

## NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Photo by Kevin Walker

The ribbon was cut last Thursday to ceremoniously open the new Forsyth County Sheriff's Office. It is located in the Forsyth County Public Safety Center at 301 N. Church St. The previous location on Second Street was 50,000-square feet; the new site is more than twice that square footage and boasts features like a gym, a computer lab, classrooms and a communication center. The building, a former R.J. Reynolds' office, and its renovations cost upwards of \$30 million.

## WSSU prepares for graduation

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Twitter.

For the first time, Winston-Salem State University is holding its graduation at Bowman Gray Stadium, which it is in the process of purchasing from the city. The service will be Friday, May 16 at 9:45 a.m.

The new location has more space, so guests won't be required to have tickets. If there is inclement weather, the commencement would return to the LJVM Coliseum. If that should happen, a broadcast email will be sent to all students, faculty and staff; a recorded message will be placed on the WSSU Weather Line which is 336-750-3456; and information will be posted on the WSSU web site, Facebook page and

Steve Pemberton, the chief diversity officer and divisional vice president for Walgreens, will be the commencement speaker.

Gates will open at 8 a.m. and due to construction in the area, normal Friday morning traffic and the number of commencement attendees expected, guests are urged to leave plenty of time to get to the stadium, park and get to the seating areas. Guest park-

ing will be free and available in the Bowman Gray West and West lots, the Civitan Park lot and WSSU lots EE, R and O. Parking will not be permitted at businesses near the stadium.

The university has created a web site at [www.wssu.edu/administration/registrar/commencement/default.aspx](http://www.wssu.edu/administration/registrar/commencement/default.aspx) which covers all the pertinent information for students, faculty and guests.

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## Graduation

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crimination and harassment on campus.

Yet, Mazaris said the graduation was also a celebration of the progress that has been made at Wake Forest, a school founded by the State Baptist Convention. Since opening its doors in 2011, the LGBTQ Center, which is open to all students, has seen a tenfold increase in visitors and more than 500 students and faculty members have completed its Safe Zone LGBTQ education training program.

Mazaris encouraged the graduates and guests to "allow our wins to encourage us as we continue to work towards a campus that nourishes and celebrates every single one of us."

Being openly gay at a prestigious university like Wake is not for the faint of heart, Christopher Gonzales La Corte said during his remarks. The theatre major said he was subjected to "racist and homophobic" vandalism on campus, including an incident in his dorm where a wet floor sign was doctored to read, "Caution: Gay Men."

"It has been a struggle for me to be on this campus, financially, emotionally and physically," he related. "Being a gay Hispanic male who's into the arts on this campus has been totally out there."

Gonzales La Corte said he never turned a blind eye to intolerance; instead, he spoke out and stood up against injustices wherever he encountered them.

"To the graduates: take this into the real world, because these issues extend far beyond the Wake Forest bubble — speak up," he said.

Jessica Leutchter said she remained closeted until her sophomore year.

"Something inside me felt that although I had been accepted to Wake Forest, I might not be accepted at Wake Forest," she confessed.

The chemistry major gradually began identifying as a lesbian to friends and acquaintances and taking part in affirming campus activities, such as Shabbat dinners with fellow members of the school's GSSA (Gay-Straight Student Alliance).

"I realized that in order to be happy, I needed to accept my identity fully," she related. "I had to accept this part first, and then everything else would fall into place."

Leutchter said the LGBTQ Center's presence has made Wake Forest feel like "a different school." The support of the WFU faculty members and the Center have been invaluable to her, she added.

"I could go on and on about the support I felt from faculty and staff here, but the point is that I felt safe, and I felt



Photo by Layla Garmy

Dr. Angela Mazaris shares a hug with Lavender graduate April Johnson, a 2014 alumna of the School of Divinity.

accepted," Leutchter declared. "... Gradually, I brought my whole self to Wake Forest, and now I am going to have a hard time leaving it all behind."

Vice President of Campus Life Dr. Penny Rue applauded the Lavender graduates for their courage and leadership.

"Before there was an LGBTQ Center or an Angela, or a Safe Zone training, you came and you made Wake Forest home, and you made our campus better for it," she declared. "As someone who is passionate about this community, I'm very grateful and I thank you (for that). You have claimed your place at Wake Forest and we will hold you in our hearts forever."

Keynote speaker J. Robby Gregg, a 1983 Wake Forest graduate, marveled at how much things have changed at the university.

"It was a whole different world. The people were different, the issues were different. I was black and I was gay, but the gay part didn't even come out. It was enough just to be a person of color at a majority white institution of higher learning," related Gregg, a LGBTQ advocate. "...As I hear the stories and I hear the folks talk about the things that they've been through, it makes me feel good because we've come a long way."

Dr. Maya Angelou was among the professors who taught Gregg at Wake. He gave graduates the same charge that Dr. Angelou gave him and other students.

"Dare to love, dare to care, dare to be significant and admit," he said, quoting Angelou. "I stand up, I stand out, and I hope you'll do the same."

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All events are free and are held at Novant Health Conference Center, Forsyth Medical Center.

Please call 336-718-7000 to register or for more information.

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