

Cosby Leaves Grads Laughing, Applauding

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (AP)—It wasn't a traditional graduation address, but then Bill Cosby isn't your typical commencement speaker.

The comedian and television star turned the University of Maryland's graduation ceremony into something approximating a comedy club performance.

He had the approximately 3,800 graduates of the College Park campus laughing and applauding, even when he touched on serious topics such as jobs.

Cosby joked that the graduates should find a lawyer and sue the university for leaving them unprepared for the type of jobs most available in the current market.

"There are no courses in valet parking, waitressing and grinding coffee," he said.

"You people are not prepared. You are well-educated and you look cute, but that's not going to do it," he said.

But Cosby also handed out some serious advice during his generally lighthearted address.

He warned graduates that they enter the job market at a difficult time, but said that "I want, five years from now, to see something from the class of 1992."

Cosby also decried a society that he said seems to want to make human beings into machines.

"I want you to practice something that is going out of style, and that is being a human being to another human being," he said.

"You can work at treating human beings with the values that they have, made by God," Cosby said.

The College Park campus handed out about 218 doctoral degrees, 686 master's degrees and about 2,900 undergraduate degrees.

It also awarded honorary doctorates to Cosby, U.S. Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin and A. James Clark, founder of one of the nation's largest general contracting firms.

But Cosby was clearly the star of the day.

Graduates and guests cheered

him as the procession of dignitaries made its way to the platform. They cheered again when he got his honorary degree, then settled back to enjoy his offbeat commencement address.

William E. Kirwan, president of the College Park campus, praised Cosby as "a professional entertainer in the most elevated sense of the word" who has used his talents to try to bring people together.

"The Cosby Show" went beyond entertainment to teach us... we are more alike than we are different," he said.

Cosby told the graduates that they now face expectations as they leave college.

"Your parents want you out of the house. Your younger siblings want you out of the house. They've gotten used to the extra space," he said.

That light tone contrasted with much of the rest of the ceremony.

Jeffrey Jones, a senior who spoke for the class of 1992, criti-

cized the bigotry and intolerance found on campus and in society today.

"Fear of our own differences still plagues us," Jones said.

Donald N. Langenberg, chancellor of the University of Maryland system, spoke of the harmful effects of the recession on higher education.

"The recession woke us up to a new reality. It made us realize if higher education is to survive, it needs to reorder its priorities," Langenberg said.



EFNEP ASSISTANT — Mary Jane Chedester received one of the nine Distinguished Service Awards presented statewide from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at a state EFNEP meeting held May 12-14 in

Raleigh. Presenting the award are Dr. Durward Bateman, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NCSU, left, and Dr. Robert Wells, director of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

Project Choice Helping Students Pay College & Trade School Costs

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Apparently, what some inner-city high school students needed was a choice. Project Choice, that is.

Seventy percent of this year's 154 seniors at Westport High School, a predominantly black school in Kansas City, have applied to college. That's a significant jump from recent years, in which about a fifth of the school's seniors went on to college.

Many attribute the jump in applications to Ewing Kauffman's Project Choice, which promises to pay all college or trade-school costs of graduating Westport High seniors.

"Before Project Choice, I wasn't going to college," said Romero Esparza, 18, the first member of his family to finish high school.

Now he's looking forward to pursuing undergraduate studies in art.

Kauffman, the billionaire founder of Marion Laboratories, Inc., and the owner of the Kansas City Royals, started Project Choice in 1988 to help students at the high school from which he graduated about 60 years ago.

The first class to participate in the program will graduate June 2.

Students have been accepted by more than 20 colleges, including the California Maritime Academy, St. Louis University and Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Most of the schools are in Missouri or Kansas. Students must obtain a waiver from Project Choice before it will pay for a school outside Missouri.

But many students like Esparza are still undecided about which college to attend. Project Choice counselors encourage students to pick smaller schools where they can get special education.

"Our overriding concern is that schools not take our kids and not help them succeed," said Lynn Rogers, Project Choice's post-secondary-education specialist. "We don't want them to take them in and set them up for failure. These schools have said they'll work with us."

Central Missouri State University, Kansas State University and Penn Valley Community College have had summer programs for students in Project Choice.

As graduation approaches, Rogers is calling colleges to check on

applications, meeting with students to discuss their plans—and dealing with mounds of compli-

cated financial aid forms.

"I see those things in my sleep," she said.

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