

## **Introduction:**

Opening greeting:

Introduce yourself: Ivory, senior, Student Leadership Council President.

Honor of speaking at RUHS's 10-year anniversary.

Why I came to RUHS:

"I didn't come because of opportunities, but because of...some massive world event in March 2020 (pause for humor)."

Misunderstanding about RUHS being a remedial school—12-year-old me didn't know what "remedial" meant.

Transition:

Fast forward to today—discovered RUHS is so much more than I imagined.

## **What RUHS Did for Me:**

Academic achievements:

Graduating with an associate degree in web software development before finishing high school.

Partnership with Blackhawk Technical College gave me a head start on my future.

Personal growth:

Found a safe space to be myself.

Freshman year: comfortable enough to change my name and embrace my identity fully.

Support and mentorship:

Small school meant personalized mentorship from teachers and staff.

Opportunity to mentor others—a rewarding part of the RUHS experience.

Sense of security:

RUHS provided financial, emotional, and physical security.

Created a real, supportive community that gave me the space to grow.

## **Closing:**

Gratitude:

Thank RUHS for being more than just a school—a launchpad for my future and a home for my growth.

Reflect on the difference RUHS has made for you and others over the past 10 years.

Closing remark:

End with a heartfelt thank-you to teachers, staff, and everyone who makes RUHS what it is.

Good evening, everyone! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Ivory. I'm a senior here at RUHS, and I've had the incredible privilege of serving as the Student Leadership Council President this year. It's an honor to stand before you tonight as we celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Rock University High School.

Now, I have a little confession to make. I didn't come to RUHS because of its amazing opportunities, its partnership with Blackhawk Technical College, or even

its promise of a close-knit, supportive community. Nope—I came here because of...well...some massive world event that happened back in March 2020. Hmm, the name seems to slip my mind. (Pause for laughter)

In all seriousness, my path here wasn't exactly the result of careful planning. To make it even funnier, when I first heard about RUHS, I was given some very incorrect information. I thought it was a remedial school—a place for students who needed extra help or credit recovery. But that didn't stop me. I mean, let's be real: 12-year-old me had no idea what the word “remedial” even meant.

Fast forward to today, and not only have I discovered how wrong I was, but I've also realized just how much RUHS would change my life.

This school has given me opportunities I never thought possible. Thanks to RUHS's partnership with Blackhawk Technical College, I'll be graduating with an associate degree in web software development before I even graduate from high school. That still feels surreal to say. RUHS didn't just prepare me for college; it gave me a head start on my career and my future.

But RUHS has been more than just a place to study—it's been a place where I could truly be myself. Freshman year, I finally felt comfortable enough to change my name and fully embrace my identity. That kind of acceptance, that kind of support, isn't something you find everywhere, and I'll forever be grateful for it.

Because RUHS is such a small school, it's also uniquely personal. Our teachers and staff aren't just educators—they're mentors. They've seen me through challenges, cheered me on through victories, and guided me every step of the way. And in this close-knit community, I've had the chance to pay it forward, mentoring younger students and helping them navigate their own journeys. That's been one of the most fulfilling parts of my time here.

RUHS has given me more than just academic opportunities—it's given me a sense of security. Financially, emotionally, and even physically, I've always felt safe and supported here. That foundation has given me the space and confidence to grow into the person I am today.

As we celebrate 10 years of RUHS, I'm reminded of just how many students this school has helped, and how many lives it's changed—including mine. RUHS isn't

just a school; it's a launchpad for futures, a home for growth, and a family for everyone who walks through its doors.

Thank you to the teachers, staff, and my fellow students who make RUHS what it is. And thank you for letting me be a part of this incredible community. Here's to 10 years of RUHS—and to many more to come!

Introduce Gail Graham, **Board President of the Charter School**