We meet once again to celebrate the common bond that has joined us together for the past fifty years. Sometimes it seems like yesterday that we graduated from Hudson High School, and sometimes it seems like a very long time ago. A photograph of our graduating class hangs in the hallway in my home, and I often stop to look at it -- the girls in white caps and gowns and the boys in black. It was our springtime, and the future held all possibilities. The world has turned many times since that photograph was taken on the front steps of the old high school. There have been changes since then, in the world and in ourselves. But it is a truism that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

To illustrate how things have changed, consider some of the events of 1951. In 1951, cease fire talks began in Korea. President Truman fired General McArthur. J.D. Salinger published "Catcher in the Rye" and Willie Mays was National League rookie of the year. It was a year of another subway series, with the New York Yankees, managed by Casey Stengel, defeating the New York Giants, managed by Leo Durocher, four games to two. "The King and I" with Yul Brynner and Gertrude Lawrence was playing on Broadway. In the movies, it was Katherine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart in "The African Queen." Popular songs coming out that
year included "Unforgettable," "Domino," and "Come On-a My House." Transcontinental television was inaugurated, the first power producing nuclear reactor was built, and power steering began to be mass produced. Local telephone rates jumped from five cents to ten cents. The internet was not even a gleam in anybody's eye at that time.

Yet despite the changes that have occurred in the last fifty years, there are certain fundamental values that never change and that are as important today as they were then: love, truth and integrity; friendship, loyalty and justice; respect, excellence and wisdom; caring and sharing. These are the values that we still hold dear and that are part of our common bond. And, as the shadows lengthen for us, we are secure in the knowledge that the banner of blue and gold, symbol of our common bond and our legacy, continues to wave.

The poet Longfellow wrote a poem in celebration of his fiftieth reunion, and it goes like this: "Whatever time or space may intervene,/ I will not be a stranger in this scene./ Here every doubt, all indecision, ends;/ Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends." May the Class of 1951 celebrate many more reunions and may we always be companions, comrades, classmates and friends!