

The Virgin Islands Consortium

The 'Indomitable, Diverse Class Of 2017': Central High Graduates 224

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ST. CROIX -- Bringing to an end this year's public high school graduation ceremonies with a bang, the Central High School's "Indomitable, Diverse Class of 2017", with its 224 graduates -- the most out of all four high schools -- celebrated like none other, dancing in the aisle of the school's gymnasium as a reward to self for successfully closing one chapter in life.

The class saw 99 percent of its students graduating; out of all the public high school graduations this year, C.H.S. was the only one to graduate more males than females (117 to 107); eleven of the class's top 25 scholars were young men; 32 members of the class have decided to enter the military; and students received over \$6 million in

scholarships.

Governor Kenneth Mapp lauded the class; an alumni of the school, Mr. Mapp did not hide his pride, "I'm glad to be home in Carib country," he said to loud rounds of applause. Mr. Mapp implored the students to bask in the moment while it lasted, looking upon their family and friends and cherishing the fleeting joy of the milestone. "Because this moment will become a snapshot in time that will be forever engraved upon your hearts and minds... This moment represents the beginning of the rest of your lives," he said.

School Principal Janasee Sinclair, a passionate educator whose dedication to academia cannot escape anyone who'd care to observe, spoke of the graduation ceremony as a bittersweet moment, as students are to now embrace a world filled with possibilities and pitfalls. "You will be transported throughout the globe not knowing your true destinations. But please do not let fear overtake your sense of direction," she urged.

By the look of things, the Indomitable, Diverse Class of 2017, with their constant loud cheers and the eventual breakout out of dance in the middle of the aisle, were ready for their new challenge. Some will head straight to college, others the military, and some straight into the workforce -- all new adventures whose oppositions will be more difficult to overcome. Yet, there was a sense that the graduates were willing to face the challenge head on; after all, they deemed themselves indomitable, meaning impossible to subdue or defeat.

"We have made it this far, let's not stop here, let us go further, accomplish goals, enjoy the journey and fill up the chapter with your stories," said class salutatorian Dionara L. Alibocas.

"We are the architects of our own future," said valedictorian Wentworth J. Gumbs. He quoted Abraham Lincoln, who said, "The best way to predict your future is to create it."

Keynote speaker Thandi Mandisa Masilela, among other topics, spoke of the importance of having the right company. "Surround yourselves with those who see the greatness within you, even when you don't see it yourself."

In total, the territory's four public schools graduated 831 students this year.

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