

**"Our light was created not to be put under the bed but to be put on a lamp stand so that everybody that walks in that room can see that light and recognize that light,"**

— Common

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something. "What are you willing to die for? Live for that." These are the words that were spoken to us on the first day of rehearsal of 'Selma' by Ambassador Andrew Young. These words resonated with me and I went home from that rehearsal and thought about that. I found out that I'm willing to die for what I believe in and my creator. So I thought, that's what I should live for," he said. "When you reach the highest potential, or greatness, within yourself, you inspire others to do the same. To reach that greatness, you have to find your path, believe in your path and live your path."

He went on to give graduates examples from his path, including Little League basketball, when he first began rapping, his break-up from Erykah Badu, the death of his cousin and losing out at the Grammy's despite five nominations.

"As you step into your greatness, remember the greatest of you is those who serve. As you find your path, believe in your path and live your path, you know that you entered to learn and now must depart to serve," he said. "You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love, and you can be that servant."

The artist told graduates not to dim their lights, or downplay their talents, for others.

"Our light was created not to be put under the bed but to be put on a lamp stand so that everybody that walks in that room can see that light and recognize that light," he said.

The hip-hop artist, actor, author and philanthropist was presented with an honorary degree of a Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Nontraditional student Sharon Stewart could relate to what Common was telling the students and in some ways had already begun the process.

The 62-year-old student can now live her path with a bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Studies. Stewart calls Friday's accomplishment "a blessing from God" as she works on her second career.

"After I got laid off from my previous job working in human services, I decided I wanted to go to school," she said. "At times it was a struggle but I did it."

Stewart hopes to own her own business and plans to come back to WSSU to work on her master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

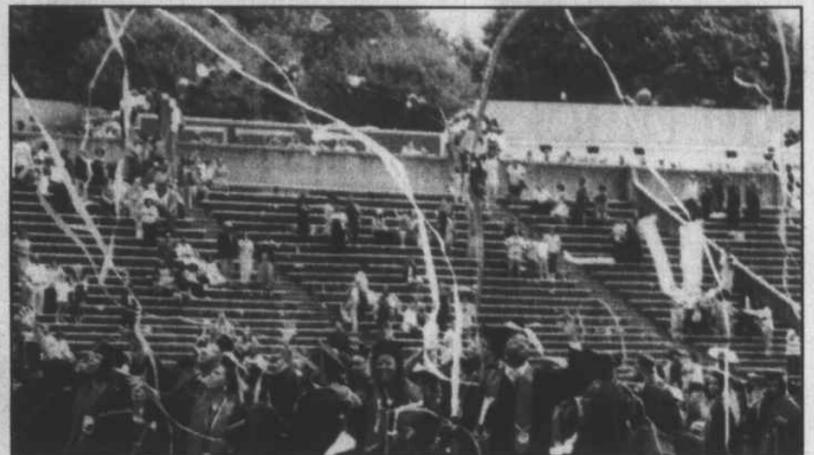
Graduating Senior and Student Government Association President Olivia N. Sedwick encouraged graduates to depart and serve in the communities that they will enter.

"The motto of our university, the very core of her existence, is that of action. Seeing the need and then making the necessary steps to meet that need," she said.

"We now have the responsibility to invest in ourselves, the communities from whence we came and know the university that has prepared us for the world that awaits. The place that we have called home for the last several years is releasing us to do as our founder Simon G. Atkins intended us to do: Depart, Serve and Change the world. So 2015 graduates, class is now dismissed."



Common delivers the commencement address at the Winston-Salem State University graduation in Bowman Gray Stadium, Friday, May 15.



Graduates celebrate as the ceremonies end at Winston-Salem State University's graduation in Bowman Gray Stadium on Friday, May 15.



Photos by Erin Mizelle for the Winston-Salem Chronicle

The future *Late Show* host, Stephen Colbert, delivers a witty yet insightful commencement address at Wake Forest University on Monday, May 18, 2015, saying that it's "time to say goodbye to the person we've become."

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motions and plodding along on someone else's treadmill. Breathing deeply might just put you in touch with your own deepest calling."

That sentiment rings true for graduate Hannah Akpaete. The 23-year-old graduated Monday with a degree in Health and Exercise Science but she teaches at least 30 first graders every day at Rashkis Elementary in Chapel Hill.

"I figured out last year that I wanted to teach and that I wanted to work in a low-income area to help children," she said. "If I wasn't in the classroom, I'd teach health education."

Akpaete said that eventually she wants to work with middle schoolers.

"You can mold them and pique their curiosities while getting them ready for the rest of their lives," she said.

Late-night television host, satirical comedian and author Stephen T. Colbert addressed the class of 2015, telling them to set their own standards

and give themselves grades. After joking about Wake Forest and the graduates' time there, he reminded them that those days are in their past after today. He told them that while he does not know what their future looks like, he feels it is appropriate that he would be addressing them "because I just spent many years learning to do one thing really well."

"I got so comfortable in that place, that role and those responsibilities that it became how I saw myself. But now that part of my life is over, it's time to say goodbye to the person we've become, we've worked so hard to perfect and to make some crucial decisions on who we will be," he said. "For me, I'll have to figure out how to do an hour-long show every night and you at some point will have to figure out how to sleep. I'm told the Adderall wears off eventually, good luck."

Colbert said that the graduates should not be new to uncertainty and that they may miss being graded on all their work. He told them to have the courage to accept what's right and what's wrong while making the world

right around them. "When you're out of school, there is no objective criteria for the work you do. People my age will say that thing you did, that thing you said, that cause you championed, it's not good," he said. "Having your own standards will help you weather moments like that. Having your own standards allows you to perceive success where others may see failure. Any standard worth having will be hard to meet and most of the time you will fall short. What is nice about having your own set of standards is that from now on you fill out your report card. So do yourself a favor, be an easy grader, score yourself on a curve and give yourself extra credit."

Closing with a quote from the new "Mad Max:Fury Road" movie, Colbert told graduates:

"All you young folks really need to succeed in the future is a reliable source of fuel and a fanatical cadre of psychopathic motorcycle killers. May you ride eternal, shiny and chrome."

The university also presented Colbert with an honorary Doctorate of Human Letters degree.

**Forsyth Medical Center's Women's Council announces 2015 grants**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Women's Council of Forsyth Medical Center Foundation has announced a 2015 commitment of \$49,400 in grants to six programs that focus on raising the standard for women's health care by helping underserved women and recognizing specialized medical needs of women.

With these new grants, the Women's Council has provided nearly \$425,000

to women's health programs since 2009.

The grants were announced at the seventh annual Garden Party fundraiser "April Showers" that was held at Forsyth Country Club on April 17.

The foundation helps Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center programs.

Programs receiving grants are \$7,500 for Breast MRI; \$5,400 for Health Coaching for Underserved Women; \$25,000 for a Peer Support Specialist; \$2,500

for Heart Disease Risk Assessments for Hispanic Women; \$3,000 for High-Risk Maternity Unit; and \$6,000 for The Weigh for You.

The Women's Council of Forsyth Medical Center Foundation is an organization of nearly 200 women who want to improve the health of women in the Winston-Salem community, primarily underserved women. It was created by women for women in 2008. The Council's mission

is to involve women in raising the standard for women's health care and expanding health-care opportunities for all women regardless of their economic circumstances.

The Women's Council will focus on ensuring that life is a healthy journey for as many women as possible by making sure that resources for good health are available.

Funding is derived from membership dues.

**May is Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month!**

To learn more about our Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs: **Teen Talk and the Teen Initiative Project (TIP).** Visit our website at <http://www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealthPrograms.aspx> For more info, email [hoffmalm@forsyth.cc](mailto:hoffmalm@forsyth.cc) or [gabriel@forsyth.cc](mailto:gabriel@forsyth.cc)

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Forsyth County Department of Public Health Promoting Health, Improving Lives

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