

County's seniors have their day

From staff reports

STAFFORD — More than 1,100 Stafford County students ended their high school careers Monday night and were advised to be individuals and to remember the responsibility that each person has in creating the future.

Brooke Point High School

Student speakers at Brooke Point High School told their classmates to treasure the past and work on creating a great future.

"It's been a long, hard climb of 13 years but we finally reached a ledge," valedictorian Frank Shields IV said. "But as we look ahead, there is so much more to climb."

Shields told the nearly 347 graduates that they live at a time of great promise — the American economy is booming, communism is all but dead and the world is mostly peaceful — and it is up to them to make things even better.

"Right now the United States is the best place to be alive in the history of the world," he said. "... The future depends on us. The choices we make and the path we take now have the potential to affect the lives of many people."

Class president Erika Karnaszewski also looked ahead in her address, reminding the graduates, as Shields did, that they will help to create the future.

"We can do anything and be anything," she said. "We are the doctors, lawyers, teachers, mothers, fathers, shop owners and everything else of tomorrow."

Salutatorian Rebecca Ellen Ronquest leaned more toward nostalgia as she looked back on her four years at Brooke Point in her speech.

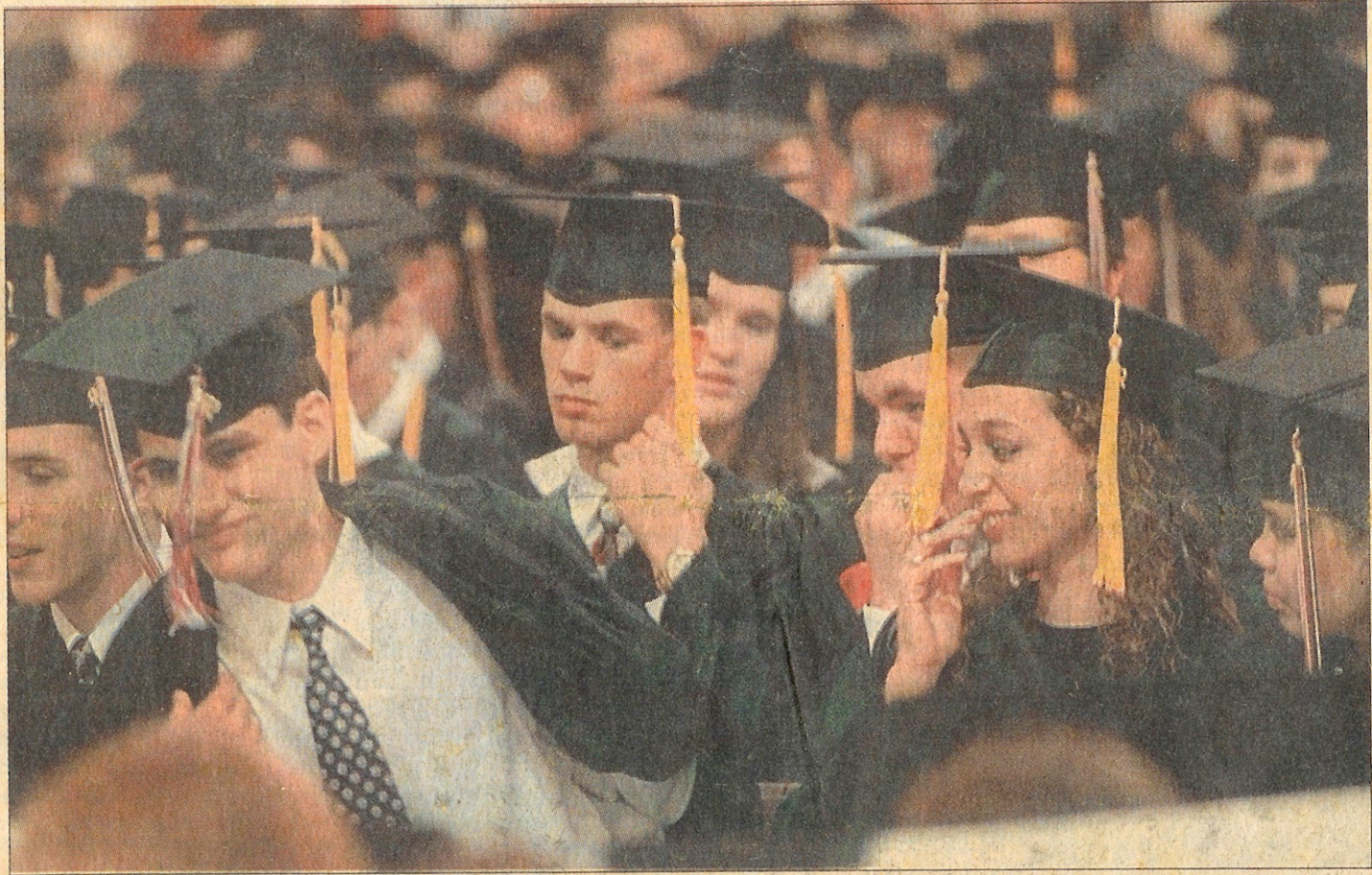


Photo by Jeff Mankle—Potomac News

Top photo: Marlena Amorin-Joyce, right (with hand to face), contains her amusement as her brother Shawn, left, puts his robe back on after fixing something that bothered him Monday during graduation ceremonies at Brooke Point High School.



Barbara Smith, left, fixes a graduation cap to Stephanie Otis' head in a stiff wind before Stafford High School's graduation Monday. Stephanie's mother died from leukemia and Smith, her grandmother, has reared her since then. Stephanie is the eldest of Smith's grandchildren and the first to graduate from high school. Jonathan Barnum, a friend and fellow graduate is behind them.