

We made it! Not even a global pandemic could stifle the determination of the Class of 89 to attend this 30th reunion. I wondered for a moment what could be stoking the resolve of this group of wanting to get together so badly.

No doubt the sheer curiosity of meeting old school friends after 3 decades, to see what we look like, how we'd all have turned out, what have we been doing since school, is a compelling enough reason. But judging from the WhatsApp dialogues, which has been nothing short of amazing, with vivid recollections of the years gone by, the music that is firmly etched in our souls, the friendly banter that characterised our care free youth (especially winding up Morgan) and the outpouring of support, love and solidarity of the class of 89, I realised its more than curiosity. It has a lot to do with the fact that when you consider our life's journey, with all its trials and tribulations, our school years are a period of our lives, which is firmly imprinted in our cortex and perhaps not all were great memories, but in comparison to the complexities and travails of our lives, our school years appear to be the most uncomplicated, the relationships and bonds we formed were unpretentious and genuine, a period of safety in our lives when we were cocooned by our parents, society at large as well as by our educators and fellow students. When you reflect on our lives as students then, with the quality of education we received, the rich values and morals that were infused in us, the experiences we were offered with the minimal resources available, we have to consider ourselves as privileged and fortunate. So, its little wonder that we have turned up here today, to celebrate this wonderful period of our lives and in so doing also honour and celebrate our Alma Mater – Roseville Secondary.

Browsing through one of the year books, there was a contribution by a learner entitled – “Roseville Secondary from Cinderella to a Princess “. You would all agree that there was a rich sense of pride amongst learners and educators alike back then. The school earned many accolades in academia, sports and other extra mural activities under the guiding hands of competent and committed educators.

Much has changed since then, but the school continues its mission to cultivate future South Africans, with a whole set of different circumstances and challenges.

With shoe string budgets (R70,000) per annum and the obligation it has to provide an education for many who cannot afford the yearly fees of around R2000, it's the philanthropy of educators and the community that ensures the schools mission continues.

As alumni of this school we too have an obligation to pay it forward, and whether its contributions of funding, or our time, or resources and capabilities, the situation for educators and learners are so dire, that a small effort would go a long way to ensuring that the future of our country has a chance.

The planning committee will continue to engage you and the wider alumni on initiatives that could make a difference.

In our hour of celebration, we would be remiss not to remember and pay our respects to our departed friends and teachers. They are fondly remembered and will live on in our memories: Finally, a resounding and sincere gratitude to THE BEST REUNION PLANNING COMMITTEE IN THE WORLD.

I have to say that if this group were ever elected to run a country, this would be the idyllic and utopian place. This group brought a unique blend of capability, devotion, efficiency and just down right phenomenal execution leading up to what we have here tonight, a wonderful opportunity to remember our lives back then, but to also make equally wonderful memories for the years to come.

Nilesh, kindly added my pic here, but I cannot take any credit. All of the people you see here, Thea – Madam Speaker, Salo, the Chief Whip, Nasa the minister of finance, Lucy the Minister of Fun, Selvie the Minister of Intelligence, Shaun the Minister of Communication, Barry the Minister of Social Development and Welfare, Eric the Minister in the Presidency, Billy the Minister of Technology, Planning and Health ...especially Pandemic Preparedness.

A round of applause and Cheers to a job well done.

Happiness is ... Meeting an old friend after a long time and feeling that nothing has changed.

Here's to the class of 89... Here's to the next 30 years..

Cheers Class of 89.

Devan Pillay