



MEDIA RELEASE

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Gray Collegiate Academy gets creative to celebrate Class of 2020 with drive-thru cap and gown delivery

WEST COLUMBIA – It was supposed to be a time of celebration for seniors. Spring sports, prom, finalizing plans for what’s next, and graduation.

With the COVID-19 crisis closing schools through the end of April in South Carolina and canceling or postponing many events, the big question on the minds of the Class of 2020 looms large – “Will we still have a graduation?”

While the answer is still unclear how ceremonies will be conducted, Gray Collegiate Academy is doing everything it can to give its seniors a memorable send off and see them again, even if just for a moment while practicing safe and social distancing.

On April 3, the public charter school in West Columbia held a drive-thru cap and gown delivery for seniors and their families. Vehicles decked out with window chalk readings of “Class of 2020” and “War Eagles!” poured through the school’s car pick-up line where administration and staff handed out graduation garb.

“This is a special day for our seniors,” said Dr. Brian Newsome, principal of Gray Collegiate. “Sure, this wasn’t the ideal way we wanted to present them with their graduation attire, but none of it has been ideal. We still wanted to find a way to make this moment as special as we could.”

Gray Collegiate’s senior class has 109 students. Braxton Brazell is one of them who will be heading to Midlands Technical College for an Electrical Engineering Technology degree. He said this will go down as one of the most special days.

“It was nice to be celebrated for all the schooling I have been through,” Brazell said. “For the administration and staff to be here today really shows how much they care about us.”

Newsome said he hopes their graduation date of May 27 will still take place.

“We are hoping for the best for our seniors,” Newsome said. “Obviously, the most important thing is we want everyone to remain healthy through this challenging time. We really miss our students and cannot wait to see them again soon.”

180-year-old Erskine College established the Charter Institute at Erskine in 2017 to improve public education across the state of South Carolina. The Institute currently authorizes Gray Collegiate Academy and 16 other charter schools comprised of nearly 11,000 students. For more information, please visit www.erskinecharters.org.

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