

Good evening!

Thank you for letting me share a short time with you as we conclude this wonderful celebration. To those **STUDENTS** who were honored, I am so proud of you! You make me feel very confident that the future of our country will be in good hands. You embody the hard work and drive necessary to be leaders in our society. Not only do you strive for academic success, but you are also leaders in your schools. You are our heroes and I thank you for being you!

In order to make tonight a success, many people put in hours of hard work. I would like first to recognize the members of the **ORGANIZING COMMITTEE** for this awards ceremony who made sure that every "i" was dotted and every "t" was crossed. Would the members of the organizing committee please stand and be recognized at this time? Again, thank you!

There are other people here tonight who also need our thanks. So, students, before you leave tonight, please take a minute to thank your parents, teachers, and administrators for all they have done for you. As a matter of fact, let's give them some recognition right now...

√ **Would all of the PARENTS of tonight's student honorees please stand? Let's give them our thanks with a round of applause!**

√ **Would all of the TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS of tonight's honorees please stand? Let's show them our thanks by a round of applause!**

Thank you! And, now parents I would like to close by speaking more to you. First, I, personally, want to thank you for being here tonight and every day to support your child at home and in school. Your children will need you throughout their lives so, please continue to be there for them ... help them to grow ... help them to learn ... help them to develop their talents, and ... help them to become contributors to our world. Your child has great potential and with your support, it is unlimited. So, please, continue to nurture them. I leave you with one of my favorite poems ... **An African Folktale** ...

## AFRICAN FOLKTALE

When we told our children they could not fly,  
Their wings never grew.

When we told our children they were bad,  
They hated themselves.

When we told our children they were stupid,  
They were chained to their ignorance, and

When we told them they could not trust anyone,  
They did not trust themselves.

But, when we told our children that they could climb fences,  
They soared over mountains.

When we told our children that they could fulfill their dreams,  
Their nightmares went away.

When we told our children that they could see,  
They searched the heavens in wonderment, and

When we told them they could trust in themselves,  
Others trusted in them.

So we told our children to learn about everything,  
And they taught us about life.

Parents ... remember this well, give your children your continued love and support and they will soar. To our students, keep up the good work. Have a safe trip home, and wherever you go in life, always remember we all believe in your talents and abilities. We wish you only the best in all your future endeavors. Good night and good luck to the leaders of tomorrow.