

WMST PCHS graduates urged to be the best

Graduation from high school is not the end, but rather it is the beginning, according to Washington Math Science Technology Public Charter High School commencement speaker Mr. Harvey Alston, chief executive officer of Best Inc. The 82 members of the WMST PCHS Class of 2011 graduated from the school on June 2 at Howard University's Cramton Auditorium in Washington.

An engaging speaker, Mr. Alston urged the graduates to “be the best,” and not allow obstacles to deter them from their goals. Judging from the class's reaction, Mr. Alston's message was well-received.

Shiesha L. McNeil, Class of 2011 valedictorian, addressed her classmates and the audience. Beginning her talk by reciting a poem she'd written, she thanked her teachers who have helped her, paid tribute to her classmates and thanked her mother. She plans to attend the University of North Carolina in the fall.

Saul B. Henderson, class salutatorian, also gave a speech, paying tribute to his mother, Ms. Sandra Henderson, WMST's director of admissions, and his sister, Ms. Rozena Henderson, a recent graduate of the University of Maryland and former valedictorian at WMST. Saul's mother homeschooled him before he attended WMST. Saul plans to attend Norfolk State University.

In addition to Henderson and McNeil, Class of 2011 graduates who earned academic honors were Jordan E. Bell, Christopher E. Johnson, Derrick L. Jones, Deondre C.K. Short, Martia C. Simms-Beard and Diamond Wren. Bell graduated No. 3 in the class, with Wren finishing fourth, Simms-Beard fifth, Johnson sixth, Heather Wimbush seventh, Nia Wilson eighth, Ashley Weems ninth and Jones tenth.

Ms. Sara Mead, DC Public Charter School Board member, spoke to WMST's graduates and the commencement audience. Mr. Harry Thomas, Jr., (Dem.-Ward 5) from the DC City Council, also addressed the Class of 2011, as did former WMST PCHS principal Mr. Floyd Gilmore and former WMST teacher Mr. Spencer Carey. Ms. Jeneen Y. Ramos, president of the WMST PCHS board of trustees, and board treasurer Mr. James A. “Mitch” Mitchell also addressed the Class of 2011 and the Cramton Auditorium audience.

Interim WMST Head of School Dr. N'Deye Diagne presided at the commencement.

Under the direction of Ms. Gail Freeman, the WMST school choir performed “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “The Alma Mater.” Members of the WMST Air Force ROTC drill team served as bearers of the colors.