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Fifty Years of Empowerment: Ivanna Eudora Kean High School Celebrates a Milestone Commencement

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Graduate celebrates during the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School 50th Commencement Ceremony on Thursday, May 18 2023. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Ivanna Eudora Kean High School proudly held its 50th commencement ceremony on Thursday, with a total of 130 students receiving their diplomas. It was a momentous occasion as the school celebrated half a century of empowering generations of students.

Principal Sally Petty, herself standing before a sea of graduating students in shimmering gold gowns, hailed their adaptiveness and perseverance throughout the global pandemic, a sentiment echoing throughout the territory's graduation ceremonies.

"There were moments this year when I struggled to bring out your best," Petty admitted, her eyes shining with pride as she addressed the graduating class. "Yet, today, you have evolved into a more outspoken, community-oriented, and expressive senior class." She acknowledged their collective resilience, emphasizing that they had weathered the ups and downs, agreements and dissent, struggles and progress together. "This momentous day was always about your success," she said.

Salutatorian Ayela Elene Riley delivered an emotional speech thanking the school's dedicated teachers and staff for their unwavering support throughout their high school journey. "We have persevered through challenges and achieved remarkable feats," Riley told her peers, highlighting the importance of education beyond facts and figures. "It has equipped us with critical thinking skills, resilience, and a thirst for knowledge. These qualities will serve as our compass, guiding us towards success and fulfillment."

Echoing Riley's sentiments, Valedictorian Destiny Martin emphasized the achievements of her class and the challenges that lie ahead. "Let's embrace innovation, compassion, and resilience as we navigate the uncharted territory of the future," she urged her classmates.

Ivanna Eudora Kean alumna and U.S. Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands, Delia Smith, shared her inspiring journey from a humble legal secretary in the Attorney General's office to becoming an Assistant Attorney General in the VI Department of Justice. She encouraged the graduates to pair hope with hard work, focus, and determination, and to be prepared to step into the shoes of leaders, such as herself.

"I need you to replace me. I need your leadership," Smith affirmed. "The future is in full view. You can go anywhere. You can do anything. You can study and become whatever your heart has the audacity to believe."

Commissioner of Education Dr. Dionne Wells- Hedrington also addressed the graduates, reminding them not to fear change but rather to embrace new directions that they might discover on their paths.

With over \$4.5 million earned in scholarships, aid, and awards, the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School Class of 2023 certainly demonstrated their academic prowess, according to Principal Petty, further cementing the school's legacy as a formidable educational institution. As the ceremony concluded, it was evident that this graduation was not just an end, but rather a thrilling beginning for 130 students embarking on a journey towards success and fulfillment.