

Parents get pat on back during William Tennent graduation

By Gary Weckselblatt Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, June 17, 2015 9:00 pm

At the behest of Jane Schrader Lynch, president of the Centennial School Board, 448 William Tennent High School seniors rose from their seats, turned and applauded for their parents filling the football stadium's stands.

"I hope you know how happy your parents are today," she said, adding "show them how much you appreciate all they have done for you."

Wednesday was a day of congratulations for students. As Principal Dennis Best said of graduating from high school, "It's an amazing accomplishment not everyone gets to do, so don't take it lightly." But Lynch wanted to give parents their due. After all, "this is the day they have waited for," she said.

From their first day in kindergarten, Lynch said, students would bring home their "little papers" and parents would tape them to the refrigerator. On Wednesday, their efforts earned them "another piece of paper."

Lynch called Tennent's 60th commencement ceremonies "the most enthusiastic graduation I have ever seen" and described the event as "unbelievable."

Indeed. Guests included 17 members of the 1965 graduating class celebrating their 50th class reunion and they, along with stadium stands filled with parents, siblings and relatives, heard words of wisdom from acting Superintendent Jennifer Polinchock, Best and class President William Suh.

While Tennent does not recognize a valedictorian or salutatorian, students with a cumulative grade-point average of 3.9 or better, summa cum laude, sat on the stage opposite school board members. They wore red, black and gold honor cords during the ceremony.

Polinchock, who graduated from Tennent 25 years ago, described the moment as a "pivotal time in your lives" and spoke of the importance of character. "Make choices and decisions you will be proud of," she said.

And she left them with the wisdom of a Chinese proverb:

"Watch your thoughts, for your thoughts become your words. Watch your words, for your words



Family members and friends cheer Wednesday, June 17, 2015, as William Tennent seniors enter the school's stadium during the school's Commencement Ceremony in Warminster.

become your actions. Watch your actions, for your actions become your habits. Watch your habits, for your habits become your character. Watch your character, for your character becomes your destiny.”

Best, the principal, also used a quote to make a point. He told the students that nothing is gained without hard work and took a comment from the great football coach Vince Lombardi, who said, “The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary.”

Best also told the graduates:

Always remember life is not a straight line. Be prepared for turns.

Always remember to give back.

Don't be in too big of a hurry to grow up.

Suh, the class president and a summa cum laude graduate, advised his classmates to always look both ways, as their parents surely did when their children ventured out into the world.

He called “our loved ones the crossing guides of our lives. Now we can let go of their guiding hand. ... Now is the time to take our next stride forward.”