



Andover Middle School graduation this year was drive-in style (story, page 28). It got off on the right foot with a beautiful sunset as families gathered in the school parking lot. Photo: Kasey Schoch



Assistant Head of School Karin Clough and Head of School Mike Henriques were the sole guests at Proctor's virtual Commencement, broadcast around the globe to members of the Class of 2020 and their families. Caption and photo: Scott Allenby

Celebrating the Proctor Class of 2020: Stepping into the World

May 30 commencement was virtual and global

Scott Allenby, Proctor Academy

And just like that it's over. The planning, the preparations, the details, the mourning of what could have been had coronavirus not upended our lives; it is all behind us, and we shift our focus to reflecting on the raw emotions we felt today as we watched the Class of 2020 graduate from high school ... virtually around the globe.

While we were unable to gather together under the big tent on Farrell Field, had to forego the swatting of mosquitoes, and collectively marveling at how in the world our dining services team prepared and served meals for over a thousand people, we felt each other's presence.

There were no physical hugs exchanged between advisors and advisees, or tearful exchanges between students and teachers. No tangible moment for parents to share their deep, deep appreciation for the transformation in their children. And yet we still felt the love that exists within this community, a love that is strengthened through shared experiences, through adversity, through crisis.

Proctor's live, virtual Senior Awards Night and Commencement ceremony took on a personality of its own; a uniquely Proctor flavor that was serious enough to celebrate the enormity of what our seniors have accomplished, but not so serious as to forget who we are.

Friday evening's Senior Awards Night featured a red carpet event hosted by Patty Pond. The fun continued in the theater as faculty announced senior awards, students shared heart-felt virtual thank you's with the community over video, and talented musicians shined brightly in virtual performances.

Saturday's live Commencement from Alice's Garden began with a parade of faculty sharing messages with their students, riding unicycles, horses, bikes, and showing our students how much we love them. After opening remarks from Head of School Mike Henriques and Assistant Head of School Karin Clough, Tommy '20, Anya '20, Will '20, and Amy '20 each shared beautiful speeches, interspersed by musical tributes to the class by Tori '20 and Mackenzie '20.

Just before we read the names of each of our graduates, Commencement Speaker Matt Nathanson '91 painted a powerful picture of the world into which our seniors are stepping and the unique preparation they have to make an impact. He discussed the never-ending process of creating music as a parallel to our lifelong pursuit of better understanding ourselves.

Matt ended his speech with a quote from Bob Dylan: "An artist has to be careful to never really arrive at a place where he thinks he's at somewhere. You always have to realize you are constantly in the state of becoming. And as long as you can stay in that realm, you'll sort of be alright." It is this mindset we need to take forward into the days and weeks and months ahead.

The 24 hours surrounding graduation allowed us to step into a bubble. This safe, comfortable, loving sphere of celebration sheltered us from the backdrop of the world around us: a novel virus that has killed more Americans in the past three months than all wars of the last half century, yet another incident of sickening racial injustice, widespread rioting and protests around the country, unemployment levels at the highest point since the Great Depression. And while it is fine to step into

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Andover's Jill Jones Grotnes had a special "congratulations" message to her graduating seniors delivered from her unicycle during the pre-ceremony festivities. Caption and photo: Scott Allenby

Andover Graduates Recognized at Proctor's Senior Awards Night

Plus a service award for Diane Benson

Scott Allenby, Proctor Academy

The Class of 2020 closed the Proctor chapter of their lives in a most bizarre manner. A virtual Senior Awards Night and Commencement afforded faculty and staff the opportunity to recognize members of the senior class with awards and recognitions. Among those honored were these Andover residents:

Philip H. Savage Award for outstanding leadership qualities: Vienna Marcus.

Alice S. Fowler Award presented to the student in the graduating class who best exemplifies strength of character, personal dedication, and commitment to the Proctor community: Vienna Marcus.

Stanley V. Wright Award for History: Vienna Marcus

Varsity Athletics Award: Vienna Marcus

Andover Service Club Award: Blaine Hinds and Chloe Makechnie

Award for Excellence in Mandarin: Chloe Makechnie

Dance Award: Ryelle Jenifer

Performing Arts Award: Tori Braley

Music Award for Vocal Contribution to Music Ensembles: Tori Braley

Nance Barrett Service Award

Andover's Diane Benson was also recognized with the Nance Barrett Service Award. This award honors the loyal services of non-faculty staff and seeks to achieve two goals: to recognize extraordinary service to the Proctor Community by a non-faculty member and to heighten awareness of the dedication, hard work, and loyalty of all its employees, which makes possible the smooth operation of this institution.



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