Mater Dei's Decision Height Soars with Heart and History
written by Ray Radtke, a senior at Beckman High School

Mater Dei High School's production of Decision Height is a poignant and powerful tribute to the Women Air Force Service Pilots of World War II, blending history with deeply human storytelling. This moving drama honors the brave women who took to the skies and fought for recognition on the ground.

Virginia (Scarlett Mattison) anchors the emotional journey with a heartfelt, unwavering sincerity. Her wide-eyed honesty never falters, even as the story's events challenge her beliefs and test her resolve. She brings quiet strength to every scene, her earnest demeanor making her the ensemble's moral compass and grounding the production's emotional stakes.

Eddie (Giulia Charlton) is a true highlight, delivering a fierce and unforgettable performance. She leans heavily into her character's gruff, rebellious nature, her physicality radiating defiance in every swagger and sharp gesture. This shines brilliantly in the scene where the girls return to base drunk, dropping poker chips--Eddie's exaggerated stumble and flailing are hilarious and utterly committed. Her chemistry with Norma Jean is electric, their constant bickering bouncing off each other with ease and perfectly calibrated comedic timing.

Norma Jean (Riley Brosnan) is equally magnificent, maintaining her strict, firm, Southern accent and motherly demeanor without a single falter. She commands authority with a steely gaze and rigid posture, yet her character's arc-- softening and growing attached to the girls under her care--unfolds with beautiful subtlety. Her transformation from stern overseer to someone willing to sacrifice for her friends feels earned and deeply moving.

Carol (Lena Maria Rios) provides a delightful burst of comic relief, nailing the innocent, wide-eyed demeanor of the smallest recruit. She is bubbly and clumsy, jumping around with infectious energy. Her comedic physicality is a highlight of the show, perfectly capturing the rambunctious essence of an endearing little sibling.

The props team (Katarina Dritsopoulos, Eoin Kerr, Khiem Nguyen) creates a wide variety of effective items--letters, snowballs, radios--that serve scenes with purpose and authenticity. The costumes (Alexa Santos, Ashley Flores name) are accurate and character-specific. Eddie wears pants instead of dresses, a subtle visual of her rebellious spirit. The oversized military suits worn by the women emphasize their smallness in a man's world--a brilliant visual metaphor for their fight for acceptance.

Mater Dei's Decision Height is a soaring triumph, proving that the stories of those who paved the way deserve to be told with passion, precision, and heart.