

Possibilities abound for county graduates



Contributed Photo

The senior breakfast, held on Wednesday of graduation week, is one of the final times many graduates will spend time with their classmates. Shown here is one group of friends making the most of the opportunity to simply hang out with one another and enjoy a meal together.

It's that time of year again... Graduation time!

Greene County Schools have spent the past couple of weeks celebrating the milestones of the students moving up in grades. Kindergarteners from Leakesville Elementary School, Sand Hill Attendance Center and McLain Attendance Center donned their caps and gowns and smiled that great big kid smile as they finished their first year of being the Class of 2029. These sweet babies are just beginning their journey to wearing the high school cap and gown.

Eighth graders from Leakesville, Sand Hill and McLain had ceremonies to celebrate their passage into high school. These students are on the brink of getting a driver's license and dating. They are beginning to think about what they like and dislike. They must find their motivation and will learn much about friendship and integrity in the years to come. Enjoy the moments kids!

The students of the Greene County High School Class of 2017 well remember coming to the high school from Sand Hill, Leakesville and McLain. It's a whirlwind of confusion and excitement. The feelings of the first week of ninth grade are almost the same as the week of graduation.

The 2017 GCHS graduating class was quite large this year. Many of the students have a plan for what's next and many of them have already been working on their road to success. Quite a few of these students have been taking college classes alongside their high school classes. Several students met their required high school credits in December and have finished a semester of college or have been working full time jobs, or both. Even those that have struggled to get where they have earned their march across the newly-planted grass

on Johnny Ainsworth Field.

Wednesday morning's Senior breakfast was full of fun and excitement as the students gathered at the school to enjoy their own celebration with their faculty and school administration. The excitement filled the cafeteria as some of these students have not seen one another in a while. Friends talked about summer plans, college plans, and most importantly, the after-graduation plans; after the cake and hugs, and of course, all the pictures with family.

GCHS teacher Paula Hensley, who has been a senior sponsor for the past nine years, gave her take on where these bright young students would be in 10 years. Jared Woullard, the class historian, received Hensley's award for 'Who is most likely to be President.' Shelby Csaszar, the Salutatorian, was selected as the one to find a cure for cancer. Mary Grace Turner, GCHS Hall of Famer, was chosen 'Most likely to be an Olympic Gold Medalist.'

Hensley was humorous with her "funny awards," having them for students that would most likely be a talk show host, model, live on a farm, and even own a McDonald's. Kelsey Bufkin was tagged as the one 'Most likely to get away with anything,' and Randy Strickland will be the rock star of the group.

I spoke with a few students as they rushed about eating breakfast so they move on to graduation rehearsal and leave.

Braxton Walker has an academic scholarship to Belhaven University. He will also be playing football while there. He plans to pursue a career in sports medicine and hopes to move to Louisiana or Virginia.

Bradley McDonald finished his classes in December and has been working in the construction industry. Although he does plan to go to college, right now he likes working.

Destiny Smith said she wants to pursue a nursing career. Smith was nominated by a teacher for the Jones County Junior College Bobcat Scholarship and won it. She said that she sees herself successful, married and being in her own home in 10 years.

Andrew Grimes, a GCHS band member, received a full tuition scholarship to JCJC where he plans to begin working on a major in music. He plans to attend the University of Southern Mississippi after his years at JCJC.

Many other students say they plan to attend college yet aren't sure of a major. Some say they want to take a break from school and will be entering the workforce.

No matter where they are in 10 years, the years of high school will be close by. Maybe some of them have reached their goals and set new ones. Some goals may have had to be adjusted or set to the side for a time, and some of these kids may be somewhere they didn't think they would be.

The proud students of this year's graduating class marched into Wildcats Stadium as a group one last time Friday night as the band played Pomp and Circumstance from the track. Many proud people watched from the stands and a few tears fell during the night.

Wherever life takes this year's graduating class, these memories will always go with them. The teachers, coaches, principles, all the ones that have pushed and helped these students along the way will stick with them as well. We all think about those figures of authority in school that helped us get through it and helped us unlock our potential.

The families that have stood behind these students deserve applause, too. Teenagers can be difficult to deal with, though we are all guilty of being teenagers at one time.

These family members have supported and worked hard to get these kids to their summer practices, after school practices, Beta conventions, fundraisers and early morning competitions. There have been prom dresses, tux rentals, class rings, club fees, an endless list of fees someone has been there to take care of the needs of these students so that they could get the pleasure of getting that diploma.

Many parents were watching as their oldest child or only child graduated while others were watching their babies graduate (like *Herald* editor Russell Turner and wife Jennifer). Even as I watched my nephew, Isaiah Taylor and niece, Alice Hobby, walk across the same field their mothers and I once did, I know we all share the same feelings of pride and joy, and even a little fear.

To the Greene County High School Class of 2017, you have come a long way, and you still have a long way to go. Take the advice of your valedictorian, Miss Charlesie Hicks and "just be yourself." Take the time to get to know yourself. You have spent the last 18 years with your parents or grandparents, siblings, cousins, and while you know who you are in the safety of family and in the safety of school, learn who you are on your own. Stretch out your arms as far as they will stretch across the horizon and explore all the good possibilities life offers.

Keep up with each other. Support each other as much as

Around the Greene

By Annette Harvison

Herald Columnist



you can through the years. Attend your class reunions. This school and the peers

beside you will always be where your roots begin. Twenty years from now you will stop and ponder on where some of your high school classmates have gone. Fifty years from now, you'll be glad you are still able to see these classmates and reminisce about the old days.

While this is the end of your adolescence, it is the beginning of the rest of your lives. Make the best of it!

Be sure to check out Stylish Clothing

Tanning Packages Also available

Congratulations & Best Wishes

Class of 2017

417 Main Street Leakesville, MS 39451 (601)394-5085

Congratulations!

We love you and are proud of your accomplishments.

ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS

Love, Mama, Jason, Dale, Andrew, and Olivia

ISAIAH

Congratulations, **Kirkland** Class of 2017

Love, Daddy, Mama, Kenzie, Breanna & Jase

Congratulations Class of 2017

"For I know the PLANS I have for you" declares the LORD "plans to PROSPER you and not to harm you, plans to give you HOPE and a FUTURE."

Jeremiah 29:11

567 Cowart St. Lucedale (601)947-7431