

Husky Connections



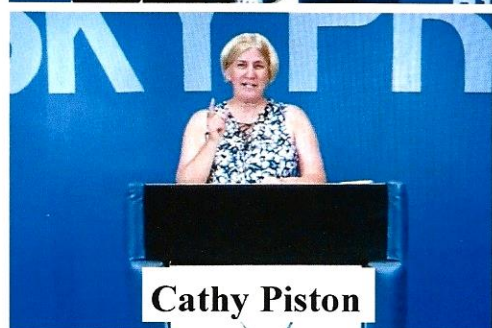
JULY 2020

Virtual Commencement for the Class of 2020

Circumstances certainly scuttled the pomp... the "Pomp and the Circumstance". Seats in the PPL Center remained vacant. The coronavirus had sabotaged the traditions of a normal commencement exercise.



Michael Makhoul



Cathy Piston



Creatively, the Principal and staff of Louis E. Dieruff High School were forced to develop alternatives to celebrate the graduation of the Class of 2020.

The solution was to implement the magic of modern technology and produce a virtual commencement.

During the few weeks preceding the presentation, Dieruff Principal Michael Makhoul, his staff, and selected graduating students worked with an accomplished professional video production company to compose a most entertaining program.

Speakers were auditioned, selected, rehearsed, and video taped. Cathy Schulte Piston, Dieruff 1985 graduate, Kiska Award Winner, Teacher and Coach at Dieruff since 1989, was chosen for the Honored Dieruff Alumni Award. (As a matter of interest, Cathy's keynote address would bring tears to your eyes. Super job, Cathy!) Photo clips of seniors' activities were set to music by the Video Club, and arranged as visual segues throughout the program.

Special slides were produced to feature each of the 72 Honor Graduates who had achieved a GPA higher than 3.5 (out of a 4.0 scale). Each slide contained a photo of the graduate, in cap and gown, as well as Class Rank, GPA, Post Secondary Plans, and School Activities. The Valedictorian of the Class is Angie Rabihi, ranked 1st in the class with a *GPA of 5.237*. She is headed for Princeton. Slides for the balance of the 444 graduates were also prepared. *(continued on next page)*

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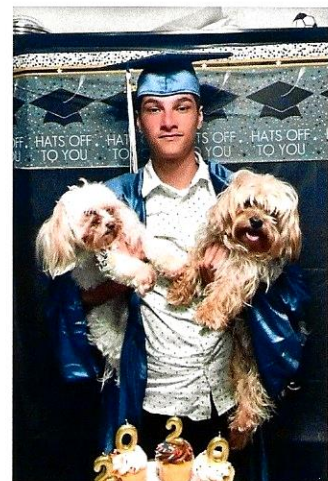
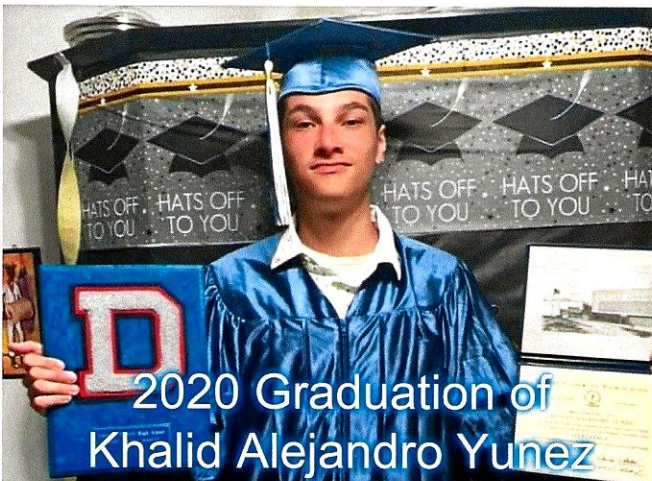
Virtual Commencement for Class of 2020 (continued)

And so, on July 26th, instead of gathering at the PPL Center in Allentown, members of the Louis E. Dieruff Class of 2020 were able to relax in their own homes, accompanied by family and friends, and watch the virtual commencement program. Some viewed on their cell phones, laptops, or desktop computers. Others enjoyed the ceremony on Smart widescreen TV's.

While nothing can replace a live, in person experience, the virtual commencement did offer some very significant benefits. For one, folks could don casual attire, treat themselves to tasty snacks and an adult beverage, and not annoy others by screaming and shouting when celebrating their favorite graduates. They also had the privilege of capturing close up photos and videos of their new Husky Alum, moving that mortarboard tassel from the left side to the right. Photos taken at the home of Khalid Alejandro Yunez during the virtual commencement broadcast are shown below.

Another important benefit of the virtual commencement is having permanent access to that one hour and 50 minute video recording. Certainly, many of those graduates will relive their commencement multiple times.... simply by clicking on that link.

A most memorable celebration for an equally memorable year. Congratulations Class of 2020!



President's Message: "UNCERTAINTY"

UNCERTAINTY! All capital letters! This COVID-19 has turned our lives upside-down and inside out. Personally, I thought by now we would be experiencing a degree of clarity for our futures. But alas! We all seem to be engulfed in an impervious fog.

What is certain is that many of our state governors are concerned with the scary uptick to the coronavirus numbers. The mask mandate and social distancing policies are being extended. Even here in the Keystone State, where Governor Wolf has granted us "green" status, masks and six foot separations and strict crowd limitations are the rule.

We are currently waiting to hear about the plans for schools reopening in the Fall. Until then, we just have to be patient before we can develop our own plans to resume Alumni Associations activities, such as our regular monthly meetings, and the induction ceremony for the newly selected members of the Alumni Wall of Distinction.

In the meantime, I would encourage you all to stay current with us. Read our monthly bulletin, "Husky Connections", and feel free to provide feedback and/or suggestions for future articles. Checkout our Alumni Association Facebook site. Make sure you are registered on our Website, www.dieruff-alumni.org.

Speaking of our Website, invest some time learning how to navigate the site. We are currently uploading names and yearbook photos for the Class of 2020. I might suggest you update your own profile on the website, and take a look at the profiles of some of your classmates. You could reach out and send them a message through the site, or read the obituaries of those who are no longer with us. Peruse the photo albums from last year's Fandangle or other class reunions. Our website is a most valuable resource for us to stay connected.

And so, my fellow Huskies, I encourage you all to do what it takes to remain healthy. Spread the Husky Spirit, but not the virus.



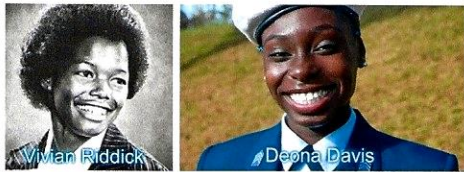
Kay Kurtz—President
Dieruff High School
Alumni Association



FLASHBACK: Kiska Award Recipients Mark Connections

Often regarded as Dieruff's most coveted prize, The Kiska Award is presented to a senior or seniors who exemplify athletic ability, scholarship, citizenship, leadership and loyalty. That translates into the ultimate blend of a well-rounded student.

Since 1960, The Kiska Award has been earned by 112 people. It is only natural that many "Husky Connections" exist.



The 2020 female recipient of the Kiska Award is Deona Davis. A passionate leader, Deona served as a Captain in the AFJROTC Program. She also was captain of the Girls Basketball Team and the Track and Field Team.

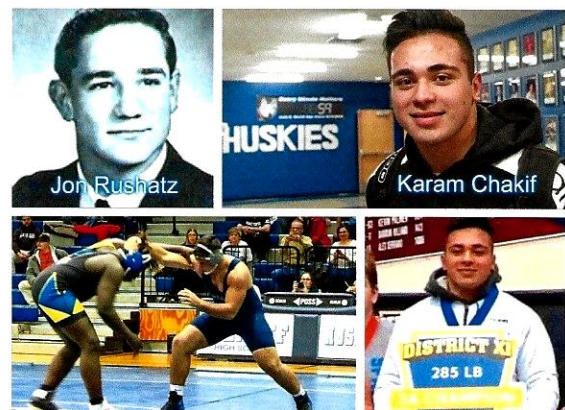


One fascinating "Husky Connection" is that Deona's basketball coach was Cathy Schulte Piston, a 1985 Dieruff Alumna and Kiska Award recipient. This year, Cathy was selected as the Honored Distinguished Alumni and keynote speaker at the 2020 virtual commencement.

As a gifted Track star, Deona owns seven school records, and is headed for Tiffin University in Ohio, having received a track scholarship. Her success in Track and Field is certainly reminiscent of 1979 Alum and Kiska Award recipient, Vivian Riddick. During her '76-'79 stint at Dieruff, Vivian competed as a long jumper and sprinter, and was the first Husky to log 100 First Place Wins. She went on to Penn State, serving as team captain and earning All American status.

Karam Chakif is this year's male Kiska Award winner. He proudly served as President of the Class of 2020, and graduated 4th in his class, with a GPA of 4.703 on a 4.0 scale. Karam played football all four years, and was team captain during his junior and senior years. He began wrestling his sophomore year, and was team captain all three years. He distinguished himself his senior year by winning the 285 pound championship titles at both the District XI and Northeast Regional Tournaments. Karam will be attending Lehigh University in the Fall.

A most memorable Kiska Award winner whose academic and athletic career parallels that of Karim Chakif is Jon Rushatz, Class of 1963. Jon was an outstanding student, President of the Student Council, and a remarkable football player and wrestler. His senior year, Jon won District XI and Regional championships, and placed second at States. He continued at Lehigh University, where he played running back in football, and boasted a sensational record in wrestling. As a sophomore, he won a third place medal at the National Tournament.



And so, we salute all of our Kiska Award winners, totally confident that they will continue to bring honor to themselves, and also to Dieruff High School.

Louis E. Dieruff High School Alumni Wall of Distinction Lori A. Chapleskie Alphonse, DO, FACOS '84



Our first 2020 Wall of Distinction honoree, Dr. Lori Chapleskie Alphonse, hails from the LED Class of 1984. As a Penn State alumna with a work ethic from her blue-collar roots, she later was inspired to attend medical school to become a cancer surgeon.

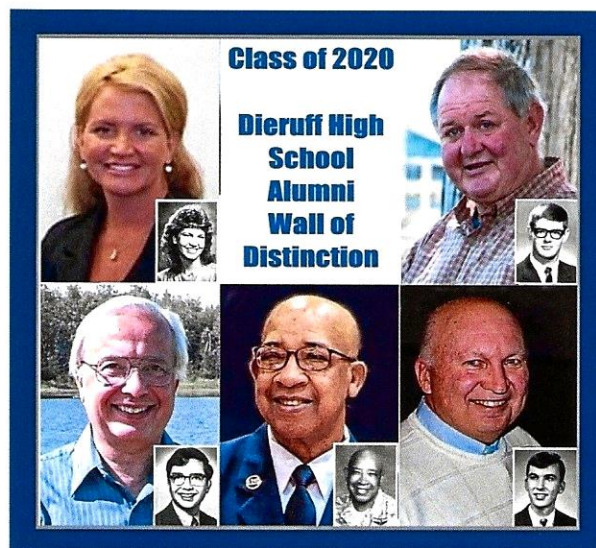
She admirably returned to her studies to pursue a degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine from which she graduated with honors. Following her internship and residency at Mercy Suburban Hospital in Norristown, Pennsylvania, Dr. Alphonse returned to the Lehigh Valley to serve the community in which she was raised.

Today, she is the Deputy Physician-in-Chief of Surgical Oncology at the LV Cancer Institute and is the Medical Director of Breast Health Services for Lehigh Valley Health Network. She also chairs the General Surgery Residency Mentorship Program.

As a fellowship-trained surgical oncologist, Dr. Alphonse's philosophy of treatment is to "take care of people, not diseases." Hundreds of five-star reviews from her grateful patients attest to that. A leader in her field, her unparalleled reputation for kindness, compassion, and skill has earned her the respect of her colleagues along with the Patients' Choice Award. Dr. Alphonse is also affiliated with the LV Institute for Surgical Excellence.

The Louis E. Dieruff High School Alumni Association is proud to recognize and salute this '84 Husky who persevered to follow her dream. She became a highly-esteemed medical professional who is dedicated to all who seek her specialty expertise in Surgical Oncology.

Joanne Ogrydziak '76



2020 Graduation Parade Smacks a Homer

COVID-19 sure served up a vicious curveball to the Class of 2020! But you know what? The Dieruff Huskies crushed it! As Philly announcer Harry Kalas used to dramatically declare, *"that ball is outta here!"*

The coronavirus had closed down classrooms back in mid-March, and year-end festivities had to be modified substantially. The virtual commencement program was being scripted, organized, and filmed. What remained unfinished were all of the other elements so critical to a Dieruff High School graduation, everything from bidding final farewells to satisfying Kiska with loving head pats and belly rubs.



What was originally designed as a casual day for distributing caps and gowns and diplomas morphed into a full-blown celebration of Husky Pride.... a grand parade that would rival a World Series victory celebration. Andre Reed Way (formerly Washington Street adjacent to the school) was designated as the parade route. Festive balloons formed a very impressive arch over the street. Pop-up tents, signs, graduation balloons, and lawn chairs, occupied by enthusiastic faculty members, alumni, and friends, aligned the school side of the street.

On June 16th, vehicles containing graduating seniors formed a long, single file line behind the arch. An energetic team of faculty members greeted each student, and delivered their diploma, a tee-shirt inscribed with the phrase "Worst Senior Prank Ever", and a stunning personalized yard sign with their name and photo.

Principal Mike Makhoul adeptly manned the microphone, and broadcast the name of each senior. As the cars proceeded under the gateway arch, music blared from a boombox, joined by a din of cowbells, drums, airhorns, and wild cheers and applause.

Reaching the end of the route, the cars turned into the main parking lot. The joyous graduates then posed for photos and exchanged final embraces. And now, for the time being, they can collectively chant, *"We're outta here!"*



Louis E. Dieruff High School
Alumni Association

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**"Husky Connections"
Alumni Bulletin**

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Husky Howls & Hugs

Hi Everyone,

Although it was different, it was still a great day to be a husky. On June 16th we had the Senior Send Off. It was a gorgeous, cool summer morning. (I so mind the heat). Aunt Cindy, Mom, and I were in awe when we saw the decorations that lined Andre Reed Way. Balloons all over the place. The huge balloon arch that spanned the street and marked the beginning of the parade was super impressive. Teachers, Guidance staff, Administrators, Alums, and I were there to wish the best to the class of 2020.

Mom walked me while Aunt Cindy set up our chairs. Got to see so many kids and send husky love. Traditionally I lead the graduating class into the PPL Center Arena. I love Pomp and Circumstance. This year we led the car procession by walking on the sidewalks. Cheers, applause and cowbells replaced the traditional music. Uncle Mike, aka the Dieruff High School Principal walked me and I worked the crowd. Traditional Diva Duty.

As we were leaving, I got to see one of my most favorite football players. I received lots of head pats, and had pictures taken with his family.

It was different but really a celebration to remember. Super organization. A special husky howl to Assistant Principal Maggie Drake for all her hard work and organization. I was so happy to be part of this special event. The graduates will have great memories of this glorious celebration. Impressive!!!

Love and best of everything to the class of 2020,

Kiska V Diva Dog

P.S. I know I sound like Dr. Rachel, but please remember to keep washing the paws.

