

## **Hreat Mills H.S. graduates its largest class ever**

Posted by [Dick.Myers\\_Editor](#) On 05/29/2014

St. Mary's County's oldest high school had its largest graduating class ever on Wednesday. Great Mills High School graduated more than 400 students, during its 85th Commencement at St. Mary's College. The class was 50 students larger than the previous year.

Principal Jake Heibel in his welcoming remarks noted that the Class of 2014 had received more than \$13 million in scholarships. "Tonight marks the end of one journey and the beginning of another," he said.

Heibel underscored the changes the students have seen during their school years by observing that gasoline was \$1.61 a gallon when they entered kindergarten.

"Four years ago was a new and exciting and scary time for you and your parents," he said, adding "Think of how far you have come."

"To achieve success you need the support of key people in your life, like your parents," Heibel said, in praising their parents, he said, "Hopefully one day you will have a teenager just like yourself. You will then realize what they went through."

In addition to their parents, Heibel gave praise to the Great Mills High School teachers, whom he said sometimes fussed at then but at the same time "were believing in you."

Heibel went on to say, "The main reason you are here today is a direct result of the choices you have made along the way." From this point forward he said the graduates would have to work hard to achieve their goals. He said they would get knocked down but it is more important "if you get up."

The chief cheerleader for the school asked the Class of 2014 to "picture the possibilities" and concluded by shouting "Because, after all, 'We are'," to which the whole auditorium erupted with "... Great Mills."

School Superintendent Dr. Michael Martirano talks at every high school graduation, which he calls "the most exciting night of my whole year." The superintendent, who is a big Twitter fan, started his address by taking a cell phone picture of the graduates which he said he was going to tweet after the ceremony.

Later in his talk he noted the terrible winter which led to a record number of lost school days. He said he had received a number of ingenious messages urging him to close school and mentioned a few of them. One said, "My body is frozen and I can't go to school because I can't move." That post included a picture of an ice cube tray.

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