

► Graduation

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such an important part of our lives, but it also signifies the beginning of a brand new adventure for each of us.”

“We have shared growing, learning, and laughing together for so many years. Hopefully, today we leave GCHS a little better place because we were here, and also leave as better people for being here.”

Class Vice-President Chloe Strickland, Class Reporter Noah Bradley and classmates Carson Clark and Dylan Tribble were next to step to the podium.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight,” said Clark, reading from 2 Corinthians Chapter 5, Verse 7. “The Apostle Paul wrote this with an eternal vision in mind, offering encouragement to hold steadfast, even when we are unsure of what is taking place around us.”

Strickland followed, telling attendees that the scripture passage was fitting for a graduate at any time, but especially appropriate for this year’s class.

“When we cannot see what the future holds; honestly, we have no true picture of what next week may even look like,” Strickland said. “What we do know, however, is that we have a Father who goes before us and does know what the future holds.”

“He knew this pandemic would take place before the beginning of time, and he knew we would participate in a traditional, albeit slightly different, ceremony here tonight.”

Tribble continued along that line of thinking and said he and his classmates should be inspired by this verse and continue to hold their heads high and continue working toward their goals, even in this time of uncertainty.

“The next few months may not look exactly like we planned, but we are promised that all things will work together for our good if we remain committed to work hard and make a positive difference in this world,” Tribble added. “We may not always be able to see the end or know how it all turns out, but we can walk in faith knowing that there is a plan and a purpose set out for each of us.”

After the scripture and short devotion, Bradley offered a prayer asking blessings over the event.

Bradley Snyder, who earned the distinction of Class Historian as the No. 3 graduate in the class, was next to deliver his address. Snyder revisited some of the highlights from the Class of 2020’s time at GCHS and encouragement to his classmates as they look to their futures.

“During our time here at Greene County High School, I had the privilege to witness the great feats that our class has achieved. From academics, to athletics, to clubs, and to the arts, moments have been made,” Snyder said. “Moments that we can look back on and say ‘We did this!’ ... ‘I did this!’ Moments where we can look back on and remind ourselves that we are people who can achieve things, people who are talented, people who have worth, and we have a resume to prove it.”

“Our memories are what makes us ‘us’, and we should

embrace who we are! We are the kids born during 9/11, we are those that will never have senior prom, and we are the class that thought we would never have graduation, yet we are here today, in the midst of a pandemic, to show the world that we will not let this be the only thing that defines us. The memories of our time here will help us push through this and will prepare us for the trials of tomorrow. We are the class of 2020 and we will not be shaken by this, and our history shows that we are more than ready for the future.”

Snyder’s complete remarks, along with those of Valedictorian Cameron Dunnam and Salutatorian Jacob Thurman, can be found elsewhere in this edition.

During his time at the podium, Thurman said recent occurrences in our country serve as reminders of how important it is to not take life for granted. He thanked school officials, teachers and his classmates for their efforts over the past four years.

“Although looking back now, the time we spent together seemed fleeting, however, I know that the memories we made together will last a lifetime,” Thurman said. “When I think about our Class of 2020, one quote (by David Sarnoff) comes to mind, ‘The will to persevere is often the difference between failure and success.’”

“This quote is the embodiment of our will to succeed as a Wildcat and I hope that this mindset follows all of you throughout the rest of your lives and careers. So for one last time, it’s great to be a GCH Wildcat.”

Dunnam took time to thank school officials and family members when beginning his remarks, acknowledging their influence on himself and his classmates. And, he gave a shout out to the school’s custodial staff as well.

“Yes, even to you, Bubba Clay and Chico Jack, for motivating students with your positive attitudes, I say thank you,” Dunnam said. “Without all of these wonderful and vital people, none of us would be the people we are today.”

Reflecting on some of the setbacks his class has faced, Dunnam recited a motto he learned from his family, saying “what you go through in life can make you bitter or better; the choice is yours.” He then encouraged classmates to focus on the things they could control, using the equation E+R=O (event plus



Photo by Russell Turner - Herald Editor

GCHS graduates (L-R) Sentory Jones, Chrissavian Gray, Kydesha Jack and Garry Hawthorne are shown together just prior to Friday’s graduation ceremony at the school.

response equals outcome).

“Oftentimes, we cannot control the event or receive the outcome we want, but we can control how we respond to the events of our lives,” Dunnam said. “Our response is what defines each of us as a unique person.”

“We, not our circumstances, dictate whether we lie down in defeat or stand up to fight in the face of adversity — whether we lash out in hostility, turn the other cheek in humility, or learn from an event or deny it.”

“Life is never going to just be one easy journey. Some of us will lose jobs, some of us will lose family members, some of us will suffer illnesses, some of us will face financial and personal struggles—and the list could go on. The only factor in this life which we can control is the response that will certainly affect the outcome. Repeatedly we will make the decision: Will I lie down and give up, or will I fight back, take advice, learn, and overcome? I know you, my classmates, are capable of great things, great achievement! So let us use our struggles to mold us into better people.”

After Dunnam’s remarks, Assistant Principal Ricky Dickson stepped to the podium to start the issuing of diplomas.

“Mr. Breland and Coach Bray, after reviewing their records and finding that they have met the qualifications of graduation as set by the state of Mississippi and the Greene County Board of Education, I present for their diplomas, the Greene County High School Graduating Class of 2020,” Dickson said.

That was followed by each graduate being called to the podium to receive their diplomas. During this time, student awards and special accomplishments were also

read aloud and recognized.

After the diplomas were awarded, Grant Keys stepped to the podium to offer a closing prayer. Then Eubanks led her classmates in moving their tassels from right to left signifying their status as graduates.

“Congratulations, Class of 2020,” Eubanks said, as she and her classmates then tossed their caps into the air in celebration.

After hats were collected and a few hugs and tears shared, the graduates and those in attendance exited the stadium fairly quickly as part of the planned safety measures.

Due to conflicts with scheduling or concerns over potential exposure and spread of Covid-19 a couple dozen members of the Class of 2020 celebrated their graduation in private ceremonies with school officials on May 22 and Monday, June 8.

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you For I am the Lord your God. Isaiah 43: 1-3

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You did it!
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