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## Graduation Special Edition. Congratulations to All Anson County Graduates!

### 2014 Commencement Honors Anson County Graduates

Saturday, June 7 will be a day to remember in the lives of 215 graduating seniors from Anson New Technology School, Anson Academy, Anson County Early College and Anson High School. As the single file line of graduates walked slowly and deliberately toward their futures, with "Pomp and Circumstance" resonating through the stadium, you could see a broad range of emotions on the faces of the young seniors who were at last about to receive that much-anticipated diploma.



In observation we witnessed pride and excitement on the faces of many graduates who were eager to begin a new phase of their lives. We witnessed pensive contemplation on the faces of those who were eager, but at the same time, thoughtful about the next steps they faced. (See photo below right.) We witnessed utter bliss and gleeful exuberance on the faces of many graduates as they stepped excitedly toward their new beginnings. We witnessed a solemn sadness on the faces of those who realized that their comfortable, safe and secure high school years were over and that they now face unknown variables wherever their paths may lead. But throughout the vast sea of caps and gowns, happiness shone gloriously on each and every face in the crowd of graduates as well as on the faces of their family members and friends who were gathered in the stands.

Alphonzia Eugene Hill and Tyrus Deal Hubbard sang the *National Anthem*, James Earl Roberts, III recited the *Pledge of Allegiance* and Ashley Marie Turner gave the invocation to begin the morning ceremony. Mr. Michael Freeman, Superintendent of Schools, welcomed the graduates, dignitaries, families, friends, faculty and staff who had come to witness the special occasion. Mr. Freeman admitted, "I am always a little nervous when speaking before a crowd, but as I gaze out into the audience this morning, I see a mother and a grandmother who have always provided the encouragement I needed along my way. And with the same encouragement I have received, I now encourage you, the class of 2014. You have made many great accomplishments and you have worked together, even from different campuses, and we are proud of you all."



Morgan Taylor McCoy, Valedictorian from ANTS, confessed to being an introvert and one who did not speak much when she first began school. "I was told that if I didn't start speaking more I would be placed into a special class. So I started to speak! Hiding in the background gets you nowhere. You have a voice, so be loud and be heard. Choose your friends wisely, be steadfast and resilient," she further encouraged.

Just before his speech, D'Angelo Gatewood, Valedictorian from AHS, took a selfie. "It is selfie time," he said with a gleaming smile. "I was obsessed to become the 2014 valedictorian, that is until I realized I would be required to make a speech!" But Gatewood did find his voice as he shared some of the obstacles he faced while making it to the top of his class. "I grew up more than \$7,000 below the poverty line, with no father. It wasn't easy, but I survived. We should envision our future while realizing that we have the potential to do outstanding things. I chose to persevere and now have a full ride to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In fact, our class received more than \$300,000 in scholarships," Gatewood added. He offered special shoutouts to Rebeckah Pace (salutatorian) and Cassidy Johnson (third in the class) for pushing him with their own high achievements.

Celeste Renee Morton, Valedictorian from ACEC, said, "Confidence is hard to come by living in the backwoods of Anson County, but I am confident. From this day forward, whatever path we take, remember that Anson County is where our foundation was built. Be proud enough to return to Anson County, a place of friendship, love and a great education. Let us give back while living the lives we've dreamed of and take the pearl from the oyster."

Each senior marched across the stage and received their diploma with a firm handshake and congratulatory words of encouragement from their principals. Mr. Freeman signaled the ceremonial turning of the tassels, and in that instant the seniors became Anson County graduates. Shiffon Crump, Danesha McCray, Rebeckah Pace and Terrill Tillman provided the benediction, and the ceremony ended with the Recessional, *Suite Gothique-Allegro*. The proud graduates exited the stadium with haste and obvious jubilation as they waved good-bye, hugged classmates and smiled big smiles of happiness and excitement.

We extend heartfelt congratulations to each and every graduate in the class of 2014. Best wishes and good luck for a bright and successful future.  
Photos and story by  
Melanie Lyon



#### HONOR GRADUATES (Pictured below left)

- **Anson New Technology School** Morgan McCoy
- **Anson County Early College** Desiree Cox, Shiffon Crump, Aisha Jabeen, Kong-peng Lor, Celeste Morton and Dana Williams
- **Anson High School** Zahria Alderson, Morgan Burr, Allison Cameron, Christina Christian, Makeya Clark, Alexis Gaddy, D'Angelo Gatewood, Joshua Griffith, Sharon Hales, Ashton Harward, Azeem Hassan, Alphonzia Hill, Tyquan Huntley, Abbey Hutchinson, Allen Jackson II, Cassidy Johnson, Kayla Kastler, Scott Kendall, Kristin Little, Rebeckah Pace, Miranda Paul, Jonaathan Pope, Jamie Prouty, Deja Simmons, Triston Starling, Sierra Strickland, Jacob Thomas, Krystal Tillman and Juan Wall.

#### MARSHALS, 2014 (Pictured right)

- **Anson New Technology School** Roldan Biete, Devin Colson, Heather Justice, Benjamin Rivers and Dylan Thuleen
- **Anson County Early College** Tracey Brewer, Zachary Gardner, Amber Morton, Colton Snodgrass and Baonhia Vang
- **Anson High School** Brianna Boggan, Destinee Burch, Kayla Burr, Jessica Cox, Miranda Curran, Riki Dows, Kendall Griffin, Kelsey Harris, Grant Harward, McKayla High, Terrel Horne, Richard Johnson, Rachael Meachem, Maya Norton, Chanel Pauldo, Joy Spencer, Raven Spencer, Mallary Taylor, Laci Treadaway and Brittany Tyson

#### VALEDICTORIAN & SALUTATORIAN (Pictured below right)

- **Anson New Technology School** Valedictorian - Morgan McCoy, Salutatorian - Terrill Tillman
- **Anson County Early College** Valedictorian - Celeste Morton, Salutatorian - Shiffon Crump
- **Anson High School** Valedictorian - D'Angelo Gatewood, Salutatorian - Rebeckah Pace

