

JUNIOR PRIZE-GIVING 2025
SPEECH – TYRONE BRIGHT (CLASS OF 2014)

It is an incredible honour to stand before you tonight, not just as a guest speaker but as someone who once sat in this very hall for five years. I know exactly how you feel—some of you are excited, some are nervous, and some are wondering how long I am going to ramble on for - I promise not for long. Studies show that the attention span of a human declines around 10 - 15 minutes. I will try to do my speech in half that.

Tonight, we celebrate the achievements of those who have excelled, and to them, I want to give you a huge congratulations—your hard work, discipline and dedication have brought you here. And while you might not want to admit it, even a bit of luck.

Luck plays a more significant role in success than people give it credit for. It was luck that played into Bill Gates hands when he attended a school that one of the first computers in the US. It was luck when Ray Kroc stopped at that fast food outlet to buy a McDonalds burger from the McDonald brothers. And they both took the opportunity given to them and used it to its full potential.

Now, to those students who didn't win an award tonight, who feel like they are just "everyday students."

I was you.

Success is not just for the top sports stars or the students with straight A's. Success is for those who are disciplined, passionate, who push through challenges, and for those who believe in their own potential. But be careful, Bill Gates once said that success is a lousy teacher, as it seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose. The quote is perfect because there are countless stories, just like when:

James Dyson took 15 years, all his savings and the 5 127th prototype to research success

Ray Kroc took 3 years and near bankruptcy to figure out the secret formula of the McDonald's chain

Micheal Jordan was deemed too short for his varsity basketball team since he was two short - and then went on to win 6 NBA championships, get the most lucrative Nike deal ever and become the first NBA billionaire.

You need to learn to fail; you need to feel what it is like and how you feel. That will drive you not to fail again and this process will teach you how to succeed. Life does not ask if you were the best in high school; life asks how hard you are willing to work, how well you adapt, and how determined you are to keep moving forward.

South Africa and the world need bright minds, innovative thinkers, and problem solvers. Your education is the foundation for the impact you will make. The future of our country doesn't just rest in the hands of a few—it rests in all of us. The world is

filled with opportunities, just like the ones presented to Ray Krok and Bill Gates, and they belong to those who chase them.

So, I challenge you: Invest in your education. Not just for good marks but for the skills, the knowledge, and the ability to shape your own future. Ask questions, be curious, take risks, and most importantly—believe in yourself. The world is fast changing, and the opportunities out there are endless. You don't have to be the best student today, but you do have to be a student who is willing to grow, to improve, and never to give up.

The only limits you have are the ones you set for yourself. Break through them. Dream big, work hard, and one day, you might be standing where I am, telling the next generation that they too can achieve anything. Thank you, and congratulations to all the students here tonight!