

Speeches...from Page 1

I were talking about the song, we were all joking around about how much pressure that is, and yes, it is a lot of pressure.

But what a great reward it is to have people look up to you. I've had people tell me that I am their role model, and it means more to me than anyone could ever understand.

Sure, it puts more pressure on me to live right, but I need those people to hold me accountable. I am not trying to be a "goody two shoes." I just know that if I choose to stay true to my beliefs, the reward in the end will be far greater than anything this world could ever offer me.

Throughout our lives, we will face constant pressures, and in every problem we will be given a decision to make. There are only two options for every situation. We can either choose to walk the path of life, or the path of destruction. For me, the path of life is that through the one and only Jesus Christ. The path of destruction is exactly the opposite. Those are the only options. I, personally, choose to live, and I would say that most of you would like that choice,

as well. No matter what path you choose, there will still be difficulties. I'm not saying that choosing the path of life leads to nothing but success. However, I am saying that it allows you to have the support that you need to get through whatever obstacles are thrown your way.

So, as we enter into the next stage of our lives, I encourage all of you to begin thinking about what kind of lifestyle you crave. What are your ambitions? What do you hope to gain from your life, and better yet, what kind of legacy do you want to leave? We will all be remembered by something, so we might as well make it something incredible.

I firmly believe that we all have bright futures ahead of us. We have been deemed as the best class to come through this school system in quite a while, and that's something to be very proud of. It just goes to show that we are capable of great things, and I'm excited to see what the future holds for each of us.

With all of this being said, I hope that all of you are excited to enter into this next phase of life. We each have the power and

capability to do great things, and I anticipate nothing less than the best for all of us. I need to say a quick thank you to my family and friends for persevering with me through everything. I've been blessed with the best support group possible and I love each of you dearly. Thanks for all of the prayers and encouragement over the years, and I also need to thank my heavenly Father because if it weren't for Him, I wouldn't be standing in front of you today. He deserves all of the glory for my success, because I'm nothing more than a sinner saved by grace.

Again, good luck to each and every one of you. I wish you all nothing but success as we enter into the real world. I encourage you to be role models for those who surround you. I encourage you to shoot for the stars, and, above all, I encourage you to take the path of life, and to walk it with boldness and courage. Because, at the end of the day, it's your life, and it's up to you to make a difference. As someone once stated, "We only live once, but if we do it right, once is enough."

Thank you and God bless.

Courtney Marshall

First of all, I want to start out by saying how blessed I've been to spend the past 13 years with all of you. I can remember the moment I walked into Pre-K and knew that I would be best friends with Allison for many years to come. I can also remember those playground days when Dylan sported a mullet and chased all the girls, or the time that Taylor ran straight through the screen door of my house and didn't even flinch. I remember how crazy it seemed to move into the new school as we started 2nd grade, and how devastated we all were when Kaila moved to Kentucky, even though she was only gone for a

short time.

As we continued through elementary school we did some really impressive things, like writing letters and sending supplies to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and having our own American Idol show on the bleachers at recess every day. We were even fortunate enough to gain Nick and Harrison as our classmates in 5th grade, and I have to say I can't imagine spending the past 8 years without them.

We then moved back into the old building as timid little 6th graders and gained Cadi and Aaron as our classmates. We began to blossom and grow together as we spent time in groups performing musicals and playing sports.

I'll never forget watching the *Alice in Wonderland* musical where Garrett, Kyle, and Aaron gave a flawless performance as lobsters, or the fun times we had at middle school football and basketball games.

I distinctly remember when Lesleigh arrived at our school in 7th grade, and I showed her to her first class, not even realizing I had just met someone who would become such a huge part of my life and our class as a whole.

I also remember how hilarious it was when Stetson tried to give Lesleigh the definition of "over yonder" while on a field-trip to Piedmont College.

We finally got to 8th grade and thought we were something special, we had finally made it to the top and spent a truly wonderful year together, a year that we will never forget. That was the year that Bradley got sick, but God used his suffering as a bittersweet blessing in all of our lives. Through him we grew closer together, and I will always be grateful for that.

We spent amazing times answering trivia Questions in Coach Boyd's class, dressing up

as Book Characters, and going through our first graduation ceremony as a class where Ansley, Taylor, Lindy, and Caitlin showed us all just how talented they were as singers, because we already knew how beautifully they could dance.

We started at the bottom all over again when we began our first day of high school, but quickly began to love our role as fresh new high schoolers. My favorite memory from freshman year was playing Powder Puff football because I got to spend that time with so many of you, and because we beat Coach Ledford's team, which was truly an incredible feat.

We successfully finished freshman year and smoothly entered our days as sophomores. Yet again we spent an incredible year together growing into young adults. Most of us got our drivers licenses and thought we owned the road.

That was when so much more fun began. We'd hang out in the parking lot because that was our spot; it was where we'd always meet.

We rolled on into junior year, a year we had heard so many awful things about. All those rumors were true, junior year was tough, but we made it through because we stuck together.

I can still remember the sounds of us parading through the halls for our Spanish parade, and our laughter when we enjoyed our first prom together.

We finished those tedious Decade Projects and realized we were finally seniors.

We made it back to the top, and we knew that we had to make this year great. And great it was. We took our senior class picture, that was more like a picture of a crazy dysfunctional family, and we shared senior leadership day together where we learned that tossing a rubber

chicken was one of the most fun things we've ever done.

We also learned that if you try to put two boys on one swing, all three end up on the ground.

We figured out that the senior class is amazingly good at decorating pumpkins, and amazingly good at making a huge mess when trying to build a float, but man did that thing look good.

We all returned from Christmas break with an extreme case of senioritis, but I think we all finally recovered once that Econ EOCT was conquered.

We had so many great memories this year alone, and will get to relive them over and over as we watch the incredible senior video that Eryn produced.

I can officially say I left our mark on this school, not only through our achievements, but also through sidewalk chalk, sticky notes, and saran wrap.

We've had a great time as a class, as friends, and as leaders, but now we can look forward to watching each other have great times in the future as we go into college and our careers.

We've laughed together, cried together, faced good times and bad, but most importantly we've become one unit. We are the Class of 2014.

I want each of you to go out of here today and boldly face the world. I encourage you to live by these words that Randy Travis once said, "It's not what you take when you leave this world behind you. It's what you leave behind you when you go."

Be courageous, be kind, be truthful, and make sure you leave behind a beautiful legacy like we as a class have left here at Towns County High School.

Congratulations Class of 2014, we made it!

Grads ...

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from the get-go.

"In 1993, MECHS opened in Union County and we graduated three students," Chastain exclaimed to the crowd. "Since then, we have grown steadily year after year. The Union Site and Fannin Site faculty and staff are proud of our 31 students who are present tonight and the 12 others who have received diplomas earlier this year. Today we are pleased to have 24 Honor Graduates with us," she said, explaining that to be an honor graduate a student must maintain an 80 grade point average. "As you can see, we have a very intelligent group of graduates."

Chastain gave a breakdown of the future plans of the graduating class, as 6 percent plan to attend college, 52 percent plan to attend technical college or trade school, 33 percent plan to reenter or remain in the workforce, 8 percent plan to enter the armed forces while the remaining 1 percent is undecided.

A message from afar from the President of the United States as the Presidents Award for Academic Achievement of an 80 grade point average or higher on a 100 point scale, was accepted by 23 students.

"I'm pleased to join your family, friends and teachers in honoring this tremendous achievement," said Dana Lance, reading from the letter while summoning the presence of President Barack Obama. "America's continuing tests depends on how well your generation is prepared for the future."

Dr. Richard Behrens, Superintendent of MECHS, handed diplomas to the eager walkers as Governing Board members met them with salutations as well as send offs.

Angie Burns, Co-Union Site Administrator, turned to the students for the turning of their tassels on the day the students would never forget. With help from one another, students, faculty and staff at the Mountain Education Charter High School stood on the frontier of an unfading vignette; part of that rare thing, as Honor Graduate Holly Davis put it, that is not common or required - but something strived for.

Reece...from Page 1

his truck to market to sell his produce were other sounds the Reece boys heard on the farm.

"We knew the sound of Bill's truck because he drove so slow," Terry Reece said. "When he got to Enotah Cottages, he had to put it in second gear."

Byron Herbert Reece was an award-winning poet, but he was much more than that in life. There was a side to Hub Reece that many never saw. His life wasn't all despondency and depression.

"Uncle Hub worried about my schooling. He told me he didn't want me to be pumping gas, he wanted me to become an engineer," Terry Reece said. "The only engineer I knew about drove a train. He was talking about a civil engineer, a mechanical engineer or an electrical engineer."

"I told him that I would love to drive one of them trains, and have a pair of those black boots with the buckles on them," Terry Reece said. "He looked at me, and said, 'son, working at a service station might not be too bad for you.'"

T.J. Reece's kids were Hub Reece's family.

"We were his kids," Terry Reece said.

There was confusion and silence before and after Hub Reece took his own life on June 3, 1958 in Young Harris.



Byron Herbert Reece

Hub Reece loved Classical music; he often played Mozart in his studio on the farm. However, one day, the music sounding from Hub's studio sounded more like Hank Williams than Mozart. Hub began to play one record over and over, I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry.

The record became the only sound coming from Hub Reece's studio. It wouldn't be long before the song's existence in Hub Reece's life became clear.

The Hank Williams ballad became Hub Reece's death song. For what seemed an eternity, he had been dying of tuberculosis. The disease was incurable in his day. He could take it no more.

Wakes...from Page 1

the appropriately colorful RVs splashed with water sport themes. "We've teamed up with *In His Wakes*, touring the country and hanging out with the kids. It's very common for kids to not even know how to swim. Many of them are so terrified. But we like to start them on the tube to get them out there, let them have fun and allow them to forget about their worries for a while. A lot of these kids have never gotten the chance to do anything like this before in their lives and we give them the message that there's hope for their life. Some of the kids we've taken out into the water are foster kids and they've already seen so much in their lifetimes. We offer them hope, and that's the hope in Jesus."

This Is My Story, an Orlando FL, based ministry specializing in the production of

documentary films centered around professional athletes teamed up with *In His Wakes* for their second year in a row. With that in tow, they also partner with outreach programs, catering excitement and mentorship as they venture by land as well as by water.

Darren Brown, pastor at Vengeance Creek Baptist Church in Marble, NC, was at the wheel of a pontoon on Thursday, carefully disbursing kids donning vibrant lifejackets out onto Lake Chatuge as groups of other thrilled young ones sent waves echoing through the waters as they passed by.

"Along with today's events, our local ski club, *Liquid Feet*, gets involved with those throughout the community every Tuesday night," explained Brown, "And we share

devotionals together. It generally takes place between Memorial Day and Labor Day. It gives the kids a chance to learn how to minister to others. And that's what it's really all about."

Dr. Le Church, a local physician and resident of Hiawassee, joined by his wife Nancy, gathered with local volunteers from McConnell Memorial Baptist Church supplying food and beverages as rain accompanied the sunshine throughout the day. However, it did not dampen the occasion.

"We do a summer long ski ministry in an effort to reach those who might not otherwise get a chance to try water sports," Dr. Church said.

"The area is a little different from the city. These kids are hungry for this. We try to deliver a message that's just for them," he said.

Crafts...from Page 1

the house and he's at the other. I tell people I'm color blind," continued MacDougall when describing her wonderfully colored textile creations. "They've been wedding gifts, for ones that have been born and then for ones when they got older," she said. "I belong to a big quilt club in Arizona. They would come to show their works and I've found some patterns there."

Jackie Su West, artist and entrepreneur with Mountain Top Studio in Hiawassee, also finds astonishing things in remote places through her oil paintings of wooded scenes, rickety textured farmhouse porches and sunset views.

"One morning I got up to

a very cold morning on Ramey Mountain. It was very foggy. I looked up and the sun was shining on me and I felt God. I got chills," she said, expressing her inspiration.

Coming from a family of artists, she also expressed the importance of an individual's artistic style and how it is very personal, unlike anyone else.

Her father, Chiu Tung Su, who lived to see 103, was a world renowned painter by way of hobby.

"When it comes to painting, he was real strict," she went on to say. "He would have liked us to paint in his way, but I want my own character."

One's own character

continued to flourish as Flo Love Hernden, who once attended Savannah College of Art and Design and resided in Japan for more than 30 years, displayed her original Japanese paper art, layering dyed Washi paper atop one another to create scenes in nature as well as those Biblical.

After making a sale to a fellow patron, she described the happy accidents that Japanese paper, some of which she was acquired during her stays in Hawaii, allows during the dyeing process.

"I did this one piece of Jesus walking on the water because when I bought this paper I saw all these waves in it."

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