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Mount St. Charles graduates 173

Sunday, 07 June 2009

By ANDREW THOMPSON

WOONSOCKET — The sun was shining as the 173 red-and-blue robed members of Mount St. Charles Academy's Class of 2009 marched into the Brother Adelard Arena, which was already packed with parents, relatives, and guests.

Booming renditions of "Pomp and Circumstance" and "The Star Spangled Banner," played by Mount's Senior Band, filled the arena as the podium was given over to Mistress of Ceremonies Allison Marn, of Smithfield.

"This ceremony marks a time of transition in our lives," said Marn. "It is time to look to the future."

The Rev. Charles Quinn, the school chaplain, then led the arena in the Invocation.

Though there were only 173 members of the graduating class, over 200 diplomas were given out at Mount's 85th commencement. That's because more than 30 members of Mount's Class of 1959 received 50th anniversary diplomas as well, given by Brother Robert Croteau, Mount's President.

Salutatorian Kristina Klara, of Cumberland, delivered the Salutatory address. Klara spoke of a toy her parents had bought her when she was three, but all she wanted to do was play with its big cardboard box. "Confined by three-foot cardboard walls, I had my own miniaturized, manageable world," said Klara. She continued to explain how, growing through elementary school, middle school, and finally Mount St. Charles itself, her box gradually expanded to include more brilliant students and more priceless memories.

"I had to carve out some space for teachers and faculty... They even had a sense of humor," Klara said as the arena erupted in laughter. "Thanks for laughing, otherwise that would have been very ironic!" she said, relieved.

Klara's message to her fellow graduates was not to think outside the box, but to "live outside the box. But always carry it with you."

Then the moment culminating four (and in some cases six) years of hard work arrived: Principal Herve Richer began calling graduates up to receive their diplomas, also announcing each student's chosen institution of higher education as the names were called. As to be expected, many students (11) were going on to the University of Rhode Island, followed closely by Rhode Island College, Assumption College, Boston University, Providence College, and others.

After all students had officially turned their tassels, Valedictorian Emily Frazzette of Franklin, MA gave the Valedictory address. Frazzette quoted famed American poet Maya Angelou's poem, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," to explain that though the past six years for Frazzette and the rest of the graduating class have been of "careful construction; today, my cage and your cages will crumble. Today, we must decide what to do with the rubble," and how to move forward with their lives.

In a speech woven with both quotes from Desiderata, and puns for fellow classmates — "'Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there was in the silence,' unless you had classes with Dustin Picard," — Frazzette's message to her fellow graduates was to take the rubble from their cages and to "share your beauty with the world."

After Frazzette's speech, Principal Herve Richer gave his address before presenting the Academy's most prestigious senior awards: The Excelsior Award, given to Emily Foster, and The All Mountie Award, given to Kevin Peloquin.

"Back in 1974, when I was ready to begin college — none of my dreams included standing here as your principal," said Richer. "Something very unexpected came along."

So was Richer's main message, to listen to and take advantage of those unexpected opportunities. "Did Barack Obama know when he graduated from high school, that he would be the first African-American President of the United States?" questioned Richer. "I bet not, [he] had hopes and dreams, but something unexpected came along."

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