

# **Huntington High School's 150<sup>th</sup> Commencement**

## **Principal Dr. Carmela Leonardi's Address**

It is an honor for me to welcome students, faculty, parents, family members and members of the School Board here tonight.

Before I present my remarks I would like to take this opportunity to thank fellow administrators and deans for their work with students and their families. A special thank you goes to the teachers and support personnel who are committed to the success of every student at Huntington High School and continue to take a personal interest in their academic and social development. Our gratitude is extended to secretaries, security and custodians who work daily to support students, teachers, administrators and parents alike.

Huntington High School has a proud and proven tradition of academic, artistic, and athletic excellence. This tradition has been upheld over the years thanks to the talents of the student body, the support of dedicated families and the planning and hard work of educators who are experts in their respective content areas and pedagogy.

Members of the class of 2011 have shown a passion for life and a dedication to peers that are both strong and genuine. They enjoy expressing their individuality while at the same time they team up with peers to support their community by volunteering for local organizations and fundraising for needy causes. The class of 2011 has gifted athletes who will be playing competitive college level lacrosse, football, wrestling, and basketball. Those

who are artistically talented have competed in visual and performing arts events gaining accolades and awards.

A large number of the seniors before you took AP exams, played in band and orchestra, sang in chorus, and participated in school plays of professional caliber. They are for the most part gifted and generous young adults who are following their passions at the same time that they plan bright futures.

And now some hard data about all that they have accomplished. Many of our seniors challenged themselves with Advanced Placement courses that have the potential of earning them college level credits. 119 seniors took AP exams. 54 took three AP exams or more with 7 students taking five and 3 students taking six AP exams each for a collective total of 297 AP tests.

For this senior class, the college center processed 1,490 college applications. As of today the class of 2011 received \$ 10,776,423 in scholarship money, an increase of over 3,000,000 from last year. 93% of the 259 students sitting here today will be going to college. 4 % will attend career oriented programs, 1% will be taking a gap year traveling to Israel and joining AmeriCorps before beginning college and 2% will join the workforce.

Students will be attending Harvard, Cornell, University of Pennsylvania, the Julliard all SUNY and various out of state public and private colleges and universities including: Boston College, the Cooper Union, Fordham University, James Madison and Loyola University, United States Merchant

Marine Academy, Northeastern and Northwestern University, Purdue, Tulane, and Villanova University to name a few.

Some of the interesting majors they have selected include: forestry, photography, elementary education, computer science, naval architecture, vocal performance, film production, political science, accounting, nursing, health science, software engineering, marketing, fashion design and merchandizing, criminal justice, culinary arts, wildlife science, athletic training, biochemical, mechanical and electric engineering, English, business, occupational therapy, social work, video game design and development.

The exciting careers you are pursuing will present both challenges and satisfactions. Stay true to yourselves. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. believed: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." I encourage all of you to remain focused on the goals you have set for yourselves and conclude with the words of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. I hope she will inspire you over the years in the same way that she continues to inspire me:

People are often unreasonable,  
Illogical and self-centered;  
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse  
You of selfish, ulterior motives;  
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win  
Some false friends and some true enemies;  
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank,  
People may cheat you;  
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building,  
Someone may destroy overnight;  
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness,  
They may be jealous;  
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will  
Often forget tomorrow;  
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have,  
And it may never be enough;  
Give the world the best you've got anyway.

Congratulations to each member of the graduating class and their families. May you continue to experience great success in your future endeavors.