

Just when I think I can't get excited about an IHS Class Day I'm surprised! What a wonderful day we had today. We had a terrific group of alums attending this year: Ron Burke '60 and Mary LaRochelle Burke '60 flew in from California; Judy Manz Henderson '60 and her husband Russell came from Virginia; Vic Petriella and Ilene Barr Skolnik represented the Class of 1959 and , Carla Schwab Rodriguez '62, Nancy Hetz Sieffert '60 and Marty Jacobs '60 completed out the group.

The Junior ROTC presented the colors and a lovely young lady sang the National Anthem. She also performed later in the program. We were pleasantly surprised to be one of the first groups to present our scholarships. Most of us went on stage and the students were very enthusiastic when they heard that some alums had come from California and Virginia. We got our usual oohs and aahs when Marty said we went to IHS over fifty years ago! We mentioned too that we had received donations from alums in 26 states and 2 foreign countries. We wanted them to know that there are a lot of people who want to support them!!! We decided to award two scholarships this year since we had such strong candidates. Our award winners this year were Cassandre Louis and Monishka Pierre and they were both very surprised and excited when they heard their names announced. Cassandre will be attending Suny at Geneseo and Monishka will be at Rutgers New Brunswick. They both received other awards and certificates of achievement and we were very proud each time we heard their names!!

After we gave our awards Malikita Wright, one of the Vice Principals, said how wonderful it was to have alumni support and urged the students to remember this and to give back as well. When the Chamber of Commerce presented their awards they also mentioned the alums and thanked us for giving back to our school and community.

For the past several years there has been a dance presentation by a group called Multipot. I enjoyed them very much the first year and each year they get better and better. This year the group has grown in numbers and the dance was very inspiring. After the ceremony we talked to another Vice Principal about the dance program. There is no formal dance program so Multipot is a club with a teacher as a coach. They practice several mornings a week from 7 to 8 am!!! Their hard work showed!!

For the first time this year they gave out theater awards....the musical they presented this spring was Bye Bye Birdie.

The ROTC program has also grown....there were many students who received awards and it was mentioned that several of them will be joining the Army and Army reserves this summer. They all seemed very proud and the other students were enthusiastic with their applause. One of the cadets was the NJ state winner in a national essay contest!

We've always enjoyed the awards given to the Irvington Ambassadors and Diplomats – a program run from the Mayor's office. This year they had a separate evening program for their recognition so we missed seeing them. Most of our award winners have been part of that program.

We were told by Mike Skibicki, guidance counselor, and also one of the Vice Principals that Irvington is on track to have a larger graduating class this year. They are waiting to hear from the state on some students but they should graduate more than 200 students. According to the Vice Principal state math

scores were also up. Everyone we talked to had a very positive attitude toward the school and the students.

We saw a lot of students wearing the IHS Blue Knight shirts with khaki pants which is the preferred dress code for school. The juniors who showed us to our seats and made sure we had what we needed were very, very friendly. We're hoping that some of them will be applicants next year!!

Someone described the day as spirited....and it was. The seniors have a tradition of presenting the class key to the officers of the junior class. This year's senior class president was a very impressive speaker! I liked her wordsDon't follow a path....go where there is no path and make a trail.

We ended with the singing of our Alma Mater led by one young man who also had a very nice voice. Everyone sang and it was the end of wonderful Class Day!!

Since there were so many of us attending Class Day we decided to have lunch together. Two of our former winners, Ron Josias '07 and Andrew McGibbon '10, joined us at a restaurant in South Orange that's in the same space as GRUNING'S was back in the 60's and 70's!!! What fun we used to have after football games!! Ron and Andrew want to get involved with our group. They have some great ideas on how they can mentor some of the younger alums. We talked about having them work under our umbrella but with the designation of Young Alumni! We're so lucky to have recent graduates who feel the same way we do about Irvington High School!!