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"I am blessed to work with an outstanding staff. We have one of the best schools in the state of Georgia," he said. The reason is the people – the parents, students, community, teachers, school employees, and the Board of Education.

"We are all on the same team, pulling in the same direction to serve our students. I am thankful for the opportunity to work at Union County High School and blessed to have the ability to impact so many students.

"I would like to personally thank everyone who has supported our school and students this year. I also have a special thanks to my administrative team: Angie Burns, Pat Donaldson, CT Hussion, Jennifer Ludlum, and Art McCann."

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe declared 2014 a year of success.

"This has been a very successful school year all around with several new administrators," he said. "It is hard to believe it is over, but what a successful year this has been.

"Our students have so many impressive achievements this year in so many different areas. They have certainly learned much and demonstrated a high level of achievement. They have performed great things in the areas of music and the arts, and have been a force to be reckoned with on the fields and courts of athletic competition. Every athletic team at UCHS played at such a high level that they almost all advanced beyond region play to reach state level competition.

"Also, our career, technical, and agricultural programs have thrived with achievements, with many students receiving industry credentials by state and national trade organizations providing the exams. Many of these students are coming out of high school prepared for some high paying trade opportunities. Overall, as school successes go, it just doesn't get much better than this."

Commencement Exercises were appropriately inspiring for the amazing Class of 2014. Emily Arrant said in her Closing Speech, "Let's go make a positive change in this world."

It is evident that the Class of 2014 will do just that.



The Gap...from Page 1A

of each other's lives.

"The 2014 graduates will remain friends for the rest of their lives as past graduates have done," Collins said. "This is one eminence that Woody Gap students possess, 'we are always together.'"

Co-principal David Murphy echoed Collins' sentiments.

"The class of 2014 is a special group of young adults," Murphy said. "They are encouraging and compassionate in both word and deed. I must admit that I have also been the recipient of their encouragement throughout the year.

"I will take away many fond memories from this class," he said. "However, I will remember each of them for their uniqueness: Lauren's love for others, Larry's infectious laughter, Stephanie's servant heart; Casey's continuous leadership, and Logan's lightening quick wit. It's hard for me to think of this group without a smile on my face."

Salutatorian Lauren Adams, daughter of Wayne and Rhonda Adams, saluted the Class of 2014.

"I feel very privileged to have been a part of The Woody Gap School," Adams said. "I can truly say that God has blessed me with the most amazing teachers and the best classmates.

"It seems it was just yesterday when I started my first day of Pre-K and I met Logan. For half of that school year we were the only two until Larry came along.

"Casey came to Woody Gap our freshman year, then Stephanie came our junior year and saved me from all the boys. We have all grown very close, and I am happy to share this moment with them, as well as with our teachers, who have encouraged us and kept us on God's path."

Logan Wood, Valedictorian, and STAR Student, the son of Kim and Devin Wood, delivered the Valedictorian speech.

"I would like to say just how much this school has meant to me, and done for me," Logan Wood said.



The Woody Gap School Class of 2014. Photo/Joe Collins

"Many of the teachers here have acted as an anchor in my life.

"Why, if it weren't for Mrs. Wood or Mrs. King, I wouldn't be able to read or count.

"Mrs. Twarog taught me how to write. Mrs. Kidd taught me some pretty amazing things about the human body, but she also taught me that kindness and respect is ultimately what's necessary in caring for others.

"Mrs. Cantrell taught me just how important this community is – as well as its members, both past and present."

Logan Wood thanked his family and friends, and shared what each of his family members has taught him.

In closing, he said, "Thank you to all who believed in me."

Members of the Class of 2014 walked the aisle and were presented their well-earned diplomas.

Then, the lights were dimmed and Murphy led the Candlelight Service. He explained that the senior class would be symbolically "passing their light" on to the eleven members present from the Junior Class.

Each member of the Class of 2014 lit a candle of

their own from a single candle, and then stood at the front of the stage.

Then, the members of the rising Class of 2015 brought a candle and lit their candle from each Graduate's candle.

At the end of the Graduation Program, everyone was dismissed to attend a reception in honor of the seniors in the cafeteria.

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe took pride in The Woody Gap School's Class of 2014.

"William Butler Yeats wrote, 'education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.' The five students who graduated from Woody Gap talked about not just what they learned from their books, but the life lessons they learned from their relationships with their dedicated teachers," Steppe said.

"They learned more than just math, science, social studies and English. They learned how to be worthy members of society and good men and women.

"The 'Fabulous Five' are very close and really nice young people who will have a very positive impact on the world."