




Graduation at Smith-Cotton: A History

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What exactly is Graduation At Smith-Cotton?

- Timeline:
 - Candlelight
 - Senior Year
 - Commencement
- Important Definitions:
 - Candlelight: Smith-Cotton only right of passage in which the graduating class symbolically hands off the responsibility of graduation to the class directly after them.
 - Commencement: Ceremony in which degrees are ushered onto students

“Smith-Cotton is not so much a building, it's not so much a graduation ceremony, it's not so much a tradition, it's the people who graduate from it, who take a degree and achieve these accomplishments academically or athletically or activities and who go on and make something of themselves”

-Rush Walters



The Factual History:

- Smith-Cotton High School was founded in 1925, with the first four-class graduating in 1929.
 - Built to Replace Sedalia High School, the previous public High School in Sedalia.
- Built on the corner of Broadway and Massachusetts Street
- Remained the main high school until 2009, when the new high school was built.

- A Few Famous Alumni:
 - Leroy Van Dyke: American Country Music Star, famous for “The Auctioneer”
 - Alan Braverman: World-Renowned Aorta Specialist and director of Marfan Clinic.
 - Andre Taylor: Highly-Respected Chemical Engineer



Left: Original Smith-Cotton Building.



Right: What an Aorta Is:



Candle Light

- Process in which the senior class passes the responsibility of holding the school to the class directly below them.
- Established in the early years of Smith-Cotton.
 - Scheduling has remained rather stagnant

CANDLE SERVICE
May 16, 1964

1. "Call to Colors" - - - - - Mike Hunt
2. Processional - - - "Festival March" - - - - - Bergen
3. "Hail Alma Mater" - - - - - Junior and Senior Classes
4. Greetings - - - - - Jim Woods
President of Student Council
5. Class Address - - - - - Mike Robinson
President of Senior Class
6. Response and Fledge - - - - - Bill Brown
President-elect of Senior Class
7. Presentation of Queen of Senior Class - - - - - Jim Woods
President of Student Council
8. Senior Queen Surrenders Her Scepter - - - - - Kathy Kindred
Queen of Senior Class
9. Response - - - - - Nancy Henzler
Queen-elect of Senior Class
10. Investment of Student Council Vice-President - - - - - John Lory
Vice-President of Student Council
11. Fledge of Office - - - - - John Owen
Vice-President-elect of Student Council
12. Investment of Student Council President - - - - - Jim Woods
President of Student Council
13. Fledge of Office - - - - - John Arment
President-elect of Student Council
14. Hymn - - - "Hail to the Tie That Binds" - - - - - Guests and Classes
15. Farewell Address - - - - - Jim Woods
President of Student Council
16. Lighting of Candles
17. Hymn - - - "God of Our Fathers" - - - - - Guests and Classes
18. "Taps" - - - - - Mike Hunt
19. Echo "Taps" - - - - - Kenny Fink
20. Recessional - - - "For the Day is Over" - - - - - Orchestra

Commencement will be Thursday, May 21 at 8:00 P.M.

Example of Candlelight Scheduling



Commencement:

- Ceremony in which graduating seniors are giving their diplomas and sent on their ways.
- Used to be held at Jennie Jaynes Stadium, but is now held at the Mathewson Exhibition Centre.
- Scheduling has remained fairly consistent, along with attire and the ceremony
- Class size increases and racial composition

Site Visit: Mathewson Exhibition Centre





Interviewee's Description of Graduation

Wade Norton, Class of '92: "I was very nervous, very nervous to have to walk across the stage just like most people are. But, once you realize that everyone else is doing it, that no one is paying attention just to you, but to the class, it was a great night."

Rush Walters, Class of '11: "It takes a while, but when you look back on it, you realize how long it was and really how short it was. All of your K-12 years just for one graduation day, but it's an important ceremony, and an accomplishment for everyone."



Interviewee's Words of Advice:

Wade Norton, Class of '92: "Enjoy it, take a part in all the ceremonies you can, and sit back and enjoy the celebration for your hard work."

Alan Braverman, Class of '79: "Work hard, give it your all, say "yes" to opportunities and do not be afraid to reach for your dreams. Study as hard as you can and apply yourself to your best in all that you do."

Rush Walters, Class of '11: "Enjoy it before it's over."

Reflections upon the
topic:

