

Endings

Dennis L. Calkins
Head of the Upper School

As I reflect upon my career as an educator in the far east for a number of years, one of my most vivid memories is the importance of beginnings and endings in the Japanese educational system. In Japan, the beginnings and endings of every school year are marked by ceremony and celebration. Much of the ceremony is steeped in tradition and seldom varies from year to year. Although we are perhaps less tied to such long-standing ceremony and tradition in this country, it is my belief that how we begin and how we end in the Upper School are the two most important milestones in the school year.

As we approach another ending, I am once again reminded that how we end the school year is affected not only by the work of those who are appointed to be in charge, but also by those for whom the ending is being planned. How our seniors approach the end of their careers at Holland Hall plays a crucial role in the entire life of the school at this time of year. The class of 2010, I am pleased to report, is in the process of helping to create an ending that will leave all of us with positive memories about this fine group of students.

As I write these words, only eight school days remain for the senior class. We can all be sure that every member of the class of 2010 is experiencing mixed emotions at this time of year.

Is it “I am so sad to leave” or is it “I can’t wait to be out of here”?

Is it “I’m not sure I’m ready to leave the safety and security I have known all my life” or is it “I am so ready for some independence and to be more in charge of my life”?

Is it “I feel so connected to this place”? or is it “My case of senioritis is about to kill me”?

If our seniors were honest, I think each one of them would say that all of the above are true to some extent.

My sense of pride in the class of 2010 at this time of year stems from the fact that so many of these students remain connected to the school in meaningful and important ways. From leadership on athletic teams to meaningful involvement in the fine arts, from important and unique community service activities to continued positive contributions in the classroom, from their enthusiasm and positive outlook to their willingness to continue to follow the rules – our seniors have set an example I hope has been noticed and will be followed by the other students in the Upper School.