

## Public Parade

### Hats Off To Holmes

John A. Holmes seniors took the nation's top academic superbowl honors Tuesday when they stood in as surrogates for high school graduates across the country while President Reagan delivered the commencement address at the White House.

And they did it almost without realizing what they were about.

It was late Wednesday when Principal Rob Boyce received a telephone call extending a special invitation to the John A. Holmes seniors to attend the President's address at the White House on Tuesday, May 13.

It being the season for pranks and the date being the 13th, the principal was at first skeptical, asking the aide on the other end of the line if the invitation were the real thing. A few more details convinced him.

The seniors were being invited to Washington to receive their commencement address in person from the President, who would be speaking through them to all other seniors getting their diplomas this spring. The Holmes class had been selected for the honor by Secretary of Education William Bennett, primarily on the basis of the school's receiving the National Secondary School of Excellence award last year.

In any event, it adds up to an honor which will make John A. Holmes seniors the envy of their contemporaries not only across North Carolina, but the whole country. And it means that John A. Holmes administrators, faculty and students must be doing some things right.

In the recent past, schools everywhere have had a difficult time trying to devise ways through which attention could be focused on academic excellence as it seems naturally to be focused on athletic prowess. Historically, John A. Holmes has won its share of athletic laurels on the football field, the basketball court and in other sports.

Now, beginning with the National Secondary School Excellence award and continuing with the invitation to the White House, the scales seem to be coming into balance.

So, we want to congratulate Secretary Bennett and President Reagan for thinking up the occasion and the staff and students at John A. Holmes High School for

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## President Reagan Addresses Area Students At Rose Garden

By JACK GROVE

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A bright and shining class of '86 from John A. Holmes heard a special address to them from the President of the United States in the Rose Garden of the White House Tuesday afternoon. President Ronald Reagan spoke to them and through them to all high school senior in the nation via live TV and radio.

Holmes' seniors were picked from among 208 schools that received the National Excellence in Education Award last year according to Assistant Secretary of Education for Secondary and Elementary Education, Larry Davenport.

Davenport represented U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett at the White House function.

Patricia McKee of the Education Department's Secondary School Recognition Program expanded on the selection process. She said that department personnel were asked to recommend nominees for forwarding to the White House.

McKee said that the following

outstanding characteristics of the educational program at John A. Holmes contributed to the school's selection:

\*An increase of 150 percent in student SAT scores over the past five years;

\*The lowest dropout rate in the state;

\*And a 34 percent reduction in discipline problems.

The department sent over five nominations and the President's Scheduling Staff chose John A. Holmes.

The President's upbeat 1 p.m. speech began with a "welcome to the White House and thank you for coming."

He spoke of an improving economy and "good news in defense funding." He said, "All that we've ever done was done with your future in mind."

The President continued, "It's important that you're fit for the future and that you can be all that you can be. So go for it."

The seniors were told, "The biggest contribution you can make is to become a good citizen." He added that ways to accomplish

this included becoming teachers in a growing teacher shortage situation; staying in school and he emphasized the importance of voting.

The President urged the students to retain "a clear mind and steady intellect." "Drugs are just a dead end street. I want to tell you I'm enjoying myself because I'm fit," he said.

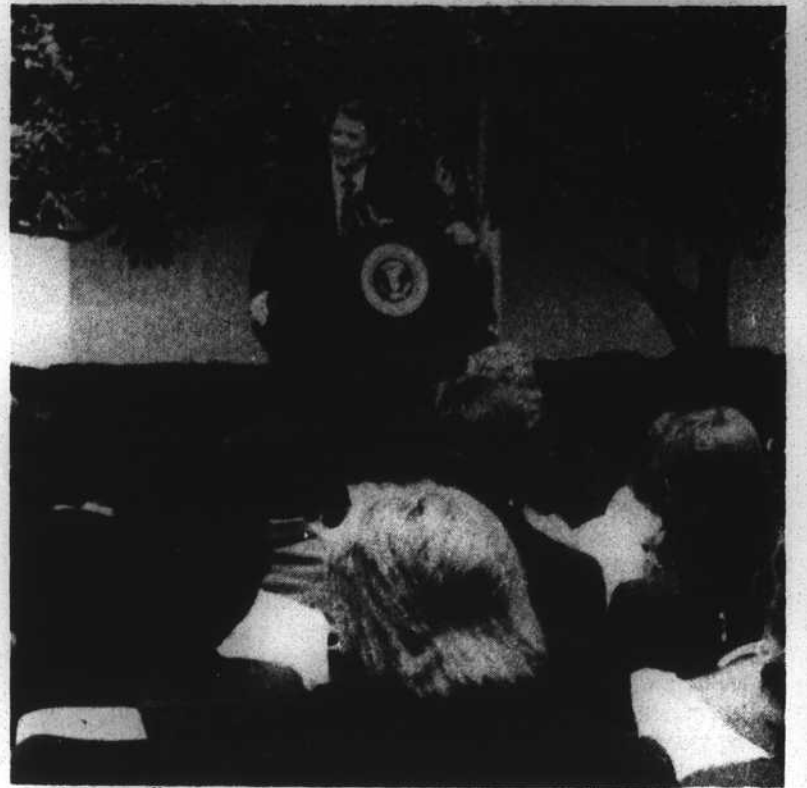
President Reagan concluded his remarks by speaking directly to the Edenton Seniors. "You have much before you. All I can say is that you've begun brilliantly."

There was time for questions from eight seniors to the President. (Twenty students were prepared to ask questions.) They included:

Ques.—Saundra Rountree asked, "will we be able to receive Social Security when we retire?"

Ans.—"When I came here, we saw Social Security was in trouble. We put together a bi-partisan commission to find solutions. As far as we can see now, Social Security is on a sound financial basis."

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**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**—President Ronald Reagan addresses the senior class of John A. Holmes High School in the Rose Garden of the White House Tuesday afternoon. He told the Class of '86 that the future belonged to them. The seniors were honored as representing the best in American high school students.

## Drought Plagues Area

The threat of woodland fires is very much on the minds of foresters as a spring drought con-

tinues to plague the Albemarle area. Weather records show that this is the driest spring since 1895 according to Chowan County Ranger Roger Spivey. Burning permits were cancelled May 2 for the second time this year and the ban remains in effect.

Spivey said that since 1980, the area has averaged a shortfall of one foot in rain. This holds true for the southern mountain area as well, with only the Piedmont receiving its normal amount of rain over this period.

There have been eleven woods fires since the first of the year in Chowan County with 43 fires total for all of last year.

Spivey said, "Scattered showers won't do us much good. We need two inches plus, of continuous rainfall, light winds, and a high relative humidity to ease the fire danger."

A forest fire, called, "very, very dangerous," has been burning out of control in Onslow and Pender Counties for almost two weeks. The fire had burned over 70,000 acres or some 109 square miles by Monday. Eight forestry personnel and one tractor/plow unit from the N.C. Forest Service's District Seven (based in Elizabeth City) were sent to that fire.

County residents may have smelled smoke over the past several days from a large fire north of Winfall or another fire burning about 400 acres at Moyock, a peat fire. Smoke was carried to this area by northeast winds.

Spivey said, "We ask the public's continued cooperation by not burning in this extreme fire danger period." He said that no outdoor burning permits are being issued until the fire danger has passed.

Burning permits are not re-

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**TV INTERVIEW**—Senior Mary Rich was one of many Holmes students surrounded and interviewed by the news media on the South Lawn of the White House. Here she is interviewed by a news team from WRAL-TV from Raleigh.

## Senior Class Enthusiastic About Washington Trip

Tuesday, May 12, was an exciting day for the senior class of John A. Holmes High School. As in a dream, they boarded four

chartered buses around 6 a.m. and began their trip of a life-time to Washington, D.C. and the White House as guests of the President



**ON TO THE CAPITOL**—The senior class boards buses after hearing an address by President Reagan at the White House. After some free time in the Capitol area, they toured the building.

of the United States.

Leaving Edenton, they saw a sign held up by students and residents that said "We're proud of you." And indeed they were proud and excited to be picked as the best of all American high school classes to represent their peers across the nation for a Presidential address.

Their first stop was as guests of McDonald's at Chester, VA for breakfast. Things settled down in the buses until they rolled into the nation's capitol when the feeling of excitement rippled through the air again.

The students soon found that the

threat of terrorism is not taken lightly these days in Washington. Concrete barriers ringed the street curbing around the White House and security was tight entering the grounds. The Seniors driver's licenses were checked against a master list and they passed through metal detectors before being escorted to the South Lawn.

Arriving at about 12:15 p.m., the 139 students and 21 educators (plus six news media personnel in the party) found refreshments laid out on white linen.

The Edenton group took their

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## Local Officials Discuss Fund Allocations

Town and county officials and several interested individuals met Tuesday at noon with First District Highway Commissioner Kenneth Roberson and DOT Divisional Engineer F.W. Adkins.

The informal meeting was held in the Carolina Room of Gaslight Square and took on the flavor of a panel discussion as questions and observations were directed to Roberson and Adkins. The commissioner stated that he believed

Governor James Martin has a good program outlined and projected a bright outlook.

Roberson said he could possibly get a maximum allocation of \$150,000 for Edenton but needed a proposal of priorities from the town just as soon as possible for presentation to his board in early June.

Priorities mentioned were widening and curbing and guttering of Paradise Road and a

similar Queen Street Extended project.

Attending the meeting were Mayor John Dowd; Town Administrator Sam Noble; Town Council Members Alan B. Harless, Marina Crummy, E.N. Manning and Willis Privott; County Board of Commissioners Chairman Alton Elmore; and N.J. George, Hoke Roberson, Gilliam Wood and John Wood.



**INFORMAL MEETING**—Town and county officials and private citizens confer with DOT officials Tuesday. Kenneth Roberson, of Robersonville, DOT Board Member, (middle left) answers Councilman Willis Privott's question (right).

## R.M. Thompson Seeks Runoff

Chowan County candidate R.M. "Pete" Thompson announced Monday that he would seek a runoff against Winifred "Winnie" Wood of Camden. Thompson and Wood were among six candidates for the Democratic nomination for two seats in the N.C. House of Representatives in last week's primary.

Incumbent Vernon James topped the voting to cinch nomination for one of the seats. Wood received 5,883 votes and Thompson garnered 5,864, a difference of only 19 votes. Each received 17 percent of the vote, but needed 25 percent plus one vote for the nomination.

In his announcement Thompson said, "Because of the support that has surfaced, I am asking for a runoff for the First District Representative. With the wide field that was in the first primary and the narrow spread between

the second and sixth positions, I feel that the voters in the first District should have this opportunity."

Thompson continued, "I know that I can work well with the elected officials in the municipalities, counties and state government. My interest in education, highways, agriculture and economic development is strong. Regional development is essential, with all nine counties in the First District having to work together."

He concluded, "These are my reasons, along with the encouragement of my supporters, that I have chosen to seek a second primary."

The runoff will be held on June 3, with the winner facing Republican Shirley Perry of Perquimans in the general election in November.

## Fugitive Apprehended

The F.B.I. announced Wednesday afternoon that Prentice S. Valentine, 29, of Edenton, was arrested by agents on Tuesday in Edenton.

Valentine was indicted by a federal grand jury on May 5 in Alexandria, VA on a charge of rape on a government reservation. The alleged rape took place at Fort Belvoir, VA on October 31, 1985.

Valentine was brought before U.S. District Judge Terrence W. Boyle in Elizabeth City the day of his arrest where bond was set at \$15,000. He was confined in the Albemarle District Jail in Elizabeth City in lieu of bond.

Robert L. Pence, Special Agent in charge of the F.B.I. Field Office in Charlotte made the announcement.