## To The Graduates,



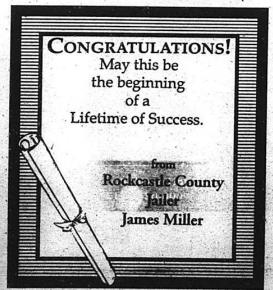
To the Class of 2000:

Today I signed your diplomas, and, as I looked at each of your names, a myraid of thoughts and memories came to me. For some of you, I remembered your moms and dads being in my English classes. One of my favorite things to do was our sharing good literature and relating it to our own lives and dreams. We often talked about our future plans and families Now, after all these years, I can celebrate the realization of many of those dreams with your parents. What a wonderful blessing!

Some of my thoughts returned to your freshmen year at the Rock. I thought about going into your classes and our talking about your work and simply seeing how you are doing. I recalled watching you compete in many activities and giving your time and effort in community service. I have cheered you on in athletic competitions and have been so proud of all your victories. I have listened to you sing and play beautiful music. We have shared happy, sad, angry and humorous moments. You have matured into

admirable young adults. Again, what a wonderful blessing!
In signing your diplomas, I thought about how we are "signing you over" to your new life and all its challenges. If, for the final time, I can offer advice on meeting those challenges, I want to say, "Be courageous." Ask yourself, "What was I created to do? What am I afraid of that may get in the way of my dreams?" Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... You must do the things you think you cannot do."
Do not be afraid to make decisions which will keep you healthy and strong, spiritually, emotionally and physically. Do not be afraid to pursue your

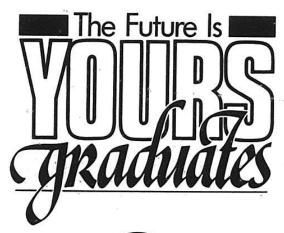
Just think - I could very well help you celebrate the realization of your dreams in your children's graduation. Again, what a blessing!



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