Mr Ryan, Headmaster of RBPS, for the co-operation and assistance that he and his staff give our school in many ways.

In a year in which a great deal has happened and important decisions have been made, I acknowledge the outstanding input given by Mr Dale Smith and the Board of Governors. We are fortunate to have the calibre of governance and support that they so willingly give.

With the level of performance exceptional and enrolment next year at a maximum, I am confident that, as stated in our Mission Statement, RBHS "will continue the legacy of excellence" and maintain its position as one of the great schools in South Africa.

M BARKER

13 October 2011

Hmspeechnight11