

tell your STORY

At the Passing of the Legacy Ceremony Aug. 15, senior class president Gabby Ayala delivered a speech reflecting on her past four years, and welcoming the freshmen starting theirs.

As students piled into the auditorium for the annual Passing of the Legacy Ceremony Aug. 15, sophomores and juniors chatted away with friends they had not seen since finals, while the seniors looked up at the nervous freshmen, trying to decide if they looked that small just three years ago. Senior class president, Gabby Ayala, felt just as nervous as the freshmen, but ready to deliver the speech she had spent her summer writing.

"In my mind I was thinking, 'Oh my God, I'm in front of the entire school, what's going on?'" Ayala said. "And it was a thing where I was talking, but I didn't feel like I was talking, just extremely nervous... and I just ended up shaking a lot."

Despite her nervousness, Ayala was confident in her speech after weeks of preparing it.

"I spent a good three weeks on that speech," Ayala said. "During the summer, I got into a writer's block, I'd just sit at my computer, and I couldn't think of anything, but then I'd wake up in the middle of the night, have an idea, and then I'd start writing it, and that's when I got my best paragraphs actually, not from sitting down and writing it, I had to have a moment."

President Nan Bone explained that oftentimes, confidence is one of the most important parts of the speech.

"I always save the speeches, they are so powerful," Bone explained. "What I say (to the senior class presidents) is just tell your story, say what you were

like when you started as a freshmen, scared to death, because, you know, 64 zip codes come in all together, and you might be from a class like Visitation or St. Peter's, or you could be somebody that's all by yourself coming in. (So) just tell your story."

Ayala agreed that the speech was an important part of the ceremony, saying that she remembered the speech alumna Bailey Whitehead had given her freshmen year, and it inspired her.

"This is cheesy," Ayala laughed. "On the first day of freshmen year, when I was hearing the president's speech, I was like 'I want to do that. That's something I want to do.'"

For Ayala, welcoming the freshmen brought back memories to her own freshmen year.

"I would say (to myself) it's okay not to like high school," Ayala said. "It's okay not to like your freshman year. Because you want to like it, I wanted to, because my mom went to an all-girl's high school and she loved it, and all my sisters loved it."

"It's gonna take time to fit in, it's gonna take time to find where you belong. Like I said in my speech, I regret days that I was unhappy, that where I was doubting who I was and where I was meant to be."

As Ayala finished her speech, she looked back at the rest of the school, knowing that though the ceremony finished, the freshmen's story was just beginning.

FOUR YEARS LATER

Senior Ellie Meysenburg and Freshmen Carmella Bailey talked about the difference between experiencing the Passing of the Legacy Ceremony as a freshmen and as a senior.

"I was nervous that they were going to call us up one-by-one," freshman Carmella Bailey said. "But it meant a lot that seniors welcomed you, everyone welcomes you here. I felt like there was always someone to talk to here. Once it happened, I felt comfortable. I wasn't scared to go up there."

"I was feeling sad because I feel like you wait for that for a really long time, and it seems like it's a lot further away than it is, and then it just happens so fast, and now it's over. I want to tell (the freshmen) to cherish the moment when they have it," Meysenburg explained. "Because there's going to be a lot of great moments, and things that happen, and it'll be over before you know it."



background photo. WELCOME Senior Anna Moore hugs a freshman receiving her St. Teresa of Avila pennant and welcome letter. photo by zoe willard
A. OLD FRIENDS Seniors Lily Levi, left, and Alex Davis sway to "Lean On Me." The song is played at the end of the Passing of the Legacy Ceremony every year. photo by maura graham
B. PRESIDENT'S WELCOME STA president Nan Bone addresses the student body on the first day of school. Bone is one of many faculty and student speakers at the Passing of the Legacy Ceremony. photo by maura graham
C. HUG IT OUT Freshman Audrey Didier hugs senior Mara Cressey at the Passing of the Legacy Ceremony Aug. 15. photo by emma boxx