



GCHS teacher Anna Lauren Prentiss is shown leading graduates onto Johnny Ainsworth Field to start the Class of 2022’s Commencement Exercise last Friday.

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stepped to the microphone and offered an invocation.

Class Historian Taylor Garretson was the first of the three featured speakers for the program. Garretson shared memories and reviewed some of the many achievements of the Class of 2022. She spoke fondly of teachers and staff, including school secretary Kay Holliman, who she called the “heart and soul of our school”, and “everyone’s favorite janitor” Terrance ‘Bubba’ Clay, who Garretson said would greet students with a “high-five and a quick conversation.”

She spoke of the good times enjoyed at Friday night football games and events like Homecoming and Trunk-or-Treat, and she reflected on the successes of the schools’ athletic teams and student groups. And, she also reflected on the trials of navigating a worldwide pandemic throughout the majority of their time at the school.

“The COVID-19 global pandemic majorly changed the ways that things were done in the classroom and on the playing fields,” Garretson said. “We had to adapt to learning behind a screen, missing vital moments of interaction with others in a classroom.”

“Once we were able to return to school, masks and remaining 6-feet apart became our new ‘normal’. We had almost forgotten what each other looked like under those masks. But through all of this, Wildcat spirit stood strong and our students and staff persevered.”

While she reflected on the past four years, she also reminded her classmates there was plenty more history to be made moving forward.

“Now is our time to make our own history,” Garretson

said. “Our future starts today.”

“To Greene County High School, it has been an honor to be speaking before you today and to have been a part of Wildcat nation for the past 4 years of my life. To the Class of 2022, thank you for all of the incredible memories and I will never forget the time we spent together. And lastly, to the world, are you ready to see some history being made?”

Next came the Salutatorian address from Reanna Scoggins, who told classmates that as they reminisce and reflect on their time together at GCHS, it was also time for them to consider who they want to be in the future.

Borrowing from the words of Denzel Washington, Scoggins reminded classmates that they would inevitably make mistakes and experience failures in their lives.

“We will lose, embarrass ourselves, and make mistakes,” she said, citing the famous actor. “It’s inevitable.”

“It is how we learn from those failures that will define us.”

Scoggins said the road that lies ahead for her and her classmates will not always be easy and that their successes will greatly depend on how hard they work.

“Each of us must choose if we will live in this world, or if we will change the world,” Scoggins added. “Success is not measured by money, but by our accomplishments. I know the potential of the class of 22’ and I can’t wait to see how we change the world.”

“This may be the end of high school, but it is just the beginning of the rest of our lives.”

Johnson, who helped welcome those in attendance, was also the last to make remarks from the podium. In a rousing Valedictorian Address, Johnson thanked his class-

mates and those who had an impact on their journey to the moment at hand. And, he challenged his classmates to make the most of their opportunities and in true Wildcat fashion, to go out and to take the world by storm.

“Wildcats do not run from challenges or cower when things get tough,” Johnson said. “Wildcats always remain family, and strive for excellence.”

“Thank you for letting me stand before you as your Valedictorian and allowing me to lay the challenge before all of us to never give up and to always try, try again!”

Johnson shared wisdom from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who he said “left no room for us to give up or make excuses.”

“If you can’t fly then run. If

you can’t run, then walk. If you can’t walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, keep moving forward,” Johnson said, quoting King’s 1960 Founder’s Day address at Spelman College in Atlanta.

“I love you my dear friends and classmates of 2022,” Johnson said as he wrapped up his comments. “Until we meet again!”

Following Johnson’s address, GCHS Assistant Principal Ricky Dickson stepped to the podium to introduce the graduates. Dickson started with graduates that had earned special endorsements based on their academic successes (Distinguished Academic, Academic and/or Career and Technical), calling each graduate forward to receive their diplomas and congratulations from Principal Scott Bray and Supt. Breland.

After diplomas were conferred, Conner West asked everyone to stand for a closing prayer. Then, Johnson returned to the podium to lead his classmates in moving their tassels from right to left on their caps, followed by the traditional tossing of those caps into the air.

That capped off the ceremony and jumpstarted an on-field celebration with guests joining the graduates on the field for hugs, high-fives and some joyful tears - and of course - plenty of photographs.



Congratulations to All Our **GRADUATES**  
We Are Proud of You!

