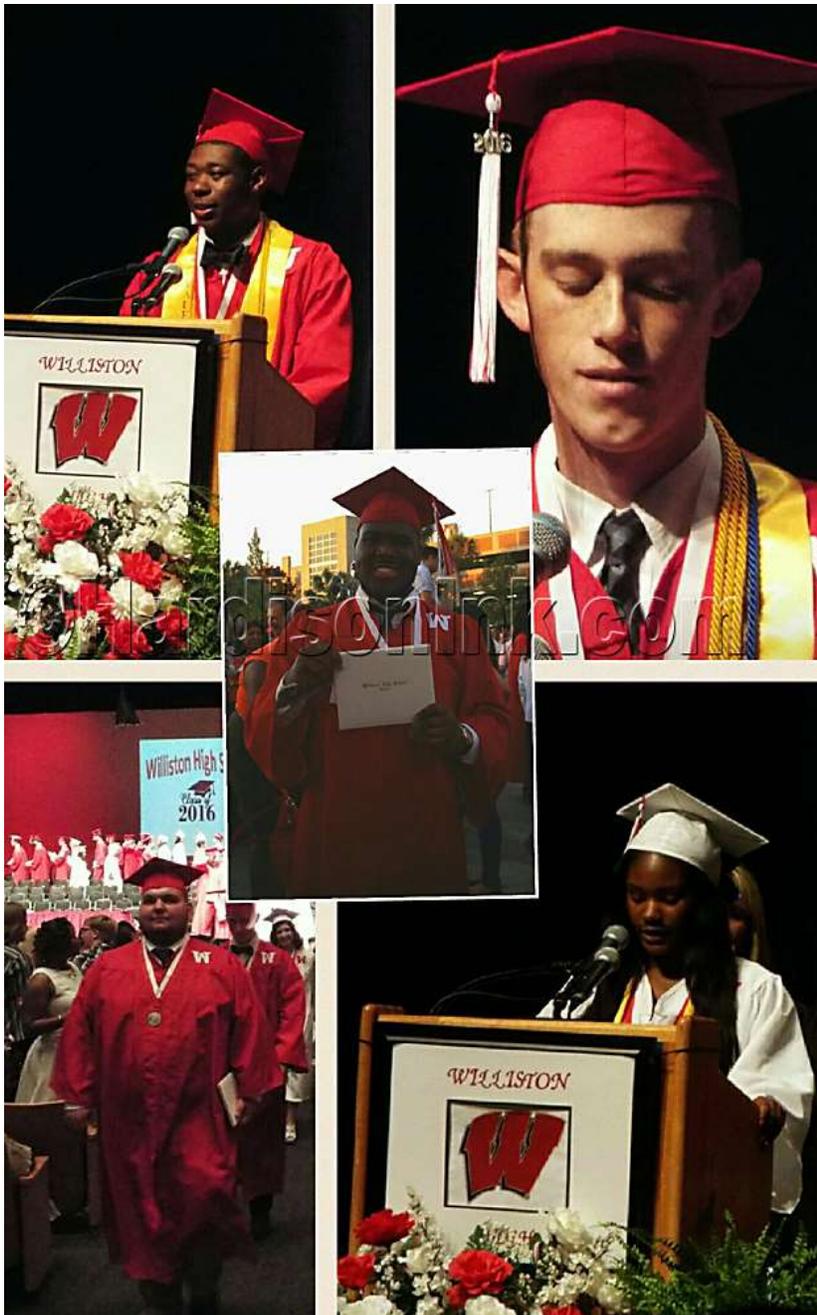


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WHS Class of 2016 graduates *Last class from old school makes history*



Story and Photos

By Rose Fant © June 11, 2016 @ 7:27 a.m.

GAINESVILLE -- Tuesday (June 7) marked another last for the old Williston High School (WHS) — the last graduating class.

With the scheduled move to a new school in the fall, which is going on schedule, members of the last class of graduates from the current WHS facility, 110 in total, moved their tassels from one side of the mortar board to the other.

It is a time of transition. As these graduates walked in their gowns and square academic caps in completing their high school careers, with all of the proper pomp and circumstance, so too WHS will be closing its doors to students later next month while it prepares to merge with Williston Middle School to form the brand new Williston Middle High School (WMHS).

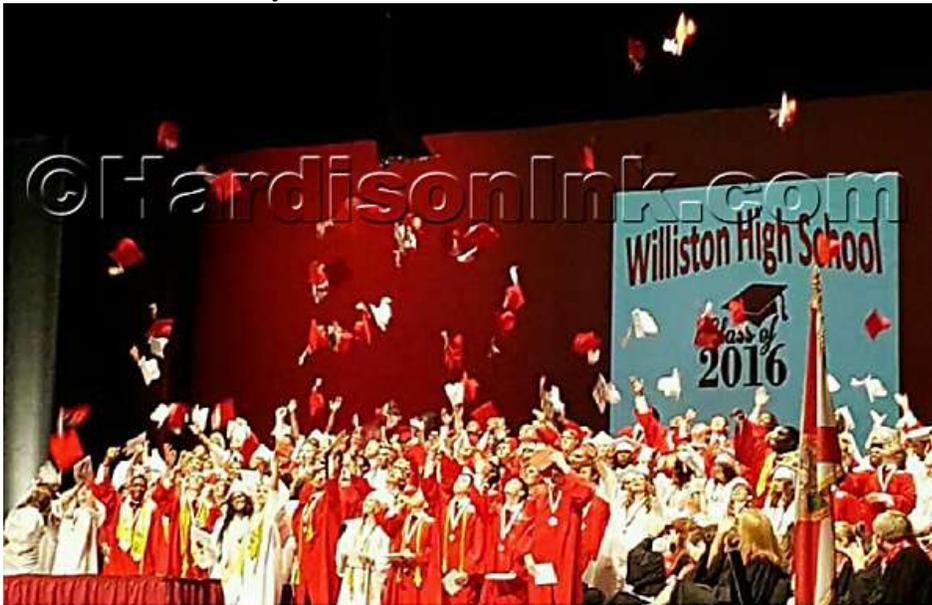
In excess of 1,200 people packed the auditorium at the Curtis M. Phillips Center at the University of Florida in Gainesville where the commencement exercises were held that fateful Tuesday night.

This class had the unique opportunity to say that they were the last group of students to graduate from the old WHS. They were the last class to

roam the halls for four full years. In claiming that honor, all graduates proudly donned the “W” insignia affixed to their robes.

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Many students were recognized for awards and scholarships received and their future plans to honorably serve in a branch of the United States military or attend various four-year colleges around the country.



There was a flawless presentation of the national anthem by Burmesia Pasco, a cadet in the WHS Army Jr. Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Class President Yanet Centeno's remarks preceded the salutatory and valedictory addresses. She encouraged classmates to follow the advice of Albert Einstein (March 14, 1879 - April 18, 1955) who said, "Never give up on what you really want to do. The person with big dreams is more powerful than one with all the facts."

Salutatorian Connor Edwards touched on what it is like to grow up in a small town. He charged his classmates with the task to create solutions to the problems facing the world and "leave the world a better place for future generations to come." He recognized the people in his life who have guided and encouraged him. He proudly recognized his step-father Jeff Phillips

for having taught him the value of hard work. He even gave kudos to his favorite teacher Bobbie Gowland for making hard work fun.

Valedictorian Willie Duncan began his allocution with a moment of silence in remembrance of the loved ones that have been lost in his life, in the lives of his classmates, and all of those family members and friends in attendance. He thanked God for those individuals he has had in his life. He remembers them in his daily prayers. In his speech, Duncan focused on the power of

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Williston's tightknit community.

Duncan stated that some students have come and gone. Some have been in Williston their whole lives. Some have come to WHS for only two years. He said "Anyone who comes or goes is always a part of Williston."

The young men and women in the Class of WHS 2016, moving forward, have obviously learned the value of belonging to their small town.



Only 110 students turned their tassels, but there was another student who was recognized as a graduate of WHS, one who has come and gone.

Stuart Bishop died in a single-vehicle accident in the middle of his junior year, graduated also. His parents Jonathen and B.J. Bishop were in attendance to accept the honor presented by Principal Lindsay Legler on their son's behalf, though they were too emotional to accept it at the time of presentation.

There was a slide show of all the pictures Stuey's classmates wanted to share, soundtracked with Cole Swindell's "You Should Be Here." The cap of every graduate was turned at the same time, all focusing on the slide show. It was a reverent moment.

After the diplomas were presented by Levy County School Board Superintendent Robert Hastings, School Board Member Brad Etheridge

and Principal Legler, the class transformed from WHS students to WHS alumni with the turning of the tassel.

The students promptly tossed their caps, tassels and all, into the air in traditional celebration of this milestone.

After the benediction, which was led by Remy Dube, the newest WHS alumni marched off of

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the stage and out of the doors of the Phillips Center in Gainesville to the tune of Jason Aldean's "Gonna Know We Were Here."

Congratulations to the Williston High School Class of 2016.



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BHS Class of 2016 graduates



BHS 2016 Salutatorian Allie Phillips gives her speech

Photos and Story

By Kearston Andrews © June 8, 2016 @ 3:57 p.m.

Updated June 8, 2016 @ 10:47 p.m.

GAINESVILLE – Members of the Bronson High School Class of 2016 accepted their diplomas at the Curtis M. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts in Gainesville Monday night (June 6).

Shortly after 7 p.m., two lines of graduates, donned in blue robes, entered from the back doors and proceeded down the aisles to the stage, where Levy County School Board members, special guests and faculty awaited them.

After all the graduates had found their seats on stage, the BHS Army JROTC Color Guard presented the Colors.



BMHS students (and sisters) Jordalyn Simon (left) and Jordanise Simon sing the national anthem.

Jordanise and Jordalyn Simon sang *The Star-Spangled Banner*, which was followed by the *Pledge of Allegiance* and invocation delivered by Scot White.

BHS Principal Gary Masters welcomed the

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students and guests. Masters introduced the guest speaker, chosen by the class of 2016, Jan Noble. Noble began her presentation by reminding the graduates, “It’s not over, it’s just beginning.”



Bronson Middle High School Principal Gary Masters (right) leaves the podium as the singers approach.

She reminisced on many shared memories from her Spanish class, dress-up and activity days, and chance encounters in the hallways.

Following her many words of encouragement and advice, Noble concluded by telling the graduates “When that road diverges in a yellow wood, take the one less traveled by!”

Seventy-four students made up the BHS Class of 2016, including Jan Gonthier, who achieved perfect attendance for her entire school career.

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After awards and honors, recipients were recognized.

Salutatorian Alena Phillips addressed her classmates. Phillips spoke about the many “first steps” they had taken to get to graduation day.

“Our first steps do not stop here... Tonight we will take our first steps into the next stage of our lives,” Phillips said.

In the concluding speech, Valedictorian Kaylyn Miller shared inspiration from the words of Dr. Seuss.

“Sometimes you never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory,” Miller said.

Miller went on to encourage her fellow classmates to “Always shine as bright as you can shine” and to remember that, “You and only you can light the way to your path.”

The conclusion of the ceremonies was the presentation of diplomas and the anticipated turning of the tassels.

Nobles returned to deliver the Alma Mater, which was followed by Masters giving the benediction.



The BHS Class of 2016.



Jenae Humble walks during the graduation event.

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Cedar Key School Class Of 2016 Graduates



Members of the Cedar Key School Class of 2016 pause for a photo opportunity. They are (from left) Jed Lynch, Abimael Rivera, Daniel Allen, Noah Webster, Marissa Hand, Nicole Cooper Alora Beckham, Cassie Lambert, Chloe Brown Joey Miller, Connor Goss, Walker Emrick, Larry Twinam, Janelle Severson, Jacob Bishop, Bryce Francis, Landrum Hamp, Vaughn Quinn, Jesse Brown, and Tabatha Hays. The class graduated on Saturday morning (June 4) at the school on the island.

Photo by Tina Berger © June 5, 2016 @ 10:07 a.m.
