Gateway graduates 56 on Booster Field

Huntington – The Class of 2017 graduated on Booster Field under puffy clouds on Friday, June 2 at 6 p.m., in the 54th Commencement Exercises of Gateway Regional High School.

Senior Diana Tereshchuk—replacing Class President Anna Pless, who would already speak as Salutatorian—welcomed the families, friends, alumni, and staff members by saying, “I’ve only had a day’s notice that I would be speaking tonight, so please bear with me. But as you all know, and to quote Evan lee, “A high schooler’s work is always done best the night before, or even better, the morning of.”

Graduating seniors joined the Concert Band for a final performance together, offering “Adrenaline Engines” by Randall D. Standridge.

Salutatorian Anna Pless and Valedictorian Rachel LeBarron then shared their reflections. After thanking the parents, siblings, family and friends of her classmates for their support, Pless had a special thank you message for her teachers. “You have not only taught me how to read, write, and solve equations, but you’ve taught me the values of respect, hard work, determination, compassion, authenticity, kindness, leadership and optimism. You have all inspired me to become a teacher myself, and I hope I can do the job justice and make you proud.”

In her comments, LeBarron shared some of her class’s notable characteristics. “The Class of 2017 was the class that made not one, but two English teachers retire. We were Mr. Kleber’s final class last year, and Ms. Bishop finished her teaching career with us this year. I’m not sure if we should be proud of the fact that we caused half the English department to stop teaching or not. Rather than believing that it’s because we are a horrible class to teach and these teachers never wanted to teach after us, I like to conclude that we were so amazing, Mr. kleber and Ms. Bishop couldn’t think of a better class to have as their last one.”

Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent, then shared his congratulations with the class. “As you embark on creating the story of your lives, let me leave you with these lyrics from Tim McGraw’s song, “Humble and Kind”, which ended with, “When you get where you’re going don’t forget to turn back around, and help the next one in line, always stay humble and kind.”

Gateway senior members of the Concert Choir and Show Choir joined their fellow vocalists to offer two pieces, “I Lived” by Ryan Tedder & Noel Zancanella, and “Photograph” by Ed Sheeran & John McDaid.

Retired English Teacher Rod Kleber, who taught at Gateway high school from 2004-2016, took the podium to share his keynote address, beginning (of course) with a quote from Mark Twain. He had
two pieces of advice for the graduates: 1) Think, truly and carefully, for yourself; and 2) Think about others.

School Committee Chairperson Michele Crane and Superintendent Hopson then awarded individual diplomas, Principal Jason Finnie offered closing remarks, Dr. Hopson Conferred the Diplomas, and the Class of 2017 threw caps in the area and exited to the music of Peter Townshend (“Baba O’Riley”).

Gateway juniors Jessica Van Heynigen and Joseph Coon were selected as ceremonial marshals by the Class of 2017.

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