

Grads encouraged to follow passions

By Arthur Cusano

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HUDSON — The 131st annual Hudson High School commencement was held Friday night at the high school auditorium, where 134 students took the stage to receive their diplomas.

Hudson Superintendent of Schools Maria Suttmeier said she had been with the Class of 2014 since they were 10 years old and was extremely fond of them.

“I was a building administrator when they were in fifth grade, so they hold a really special place in my heart to see them on the stage this evening,” she said.

Suttmeier told the new graduates she and the many parents on hand were proud of their achievements, their perseverance and their successes over their school career.

“Take a look at them right now — you see them smiling and snapping photos so they can record this moment forever,” Suttmeier said. “This is a very important day for you and for them. Today they are very, very proud of you.”

“In fact, today would be a very good day to ask them for money,” she joked.

Salutatorian Samantha L. Ganey, who will study biochemistry at the University of Rochester next fall, reflected on how much the world had changed in her generation’s time.

“We’re still young enough to remember when computers were heavier than a sack of potatoes and colored the plainest shade of beige there ever was,” Ganey recalled. “When we were kids the Spy Kids 3-D DVD was the closest we got to 3-D T.V. And who could forget those practically indestructible flip phones many of us received as our first cell phones.”

Ganey said she loved science because it allowed her to ask questions and use those questions to help people and it made her confident the Earth and its residents could be saved.

“Science unites people to work toward a common cause,” she said. “This is my passion, and it’s my hope everyone will find their own passion.”

Valedictorian Mohammed H. Ghani, who will study mechanical engineering at Rensselaer



Hudson Graduation2.jpg

Polytechnic Institute next fall, said diversity made Hudson City School District a special place to live and learn.

“We all come from varied backgrounds, we differ in our culture, religions, languages, ethnicities and life experiences,” Ghani said. “Yet we defended each other. We came together as Bluehawks, during sports, plays and spirit weeks. We shared common experience in the classrooms. We came together while still being different. In this way we represented the great American melting pot.”

Ghani said he looked at high school as a training ground that prepared him for the rest of his life.

“We have learned from our mistakes and failures,” Ghani said. “We have wonderful teachers and staff helping us along the way. What we have learned here is very important. Though we will learn many more lessons in the future, we’ll always have the lessons we learned here to guide us.”

This year’s guest speaker was Mike Arterberry, creator of the Youth Voices Center and the Power of Peace program, which Hudson students took part in over the school year. He was chosen to speak by principal Antonio Abitabile following his work at the school.

Arterberry talked of his life growing up in a low income Westchester County neighborhood in a home that often didn’t have heat and didn’t have a shower. He was so embarrassed of where he lived he never told anyone he lived there, he said.

“What I proved to many is that you can live in an environment but you don’t have to become that environment,” he told students.

Arterberry encouraged students to follow their passion, which he said is the thing that truly leads people to happiness.

“Don’t chase the dollar bill,” Arterberry said. “You think that the money is going to make you happy, but it’s not about how much money you make. It’s about waking up in the morning and enjoying where you’re going to go work. You have a lot of people who have big cars and nice homes but they’re miserable. So when you start to set your course I want you to make sure you find something that you are passionate about.”

Arterberry asked students to think about how they will be remembered later on in life and choose their actions wisely. “When you look back over your life, and when you start to break down the pieces, what I don’t want any of you to have is regret,” he said. “Make sure you did everything you had to do. Make sure you dot every ‘I’, cross every ‘T’ and make sure you do it 100 percent.”