

# South Brunswick Graduation Marked By Joy And Sadness

BY RAHN ADAMS

A hush fell over the South Brunswick High School football stadium during an otherwise festive commencement program last Wednesday night, as the overflow crowd observed a moment of silence for one of the school's 200 graduating seniors.

Sitting quietly with faculty members and other special guests near the podium, Mary Maggard—mother of the late Robert Horace Blanton—watched as seniors Luke Hunt and William Sullivan accepted her son's diploma from Principal Mose Lewis.

The two young men, in their navy blue caps and gowns, somberly carried the diploma to their friend's mother, embraced her and returned to their places in the long line of graduates.

Minutes later, as South Brunswick High School's Class of 1988 filed out of the stadium, Mrs. Maggard reflected on the ceremony that would have been much happier for her, if not for the tragic automobile accident that claimed her 17-year-old son's life in March.

"I think it was nice," she said of the school's decision to award Robert's diploma posthumously. "It (the graduation ceremony) was sad—but joyous, too, for the other ones. And I pray that the Lord will go with each and every one of them."

"Joyous" was, in fact, the best way to typify the hour-long commencement exercise. Brunswick County Commissioner Jim Poole opened the program by presenting the school's championship baseball team with resolutions of appreciation from the county.

Meanwhile, the threat of thunder-showers added an extra element of excitement to what was already an exuberant occasion on the whole.

"A long, boring speech is another graduation tradition, and I was going to give you that speech," said School Superintendent John Kaufhold. "But as I look at the clouds, I change my mind."

"Thank you!" a man shouted from the grandstand.

Instead, Kaufhold briefly encouraged the graduates to consider their "commencement" program as a new beginning, despite their success or failure in high school.

"If I held a glass," Kaufhold concluded, holding out his hand to the seniors, "I would make this toast: To new beginnings—make the most of them."

Another commencement speaker, Board of Education Chairman James Forstner, also encouraged the graduates always to do their best, no matter what occupations they choose. "The world will know you by your work," he said.

And in the class's farewell address, Valedictorian Maria Ward compared

graduation to stepping through a door into the future.

"If we can accomplish so much in four years, think of what we can do in a lifetime," she said. "It is time for the Class of '88 to let go of the doorknob and leap into the dark."

Others participating in the commencement program included senior class President Patrick Bryant, Salutatorian Robin Vivitoe, Assistant Principals Les Tabb and Roland English, and the South Brunswick High School Band.

Presidential Academic Fitness Awards were presented to honor graduates Charles Baldwin, David Bean, Carolyn Busse, Tiffany Clements, Bernard Flythe, Eddie Kirby, Dawn Rohde, Robin Vivitoe, Woody Walls, Maria Ward and Amy Yount.

Other honor graduates included Julie Allen, Joellen Best, Matthew

Blake, Karen Bogart, Shan Bogart, Zachary Cathey, Bryon Chandler, Glenda Creech, Raymond Englerth, Amanda Holland, Tracey Howard and Luke Hunt.

Also, Quinton McCracken, Jeanine Molek, Kristi Nelson, Michael Pany, Dionne Parker, Scott Parks, Rachel Ragsdale, Ellen Ramsey, Nancy Renn, Wayne Sanderlin, Michiko Sato, Marcus Spencer and Kristel Wallin.

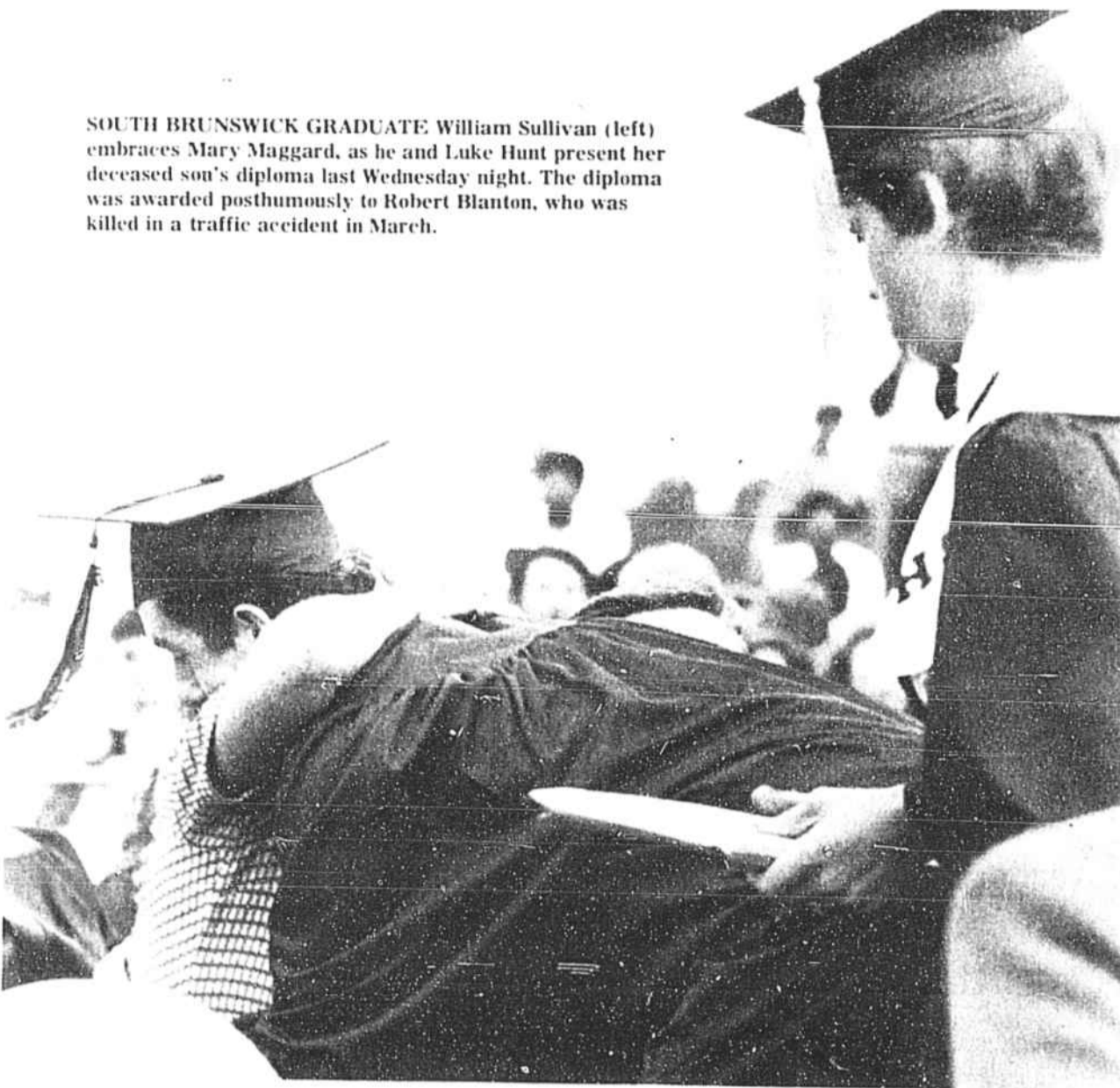
Extraordinary Effort Awards were presented to Joy Hewitt and Tina Marie Hart.

Maria Ward, Marcus Spencer, Woody Kirby, Bernard Flythe, Luke Hunt, Crystal McDowell, Tim Brown and Shawn Bryant were recognized for perfect attendance during their senior years. Also, Bryant received a \$50 savings bond for 12 years of perfect attendance.



COUGAR BASEBALL STAR WYNN BECK (left) accepts a resolution of appreciation from Brunswick County Commissioner Jim Poole during the commencement program last Wednesday at South Brunswick High School, as members of the championship team were individually honored. Also pictured are Principal Mose Lewis (right) and Assistant Principal Roland English.

SOUTH BRUNSWICK GRADUATE William Sullivan (left) embraces Mary Maggard, as he and Luke Hunt present her deceased son's diploma last Wednesday night. The diploma was awarded posthumously to Robert Blanton, who was killed in a traffic accident in March.



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