



# K A N S A S

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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## Graduation Day

*The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:*

It is graduation season; across the country young men and women put on robes and mortar boards to take the next step toward their destiny.

Perhaps no ceremony will receive more attention than the one attended by the President of the United States.

This past weekend, 18 seniors from Greensburg High School walked across a make-shift stage to receive their diplomas, shook the hand of the President and became graduates.

There, in that temporary facility, they created a lasting memory.

Camera crews from around the county chronicled the moment, sharing with millions what it looks like when a small town picks itself up, dusts itself off and moves forward.

Family and friends came from near and far, filling a metal building that has served as gymnasium, cafeteria and community center.

The band played, the choir sang and parents, relatives and family friends cried, clapped and snapped picture after picture.

President Bush delivered a wonderful and heartfelt speech. Student leaders shared powerful stories of their remarkable year.

Senior Class President Jarrett Schaef spoke of emerging from the rubble on that night, exactly one year ago, with his first thought being the safety and well being of his friends.

In his speech, Jarrett did something so many of us do not do enough. He told the people closest to him how important they were and how much they meant to him.

There are many lessons to be learned from the people of Greensburg – lessons of perseverance, of innovation, of finding the strength to press on. Greensburg students learned that faith, family

and friends are more important than possessions, and that it's important to meet goals in spite of adversity.

Jarrett taught us one more – that while a storm can destroy a house, it cannot destroy a home. That while wood and plaster can be torn down, a community of people can never be torn apart.

To high school seniors across the state: well done. Take a moment to be proud of your accomplishments and don't forget to thank your parents, your teachers or that special person in your life who has helped you reach this milestone and who will be with you as you strive for more to come.

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