

Class Day: A Celebration of the Graduating Class of 2017

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Graduating high school is a paradoxical event. It is a time of sadness because a journey has come to an end but it is also a time of great excitement and new beginnings! Leaving everyone and everything you are familiar with and to go into the unknown outside world seems like a formidable and daunting task. This is especially the case for the close-knit Class of 2017 who has spent their entire eighteen years of life sheltered in our small town of Ashland with a majority of their memories housed in the Ashland Schools. They have gone through Ashland Public Schools as pre-schoolers finger painting together all the way to diploma-carrying high school graduates. Most of their significant memories must have been in the high school, during the years one changes and grows into their true selves, making some of your closest friends, and discovering what you are passionate about. Most can agree that high school is an unforgettable time of success, failures, achievements, hard work, and adventure. This year's graduates took a trip down memory lane with Senior Week



events such as visiting all former Ashland schools, conducting community service projects, signing yearbooks, and dressing up for a Boston Harbor cruise (similar to the eighth grade Boat Dance in Washington DC). To celebrate the achievements of the 142nd graduating class of AHS, parents, friends, students, and faculty congregated on the

last Friday before graduation for Class Day.

Class Day has a long-standing history with many Ivy League schools who originally started the tradition with mock awards and a day of rambunctious entertainment which slowly grew into a formal ceremony to recognize students' achievements, receive awards, review class history, and grant the graduating class a key to the campus. While Class Day is traditionally a college tradition, our school finds it important to commemorate the achievements of graduates on a day additional to graduation, as well!

This year's class had a procession into the Gym in their cap and gown to music played by the Ashland High Band. Senior Class President, Maggie Duich then addressed her class, speaking about the phases of their high school life and reminding her classmates to always live spontaneously. She

ended by saying, "Do great things, I expect nothing less from the Class of 2017." Afterward, Kelsey Collins and Rebecca Hopmayer dedicated the yearbook to their Class Advisor, Mrs. Janet Twomey, and nurse, Mrs. Mary Beth Curry. After the gracious honor, Superintendent Jim Adams introduced the outstanding Salutatorian and Valedictorian of the class. Salutatorian Jessica Wright graduated with an impressive 4.74 GPA and is attending the University of Vermont while valedictorian Alex Mariona, who scored a perfect 800 on all of his SAT Subject Tests, is attending Harvard University. Unsurprisingly, Mariona was also honored as a National Merit Scholarship recipient. Core Value award recipients were Sam Rothkopf for Respect, Nick Fetherston for Responsibility, Kelsey Collins for Integrity, Jake Peterson for Involvement, and Jillian Celatka for Achievement. Ad-

ditionally, Student Council and National Honor Society members and board were recognized. The Class of 2017 was able to earn an outstanding amount of scholarships towards their higher education, as well. Two of those were memorial scholarships that were established after our community lost James Bredin and Brendan Petry. The second Bredin memorial scholarship was awarded to Sydney Jablonowski and the first Petry memorial scholarship was awarded to Marcus Illingworth. The losses of both these community members were tragic but hopefully, these scholarship winners will use the money they were awarded for education that will continue the legacy of those who were lost too soon. There were many other awards and scholarships granted and my hearty congratulations to everyone who received them!

Throughout the ceremony, students also performed musical pieces. Fantastic job to Kaitlin Carson, Danielle Carson, Zach Greenstein, and Jon Walter who showcased their talents in singing and playing instruments! I wish the Class of 2017 success in all they do in the future and hope they will keep the memories and lessons they learned at Ashland High with them for the rest of their life. For more about the world through my eyes, keep reading my monthly column:)

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