

Kenneth Yeung – Captain of School 2026 Address – Presentation Evening 2025

Good evening members of the official party, staff, parents, and boys. It is an honour to address you this evening as the Brighton Grammar School Captain for 2026. I am incredibly fortunate to be working alongside vice-captains Jack Carson and Jack Power, as well as a bright and inspired group of prefects. I'd also like to thank Charlie, James, Hamish, and the Class of 2025 for their immense contribution to the legacy of the school that will certainly leave a lasting impact on the years to come.

Every Year 12 cohort leaves a legacy. 2018 gave us the Creed – a reminder to be 'a better man today than we were yesterday'. 2023 reminded us that the crest on our blazers is 'more than a crest' and rather a potent symbol of what unites and inspires us. This year reminded us to 'honour, celebrate and embrace.'

But sometimes the most powerful legacies aren't consciously created; they're the quiet ones that silently emerge through a personal commitment to a dream. The ones that don't *tell* us, but *show* us the kind of men we can be. Tonight, I want to talk about someone whose legacy still hangs, literally, over all of us: John Robertson Duigan.

If you've walked into The Duigan Centre, you know exactly what I mean. There's that unbelievable plane suspended above the cafeteria. It looks more like a giant kite with a truck engine strapped to it than something meant to fly, but somehow, it flew. And that's the point.

In an era when we take flying across the world for granted, we can barely imagine that at the time Duigan built that plane, the idea of flight was a fantasy. Those wanting to fly were considered dreamers at best and reckless at worst. Flying was also incredibly dangerous, with many having already died. But John Duigan didn't let that stop him.

He wasn't chasing fame. He wasn't trying to go down in history. He was simply someone who had a dream and then did the work. He designed, built, rebuilt, tried, failed, and then tried again. And when he reached the end of what he knew, he left Australia to learn more. He went after the knowledge he didn't yet have. There was no instant gratification. No shortcuts. No guarantees. Just modest commitment, humility, and courage. And eventually, in 1910, the ground disappeared below him as he rose not just into the air, but into the history of Australian innovation.

In 1916 he went to war, where he was awarded the elite Military Cross for bravery. Then he got married and opened an engineering firm because he needed to support his family. He did what needed to be done.

For me, that is leadership. Not the title, nor the badge or the applause. Leadership is the doing, the talking on its own is nothing but noise. It's seeing what needs to be done and choosing to step towards it, even when the crowd turns their back, even when they call you crazy, and even when you're unsure. Leadership is putting in the hours, not for praise, but because it's the right thing to do.

As we head into 2026 together, that is what I challenge us to carry. A willingness to work, learn and struggle. To back each other, dream boldly, be humble enough to improve and brave enough to start.

Boys, I challenge you to dream. I know there's a dream somewhere inside all of you. Don't wait for people to believe in you; start moving until they have no choice. Standing here tonight, looking out at all of you and seeing the achievements, I'm reminded of how much potential sits in this room. You don't have to build a plane. You don't have to rewrite history or be a genius. But you *can* choose courage. You *can* choose effort. You *can* choose to make this year mean something, for yourself, for the young men sitting beside you, and for those who will come after us.

Because once upon a time, a fellow Tonner lit himself a flame, daring to believe he could do the impossible. And so, he did. In 2026, let's take flight, not by chance, but by choice. Let's build something we're proud to leave behind. And let's do it together.

Meliora Sequamur — let us pursue better things.