

Good Morning,

It is a tremendous pleasure for me to be here today as a recipient of this great award of distinguished alumni. As I see those that have been honored before me, I am truly humbled to be in the mist of their company. I am equally thrilled to be here with my fellow Distinguished Alumnus Barry McRae, not only have I thought of him as distinguished, but also as a dear friend.

I would like to thank Mrs. Whiteside, the Alumni Association, Michael Rediker and those who nominated me for this honor ... I am indeed humbled.

I represent an era of the first graduating class of The Altamont School. This is an era that swept across the country, resulting in co-education be the norm. It naturally had its own difficulties ....presented challenges for the students and for the faculty. My class consisted of 52 boys and girls Thrown together after the merger of Brooke Hill and Birmingham University School, in the summer of 1975 , some were academically smart and some were street smart, Some students wanted to be here ... and some did not ..... But as a result of this merger, which has lasted 30 years, Altamont has promoted an environment of academic excellence and social maturation, an institution worthy of our support.

Many of my most memorable experiences that FIRST year of ALTAMONT occurred OFF campus, on weekends and in some cases in foreign lands ... the famous Mr. Hames's Trips! Of course, it would take many assemblies' to tell about those experiences to give them justice. Now, I know it's been 35 years since I've sat in an assembly BUT there is one thing that I still remember .... ..and that was thinking >>>>WILL this speaker get to the point and wrap it up!! So , today my comment's will be brief and I'll share with you two very basic, BUT foundational principles that I have carried with me as a result of this school .

"Be kind to one another". When I set foot on this campus 41 years ago, I knew only a few people, but no one well ... we were 41 girls with as many diverse backgrounds as you could find anywhere .... A couple of girls, that I did know before attending had communicated to me, there were several girls at Brooke Hill that were not very welcoming ..... WATCH OUT for them ... Well, when your 12 years old, these type warnings resonate LOUD AND CLEAR ..... So as I approached this new experience of Brooke Hill I found my reluctance had grown now ... over shadowing my once felt excitement UNTIL ..... I meet those girls that I had been warned about ..... And much to my surprise ... My encounter was much different .....as a matter of fact it was the exact opposite ..... I found them to be the most kind, light hearted girls I had ever met ..... We were fast buddies, we have shared many of life s richest, most mindful experiences, and to this day, we have been lifelong friends... So, be conscience of being kind to others, in making it a practice, cultivate kindness you may end up changing the course of your life as well as someone else's Life!

Secondly, be open to learn in Un- expected ways .... I am reminded of two examples, Many of us will remember, Alabama in the 1960 and 70's; where integration and segregation were constant forces in our society. My earliest memory grew out of a simple experience, a few of us would go down to the

boiler room, and I want to say, while we weren't in class... BUT I am not too sure that's the way it happened ... Anyway, Roosevelt, our then custodian, would let us come down to the boiler room , roll out the ping pong table and play ping pong ..... Imagine that .... As simple as it sounds He was a great ambassador in shaping how we viewed that time in our history. We loved him and cherished his company. He was a great man!!!!

The second example would be my foundation of music and the arts began and how it began here at Altamont.

When I attended Brooke Hill, Music was a mandatory requirement. Little did I know that thru Mrs. Lynch's instruction and guidance that I would develop a passion for the musical arts, Which would lead me to opportunities, including Carnegie Hall, and the International Hayden music Festival in Vienna, Austria ..... Wouldn't Mrs. Lynch be proud!!! Had I been closed to new opportunities or intimidated by the fear of learning a new craft, I would have never experienced these wonderful opportunities. I remain grateful to this school for instilling in me these values. I'll finish with a quote from a book I love dearly written by Andy Andrews, The Butterfly Effect

"There are generations yet unborn whose very lives will be shifted and shaped by the very moves you make and actions you take today. And tomorrow, and the next day, and the next.

Every single thing you do matters"!

Thank– you again for this honor and God Bless