

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Andrea Garcia

(909) 447-2403

Monrovia High School Celebrates Over 300 Graduates During Drive-thru Ceremony

MONROVIA – Over 300 Monrovia High School seniors exited their vehicles, walked the green and white decorated stage, received their diplomas, and turned their tassels during the school’s drive-thru commencement ceremony at Monrovia High School on June 3.

“I’m incredibly proud of our extraordinary graduates, who finally got their moment of celebration after losing so many aspects of their senior year to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Board of Education President Rob Hammond said. “I know they will go on to contribute to our society in wonderful, meaningful ways, drawing on the lessons learned over their years at Monrovia Unified.”

The graduation ceremony almost didn’t happen, after Los Angeles County education leaders nixed drive-thru events. But advocacy by Hammond and the rest of the Board of Education, Monrovia High School Principal Kirk McGinnis, and the Monrovia community, convinced the county to reverse its ruling, opening the opportunity to celebrate safely – not just for Monrovia but for districts across the region.

The very first graduate of the day was Vivian Fisher, who received an honorary diploma as she was unable to receive her diploma from the class of 1938. Fisher, 99, longtime Monrovia resident and former Monrovia Unified School District employee, was escorted on stage by her great great nephew and Monrovia High Class of 2020 graduate, Elijah Vance.

Afterward, students lined up 6 feet apart and walked the stage as their names were announced through the speakers. Families drove next to the stage, taking photos and cheering for their graduate before making their way to a pick-up zone.

“Graduation ceremonies symbolize the culmination of educational pursuits as a child and the commencement of life as an adult. They are a celebration of achievement. This year, we also celebrate our graduates for their perseverance through these challenging times,” Superintendent Dr. Katherine Thorossian said. “They are the bright spot in a time of crisis.”

Though the graduation ceremony was vastly different than years past, valedictorian Kate Tadeo and salutatorian Jessica Lee were still given the opportunity to address their fellow graduates through a video message.

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OUR MISSION

Inspire students to engage in meaningful learning in a safe and nurturing environment that embraces diversity.

Challenge students to be ethical, productive members and leaders of the community.

OUR VISION

Our students will be ethical, compassionate individuals who:

- graduate from high school prepared for college and career,
- contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world by being resourceful and responsible citizens, and
- embrace diversity.

MONROVIA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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“I ask you, Monrovia Class of 2020, to not look at this experience as something of sadness, but as an opportunity to fight for those who don’t get to walk across their stage because of gun violence, who do not get to watch their virtual graduation from their Apple MacBooks, and for those who are unable to lead their lives without fear of being persecuted for their beliefs and identity,” Tadeo said. “We have to be better. Fight for better. Be the generation of change as I know we can be.”

Lee, who shared advice and words of wisdom she learned from her brother, emphasized the importance of setting goals and practicing compassion.

“Always remember to practice gratitude, because not every day is guaranteed. Although I am proud of the achievements I have accomplished, looking back, I regret not spending more time with people,” Lee said. “In a time like this, more than ever, I’ve realized how easy it is to forget the privilege of being around friends and family.”

Despite the hardships to get to graduation, Monrovia High School, Monrovia Unified Board of Education, and the community of Monrovia collaborated to create a memorable day full of smiles, cheers, and applause.

“Graduates, you have proven that your commitment to graduate was made with a conviction to finish strong. I challenge you to set a new vision for success,” McGinnis said. “I trust that you will take the skills, lessons, and qualities you learned here at Monrovia High School and apply them to each step in your life. Monrovia High is truly the home of scholars and champions and is a better place because of your contributions over the past four years. Congratulations.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

06.05.2020_MUSD_Graduation 1: A Monrovia High School graduate walks the stage, receives his diploma, and thanks Monrovia High teachers and staff during the drive-thru commencement ceremony at Monrovia High School on June 3.

06.05.2020_MUSD_Graduation 2: Vivian Fisher, accompanied by her great grandson and Monrovia High graduate Elijah Vance, received her honorary diploma from Principal Kirk McGinnis on June 3 during Monrovia High’s commencement ceremony.

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