

Speaker tells students to be self-confident, helpful

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By Gina Childress | Daily Times Staff Writer

Never give up on your dreams, and never let you past determine your future.



That's one of the many messages Ed Gerety, a nationally recognized author and speaker, told the 377 honor students and their parents Friday morning at Fike High School.

Gerety tours the country using dramatics and humor when speaking to youth, inspiring them to live up to their full potential as leaders and society members.

He spoke to a packed auditorium filled with honor students during the Academic Champions ceremony sponsored by the Wilson Education Partnership.

Freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors from Fike, Hunt and Beddingfield came together to be recognized for their academic excellence.

Students who achieved a grade point average of 4.0 during the first semester of the school year were recognized with a certificate, and seniors were presented with an inscribed pen.

Gerety wanted the students to not just take away the personalized items; he also wanted them to walk away with something even more valuable: Inspiration.

He stressed inspiration to better themselves and help someone else through their words and actions.

"Remember to always let people know how you feel about them," said Gerety. "Let them know while they are still here and you can still talk to them."

To illustrate his point, Gerety pulled Hunt senior Blake Jones on stage and told him to imagine that he had only one hour to live and asked him to think about the person he would call.

Since his parents were in the audience, Jones chose to call his brother.

In front of everyone in the audience, Jones called his brother, who was at work, and told him that he loved him. A resounding "awww" was heard from the audience.

"Who would YOU call?" asked Gerety. "Who would you want to call and who would want you to call them? Think about it. If you lead your life respecting others, then others will respect you.

"I hope you take something away from what I've said today," said Gerety. "Remember, we can all learn from each other."

William Price, a sophomore at Fike was definitely thinking about Gerety's inspirational message.

"His words moved me to think about looking out for others instead of myself and being selfish," he said.

"I will definitely be more careful about how my actions affect others," said Darryn Terrell, a sophomore at Hunt. "I will be more self-conscious about how my words and actions affect others."

One of the more thought-provoking aspects of Gerety's speech came when he challenged everyone in the audience to remember that their thoughts will equal their words; their words will equal their actions; their actions will equal their habits; their habits will equal their character; and their characters will equal their destinies.

"Remember guys, you are never alone in your journey," he said. "There are always people there to help you and support you along the way. You just have to have the courage to ask for the help."

Ashley Quick, a freshman at Fike, said Gerety's words encouraged her to never forget who she is and what her beliefs are no matter who she was with.

"Don't change yourself to conform to fit in with others," Gerety said. "Be yourself and always, always, stand up for who you are and what you believe in."

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