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Class of 2012 a class to remember, Schuette said.

"Teams, class and community have encouraged us to better ourselves and to define our passion," she said. "They have inspired us to do something, whatever that maybe."

It is the experiences in high school that have paved the way for the Class of 2012's journey through life.

"Over the past four years, we've all experienced good times and bad, friends have come and gone, we've had classes we loved and the classes that we hate. We've met teachers that changed our lives and we've learned things that make us look at the world in a different light," she said.

"Our paths are different for all of us," she said. "We've been a part of each others' lives for the past four, eight and for some, 18 years. But today is the day that we all go our separate ways. It's today that we finally move

on, never to be together as a class again.

"But this is something to be proud of," she said. "It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are. We walk across the stage tonight because we're ready. We're ready to leave high school and we're ready to step out on our own. And we're only ready because we helped one another."

"As a Class, we've impacted each other's lives and the memories that we've made are something that we will never forget. It's something that we will always share," Schuette said. "Our days in high school, while they may not have been perfect, have changed us and has created a Class that truly has the power to make a difference."

Salutatorian Donald Jeffrey Ward told the group that it could be hard to believe that the Class of 2012 has reached such a lofty milestone as graduation.

"I know it's hard to believe," he said. "I know that all of us learned something valuable in that building (Union County High School) and I'm not talking about formulas, grammar, separate theories and masonry."

"I'm talking about something that we will take with us for the rest of our lives," he said. "For me, I learned to take responsibility for my education. I learned to love and respect you, my classmates. And I learned that whatever I attempt to do, do it with conviction."

"This lesson, I will take with me wherever I go," he said. "I know all of us learned something very different. So as we walk through this chapter in our lives, what will you take with you? What did you learn?"

Schuette will attend American University in Washington, D.C.; Ward will attend Georgia Tech.

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ing "it's time for us to move on and the class behind us to take our place and I know that we will all do great things."

Valedictorian Hannah Mott then stepped to the podium for evening's address.

Mott opened by thanking everyone for taking the time to attend their graduation ceremonies and to honor the graduating Class of 2012.

"Our graduation is a milestone," Mott said. "But we must be honest with ourselves. We would not be here without your love, support, and guidance."

Mott spoke of the transition from high school to college.

"From our small, rural community, out into a bigger world. A world so vivacious. A world with such incredible beauty, we will march forward," she said.

She talked about the values of a solid education.

"A good education starts with an open mind. You are going into a world where you will experience diversity," she said. "No matter what this world says or does, always



Hannah Arbour

keep an open heart, an open mind, only then will you get the best type of education that life has to offer."

She closed her address by introducing the commencement exercises two guest speakers, Althea Cantrell and Mary Kidd. Both shared a few of their favorite stories about each of the five graduates.

Principal Jinjer Taylor then presented the Class of 2012 to Superintendent Gary Steppe.

Following the diploma

presentation, the lights were dimmed and a senior video presentation was shown to allow everyone to reflect and enjoy the graduates' 12 years at Woody Gap.

The Class of 2012 was a talented one. With Mott as the class Valedictorian and Arbour its Salutatorian.

During closing ceremonies, Pickelsimer performed the "Passing of the Torch" and the "Holding of the Torch" before the graduation ceremonies came to a close with the Recessional and Principal Taylor bade the Class farewell.

"In the words of William Arthur Ward, 'if you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it,'" she said.

The Class of 2012 is now in the history books.

Next year, the school will be downsized somewhat, because of financial woes at the public school level. Though it maybe different to some, it remains one of the most high-achieving public schools in Georgia.

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ticket.

Incumbent Sheriff Scott Stephens qualified on the Democratic ticket, and he'll face Republican challenger Mack Mason in November.

Board of Education members Gary Davenport from District 1, and Carlton Collins from District 3, both have November opposition. Patricia Bertuna qualified on the Republican ticket to face Davenport in District 1; Cynthia Byers qualified on the Republican ticket to face Collins in District 3.

In the nonpartisan Probate Judge race, Incumbent Dwain Brackett qualified for reelection. He'll face opposition in the July 31 Primary from retired attorney Barry Weinstein.

In the District 8 State House race, Incumbent

Stephan Allison, a Blairsville Republican, qualified for reelection. He'll face 58-year-old Democrat Jana Hill of Clayton.

In District 51 State Senate, Incumbent Steve Gooch, a Dahlonega Republican, qualified for reelection. Sen. Gooch was unopposed.

House Speaker David Ralston, a Fannin County Republican, was unopposed in the District 7 State House race.

Four candidates qualified for the vacant 9th Congressional District Seat, which became vacant following redistricting. Republicans Doug Collins, Roger Fitzpatrick and Martha Zoller represent the GOP ticket in the July 31 Primary. Collins and Zoller are from Gainesville; Fitzpatrick is from Cleveland. The

winner will face Gainesville attorney Jody Cooley, who qualified on the Democratic ticket. Two other Republicans, Hunter Bicknell and Chris McDuffie, both who had announced intentions of seeking the congressional seat, did not qualify by the Friday deadline.

Bill

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of the most notables:

In 1987 Sheriff Hutson was named "Sheriff of the Year" by the Georgia Sheriff's Association.

In 1988 he was named "Sheriff of the Year" by the County Officers Association of Georgia.

Named one of Georgia's Most Influential People by James Magazine in 2005 and again in 2006.

Received the Marietta Daily Journal's "Citizen of the Year" award in 1992.

Named "Sheriff of the Year" in 1999 by the National Sheriff's Association.

Governor Sonny Perdue appointed Hutson Executive Director of Georgia Peace Officers Standard and Training Council on January 1, 2004. Hutson served three years in that position. This council establishes the training standards for all sworn Georgia Peace officers and certifies Peace Officers to have arrest powers. The council has the authority to revoke an officer's certification and arrest powers.

Although Bill stated in his high school annual that he would like a career with the U.S. Navy, one wonders if it would have compared with his successful career of carrying the badge for 40 years. Since his retirement, Sheriff Hutson and his wife Jackie spend much of their time back here in Union County where Bill enjoys tending to his cattle on his farm in the Choestoe area.

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