

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 6, 2022**CONTACT:** Ashley Visco**PHONE:** 909-204-6013

Banning Unified Celebrates Largest Graduating Class in Banning High History

BANNING, CA – Banning Unified School District recognized the achievement and academic excellence of 264 graduating students from Banning High School – the largest graduating class in the school's history – at a joyous commencement ceremony on June 2.

Friends and family gathered at the Banning Broncos Sports Complex to celebrate the students with energetic applause as they received a variety of honors and accolades, including Student of the Year and the Principal's Award, as well as the distinctions of valedictorian and salutatorian.

Among the honorees was Student of the Year Destiny Levar, who was recognized by Principal Matthew Valdivia for “representing the very best of Banning High School” and was described as funny, caring, studious and supportive. Levar, who has endured hardships in her personal life, said she has always pushed herself to work hard, think about issues through a critical lens and to act as a beacon of positivity in her community.

“I am so proud of all of you graduating today, and I’m so proud that all of us surpassed – we went beyond,” Levar said. “I know everyone here is going to do amazing things and be amazing people no matter what you do. I want you all to know I love you so much.”

Associated Student Body President and Principal’s Award recipient Jordan Amis was recognized as one of the top 10 students in the senior class and described as “the epitome of school spirit” by Valdivia.

Salutatorian Vanessa Phavong was recognized as a top scholar in the 2021-22 school year, receiving an academic award from the Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE). Phavong urged her fellow graduates to live in the present moment and to remember they are loved.

Bryn Thornton, a fellow recipient of an academic award from RCOE and the Class of 2022 valedictorian, is a high-achieving scholar with a 4.6 GPA. She has been accepted to California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, where she will explore her love of nature in the environmental earth and soil science program.

“I’m excited for the adventure of a new place and the new friends to be made, for learning more about what I want my forever to look like,” Thornton said. “I hope for all of us that each tomorrow presents itself with an opportunity that challenges and provides room for growth, and that every opportunity is seized with excitement.”

MORE

In her speech, senior class president Brianna Hernandez highlighted some of the many accomplishments of the Class of 2022, including CIF and league championships, student performances in the Rose Parade and Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and top scholar awards from the Riverside County Office of Education.

"It is my hope that you will all go out into this world and show them that the graduating Class of 2022 from Banning High School has the most amazing people," Hernandez said. "I hope that you all accomplish your dreams, whether it's making it to the NFL, being in the MLB or creating your own business. Go out into the world and find success in your own way."

The ceremony was attended by the Banning Unified Board of Education, Superintendent Terrence Davis and the District's Executive Cabinet.

Following a performance of the Banning High School alma mater, students turned the tassels on their graduation caps, officially signifying the conclusion of their educational journey in Banning Unified. The energetic ceremony concluded with the sounds of student cheers and a spectacular, rocket-like outpouring of bright white fireworks.

"I came, I saw, I conquered," Davis said, quoting Julius Caesar as he addressed students. "You have conquered, and we are very proud of that. In today's world, the future is in your hands. You can do whatever you want. You control your destiny. Congratulations, graduates."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

COMMENCEMENT_BANNING1: Banning High School students received many honors and accolades during a commencement ceremony on June 2. Among the honorees was student of the year Destiny Levar, who was recognized for "representing the very best of Banning High School."

COMMENCEMENT_BANNING2: Banning Unified School District celebrated the largest graduating class in Banning High School history at a commencement ceremony on June 2.

COMMENCEMENT_BANNING3: Banning High School's 264 graduating seniors celebrated their achievement at a commencement ceremony on June 2 that included student performances and fireworks.

###