

The Apprentice School



Graduation Exercises for the Class of 2025



*Hampton, Virginia
Saturday, March 21, 2026
10 a.m.*

The Apprentice School

On July 1, 1919, Homer L. Ferguson, president and general manager of Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, signed Executive Order 24, formally establishing The Apprentice School by agreeing to pay apprentices to attend academic classes geared toward the shipbuilding industry on company time. Since its inception, more than 11,000 students have graduated as shipbuilders from The Apprentice School. The school's timeless values of craftsmanship, scholarship and leadership are still demonstrated by all apprentices and apprentice graduates building "Good Ships" at Newport News Shipbuilding for our country's service. Today's apprentices are learning new technologies that will enhance the building of ships that will forever serve future generations. Ferguson was indeed a visionary and his vision for The Apprentice School is stronger now than ever before.





Graduation Exercises

Initiation of Program

Xavier Beale
Vice President of Human Resources
Newport News Shipbuilding

Processional: “Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1”

“The Star-Spangled Banner”

Alexander Gabriel Rodriguez
Class of 2025

Invocation

NeOndra Vena Kelly
Class of 2025

Remarks

Xavier Beale

Remarks

Kari Wilkinson
President
Newport News Shipbuilding

Awards Video Presentation

Commencement Address

The Honorable Linda McMahon
U.S. Secretary of Education

Awarding of Certificates

Dr. Latitia McCane
Director of Education
The Apprentice School

For the Graduates

Joseph Alexander Edwards
Homer L. Ferguson Award Recipient

Closing Remarks

Xavier Beale

Recessional: “Armed Forces Medley”

Graduate and Faculty Awards

Niels Christiansen Craftsmanship Award

Presented to graduates who excelled in craftsmanship among waterfront trades:

Nicholas Hunter Brandt
Cordaryl Joron Butler
Joseph Alexander Edwards
Ricky Lee Harris Jr.
Keshaun Markez Leroy Williams

Charles F. Bailey Award

Presented to graduates who attained the highest scholastic average in required courses:

Stephen John Ashworth
Mingyi Cisar
Brenton Darnell Cross Jr.
Joseph Alexander Edwards
Jasper Dylan Fogleman
Evan Pennington Hernandez
William Wesley Hyatt Jr.
David Robert McElravy Jr.
Colten Davis O'Brien
Noah Bud Pafford
Hayden Tyler Smith
Kelly Marissa Waters Smith

W. R. Phillips Jr. Award

Presented to graduates from the optional salaried programs who excelled in craftsmanship and job performance:

Jarub Chandler Ellenwood
Troy Richard Gibbons Jr.
Richard Terry Locklin Jr.

G. Guy Via Award

Presented to graduates who attained the highest scholastic average in each of the optional programs leading to degrees in engineering, engineering technology and business administration:

Kevin Paul Gardner
Christopher Alan Griffin
Natasha Jacobitz Pekala

James P. Healy Community Service Award

Presented to the graduate who most exemplified leadership in community service:

Stacey Lynn Frye

Frank F. Satchell Jr. Outstanding Faculty Award

Presented to a faculty member nominated by the graduating class who demonstrates the highest level of instructional quality and concern for apprentices' success, and for overall contributions and support of the school:

Norman B. Pulliam Jr.

Homer L. Ferguson Award

On behalf of the Apprentice Alumni Association to the graduate who achieved the highest average in combined, required academic and craft grades:

Joseph Alexander Edwards

Gold Athletic Award

Presented to graduates who lettered each year of their apprenticeship in the same sport or activity while demonstrating leadership in the classroom:

BASEBALL

Logan McCoy Earley
Douglas Connor Gregory
Matthew Lane Phoebus
Bryce Jerney Post
Caleb Tysen Russell
Jake Louis Sanchez-Tiller
Camden Lee Weston
Kyle Anthony Whitlock

FOOTBALL

Xavien Devante Hunter
Jyshawn Jamonte Jackson
Haiden Leslie Moody
Roshard Eugene Phipps Jr.
Kaytwan Savon Shuler
Mason Alexander Tatum
Grant Thomas Swanger

GOLF

Kai William Crockett
Richard Terry Locklin Jr.
Grant Thomas Swanger

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Xavien Devante Hunter
Karree Jamal Smith
Adrión Joshua Wall

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Nyla Nicole Jackson
NeOndra Vena Kelly

WRESTLING

Matthew Jonathan Dela Mines Henson
Landon Edward Kissell
David Robert McElravy Jr.

Graduates

RICKEY LAMONT ABERCROMBIE JR. @#
Welder
Greenville, South Carolina

AMARI DE'TRALE AKLIN @#!
Shipfitter
Hampton, Virginia

LOGAN RACE ASHLEY @#
Maintenance Electrician
Hopewell, Virginia

STEPHEN JOHN ASHWORTH @#!***
Outside Machinist
Williamsburg, Virginia

EVAN RHOADS WYLDE ATKINS @
Shipfitter
Newport News, Virginia

CLYDE CLINTON BARDEN V @#
Electrician
Hertford, North Carolina

KAYLEB CONNOR BELANGERI @#! **
Marine Designer
Gloucester, Virginia

CAMERON DOUGLASS BERGER **
Marine Designer
Cheshire, Connecticut

TYLER ANSON BRADSHAW @#!**
Marine Designer
Portsmouth, Virginia

NICHOLAS HUNTER BRANDT @#!**
Outside Machinist
Gloucester, Virginia

CHARETTA LYNISE BROWN @#
Outside Machinist
Plant City, Florida

RYAN NEIL BRUGGER @#!***
Nuclear Test Technician
Mechanicsville, Virginia

ADRIAN TYLER BUNN @#
Pipefitter
Newport News, Virginia

CORDARYL JORON BUTLER @#
Heavy Metal Fabricator
Smithfield, Virginia

RYAN KRISTOPHER BUTLER @
Supply Chain Specialist
Gloucester, Virginia

SCOTT ALLEN CAMPBELL **
Supply Chain Specialist
Gloucester, Virginia

SEAN EVAN CARLSON !*
Production Planner
Matthews, Virginia

GARRISON REEDER CHAMPIGNY @#
Electrician
Suffolk, Virginia

MINGYI CISAR !**
Marine Engineer
Shanghai, China

GARRETT EDWARD CLAYTOR @#!***
Outside Machinist
Newport News, Virginia

JOSEPH DAVID CLIFTON @#!**
Electrician
King William, Virginia

RILEY SEBASTION COLE @!
Welder
Newport News, Virginia

RON MARCELLUS CORBIN @#
Pipefitter
Gatesville, North Carolina

KAI WILLIAM CROCKETT@#^
Shipfitter
Fredericksburg, Virginia

BRENTON DARNELL CROSS JR. **
Supply Chain Specialist
Franklin, Virginia

JAQ VITORRE BERBERABE DE LEON @*
Production Planner
Williamsburg, Virginia

ELANTE EDWARD DREW @
Outside Machinist
Smithfield, Virginia

ANDRE ERROL LLOYD DUHANEY @#
Rigger
Atlanta, Georgia

LOGAN MCCOY EARLEY @^
Pipefitter
Gates County, North Carolina

JOSEPH ALEXANDER EDWARDS @#!***
Electrician
Hampton, Virginia

JARUB CHANDLER ELLENWOOD ***
Marine Engineer
Hampton, Virginia

ALEXANDER BROWN FERGUSON *
Cost Estimator
Hampton, Virginia

JASPER DYLAN FOGLEMAN @**
Milwright
Portsmouth, Virginia

STACEY LYNN FRYE @#!
Electrician
Hancock, Maryland

JOSEPH EDWARD FULTZ III @#
Electrician
Richmond, Virginia

KEVIN PAUL GARDNER !**
Marine Designer
Millville, New Jersey

Graduates

TROY RICHARD GIBBONS JR. #**

Production Planner
Newport News, Virginia

CARLOS MIGUEL SAVION GREENE @

Outside Machinist
Newport News, Virginia

CONNOR NATHANIEL GREENLEAF @#!

Production Planner
Yorktown, Virginia

DOUGLAS CONNOR GREGORY @^

Molder
Birmingham, Alabama

CHRISTOPHER ALAN GRIFFIN **

Marine Engineer
Suffolk, Virginia

JOSEPH STANLEY GURGANUS III @#

Pipefitter
Chesapeake, Virginia

COLTON DAYNE RILEY HADEN @

Millwright
Hopewell, Virginia

DYLAN TAYLOR HALL @#

Outside Machinist
Hampton, Virginia

KAMIL LERIN HARGROVE @

Sheet Metal Worker
Lexington Park, Maryland

RICKY LEE HARRIS JR. @#**

Pipefitter
Newport News, Virginia

RILEY OWEN HARRISON @*

Maintenance Pipefitter
Culpeper, Virginia

**MATTHEW JONATHAN DELA MINES
HENSON @***

Pipefitter
Suffolk, Virginia

EVAN PENNINGTON HERNANDEZ ***

Marine Engineer
Hampton, Virginia

ADRIAN BREON HUBBARD *

Cost Estimator
Altavista, Virginia

XAVIEN DEVANTE HUNTER @^^

Shipfitter
Louisa County, Virginia

WILLIAM WESLEY HYATT JR. @#!**

Nuclear Test Technician
Chesapeake, Virginia

LOGAN MICHAEL ISTRE @!

Electrician
Virginia Beach, Virginia

JYSHAWN JAMONTE JACKSON @^

Maintenance Electrician
Richmond, Virginia

NYLA NICOLE JACKSON @#!^

Electrician
Newport News, Virginia

JASMYN NATE' JERKINS @#

Marine Designer
Newport News, Virginia

ABREA JANEL JOHNSON **

Supply Chain Specialist
Windsor, Virginia

TIMOTHY ALAN JOHNSTON JR. @#

Electrician
Virginia Beach, Virginia

NATHANIEL BENJAMIN KAGEY @#

Pipefitter
New Kent, Virginia

GRANT SAMUEL KAPPAUF @#*

Welder
Suffolk, Virginia

NEONDRRA VENA KELLY @#!^

Insulator
Surry County, Virginia

DONALD EVERETT KENNEY @#

Shipfitter
Hampton, Virginia

LONDON EDWARD KISSELL @#^

Rigger
Suffolk, Virginia

BRIONNA KNIGHT @##

Metrology Technician
Southampton County, Virginia

WILLIAM BRYANT LARKIN SR. @#!

Rigger
Virginia Beach, Virginia

MICHAEL KOBY LISBON *

Nuclear Test Technician
Cross, South Carolina

RICHARD TERRY LOCKLIN JR. @#!^***

Metrology Technician
Lincolnton, North Carolina

JARED DUANE LORD @#**

Rigger
Suffolk, Virginia

BRICE ALEXANDER LUPICO @#**

Welder
Newport News, Virginia

LUKE JOHNSON MAHAFFY @

Supply Chain Specialist
Yorktown, Virginia

BRAEDON SCOTT MCBRIDE @

Shipfitter
Newport News, Virginia

DAVID ROBERT McELRAVY JR. ^

Sheet Metal Worker
Indiana, Pennsylvania

Graduates

ANDREW EMMANUEL MEEKINS JR. @
Marine Designer
Williamsburg, Virginia

SABRINA DION MITCHELL @#
Electrician
Hampton, Virginia

DANIEL ADEMIR MOLINA @
Pipefitter
Williamsburg, Virginia

HAIDEN LESLIE MOODY @^
Welder
Republic, Missouri

CLIMOTHY OSBURNE MORRIS JR. @**
Supply Chain Specialist
Charles City, Virginia

KRISTIN NICHOLE MUNFORD **
Marine Engineer
Smithfield, Virginia

KEVIN ARTHUR MURPHY II @#**
Nuclear Test Technician
Sterling Heights, Michigan

CHRISTIAN SCOTT NEWBORN @
Sheet Metal Worker
Hampton, Virginia

CAMDEN ALDEN NICKERSON @#*
Electrician
Boise, Idaho

COLTON DAVIS O'BRIEN @#**
Outside Machinist
Appomattox, Virginia

ZACHARY TYLER WILLIAM ORTEGA @#
Heating and Air Condition Worker
Fredericksburg, Virginia

CONNOR LEE OVITT *
Outside Machinist
Williamsburg, Virginia

NOAH BUD PAFFORD @#***
Nuclear Test Technician
Virginia Beach, Virginia

DWIGHT ONEIL PALMER @#
Pipefitter
Newport News, Virginia

NATASHA JACOBITZ PEKALA !**
Supply Chain Specialist
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

JOHN DAVID PERREAULT @#
Outside Machinist
Newport News, Virginia

ROSHARD EUGENE PHIPPS JR. @^
Insulator
Richmond, Virginia

MATTHEW LANE PHOEBUS @#^***
Nuclear Test Technician
Fredericksburg, Virginia

KEVIN MICHAEL POITRAS @#
Shipfitter
Seaford, Virginia

CHASE PARKE PORTER @#
Outside Machinist
Carrsville, Virginia

CAMILLA SUE POSEY **
Marine Designer
Chester, Virginia

BRYCE JERNEY POST @^**
Heating and Air Conditioning Worker
Front Royal, Virginia

ALTON HYOU POWELL
Metrology Technician
Aiea, Hawaii

JORDAN DAVID POWELL @#
Rigger
Newport News, Virginia

QUA'TAZ KIREE REYNOLDS @#**
Coatings Specialist
Newport News, Virginia

SKYLAR ANDREW RHOADES @
Sheet Metal Worker
Clarion, Pennsylvania

DALTON STEVEN ANDREW ROBERTS @#!
Welder
Lusby, Maryland

ALEXANDER GABRIEL RODRIGUEZ @#!***
Marine Designer
Watertown, New York

AILEEN NICOLE RUDIGER @!***
Cost Estimator
Norfolk, Virginia

CALEB TYSEN RUSSELL @^
Electrician
Carson, Virginia

JAKE LOUIS SANCHEZ-TILLER @^
Rigger
Portsmouth, Virginia

DAVID SCOTT SASSER @#!***
Shipfitter
Hampton, Virginia

MICHAEL JOSEPH SAUNDERS @
Electrician
Gloucester, Virginia

KRISTEN LEE SCARSDALE @#**
Supply Chain Specialist
Yorktown, Virginia

JACOB SCOTT SEALE @#!
Electrician
Yorktown, Virginia

KAYTWAN DAVOND SHULER @^
Rigger
Orangeburg, South Carolina

Graduates

JOHN CHRISTOPHER SLAVNIK II @#**
Electrician
Gloucester, Virginia

HAYDEN TYLER SMITH @#***
Outside Machinist
West Point, Virginia

KARREE JAMAL SMITH @^
Milwright
Virginia Beach, Virginia

KELLY MARISSA WATERS SMITH @#!***
Metrology Technician
Smithfield, Virginia

NICHOLAS POWELL SMITH @**
Pipefitter
Seaford, Virginia

GRANT JAMES STROTHER @#**
Non-Destructive Tester
Fairmont, West Virginia

JOHN PAUL STUART @
Welder
Carrollton, Virginia

GRANT THOMAS SWANGER @#^^
Sheet Metal Worker
Chesapeake, Virginia

RYAN ANTHONY SZANTO SR. @#!**
Nuclear Test Technician
Newport News, Virginia

KEVIN HUNG LEUNG SZE *
Nuclear Test Technician
Brooklyn, New York

MASON ALEXANDER TATUM^!***
Metrology Technician
Ashburn, Virginia

ZACHARY DAVID THOMPSON **
Marine Designer
Elyria, Ohio

ADRION JOSHUA WALL @^
Shipfitter
Norfolk, Virginia

JOSHUA THOMAS WEST @#!
Shipfitter
Newport News, Virginia

CAMDEN LEE WESTON @^
Welder
Chester, Virginia

JAMARIUS KAI WESTON @
Rigger
Stafford, Virginia

KYLE ANTHONY WHITLOCK @#^!
Outside Machinist
New Kent, Virginia

CARITA EARLENE WILKINS @#
Insulator
Hampton, Virginia

CHASE BLYTHE WILLIAMS @#
Pipefitter
Carrsville, Virginia

KESHAUN MARKEZ LEROY WILLIAMS @!
Rigger
Andrews, South Carolina

SYMBOL KEY

@	ASSOCIATES APPLIED SCIENCE MARITIME TECHNOLOGY DEGREE
#	FRONTLINE FAST
^	GOLD ATHLETE
^^	GOLD ATHLETE - 2 SPORTS
!	NATIONAL SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESS
*	WITH HONORS
**	WITH HIGH HONORS
***	WITH HIGHEST HONORS

Kari Wilkinson

PRESIDENT, NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING



Kari Wilkinson is executive vice president of HII and president of the Newport News Shipbuilding division in Newport News, Virginia. Named to this position in 2025, Wilkinson has the responsibility to lead, enable and support the more than 26,000 shipbuilders who design, build and maintain nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines. Newport News Shipbuilding has built and maintained ships for 140 years and is the largest industrial employer in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Wilkinson previously served as president of Ingalls Shipbuilding, Mississippi's largest industrial employer. Named to the position in 2021, she led more than 11,000 shipbuilders who design, build, and maintain amphibious ships, destroyers, and cutters for the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard. Prior to becoming president, Wilkinson served in a number of roles during her nearly three decades at Ingalls, including vice president of program management, and positions in Engineering, Program Management and Operations.

Originally from Michigan, Wilkinson holds a bachelor's degree in naval architecture and marine engineering from the University of Michigan, and an MBA from Temple University.

Wilkinson believes in serving the community in which she works and lives and was active in Mississippi on boards and executive committees. She has brought this same sense of service with her to Virginia and now serves on the Mariners' Museum and Park board of trustees, the Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable board of directors and the Naval Submarine League board of directors.

The Honorable Linda McMahon

U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION



Linda E. McMahon was sworn in as the 13th U.S. Secretary of Education on March 3, 2025, appointed by President Donald J. Trump. A businesswoman, education policy leader, and public servant, she has decades of experience in job creation and expanding educational opportunities.

Born in North Carolina, McMahon earned a bachelor's degree in French from East Carolina University, initially aspiring to be a teacher. She later served on the Connecticut State Board of Education and the Board of Trustees at Sacred Heart University, advocating for teacher empowerment and student success. She has had a multi-decade career in business as CEO of WWE, creating thousands of jobs and sparking her passion for Career and Technical Education (CTE). Under the first Trump Administration, she served as Administrator of the Small Business Administration, and later chaired the America First Policy Institute, where she focused on reforms to education and workforce policy.

As Secretary, McMahon prioritizes expanding school choice, empowering teachers, and returning education oversight to the states. She calls Connecticut home and has two children and six grandchildren.

Xavier Beale

VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES



Xavier Beale is vice president of Human Resources for Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of HII, located in Newport News, Virginia. Named to this position in 2022, Beale is responsible for talent acquisition, human resources operations, labor relations, leadership and professional development, ethics, engagement and Newport News Shipbuilding's Apprentice School.

A second-generation shipbuilder, Beale is committed to advancing a highly skilled workforce and representing the interests of Newport News Shipbuilding employees. He began his shipbuilding career in 1991 as a pipefitter before leaving the shipyard for 10 years to work as a probation officer and program manager of a behavioral health treatment center. During this time, he also served in the Virginia Army National Guard. Since returning to the shipyard in 2004, Beale has held positions of increasing responsibility to include supervisor of employee relations, manager of human resources business partners, manager of EEO and diversity, and director of human resources. Prior to his current appointment, he served as vice president of Trades.

Beale earned a bachelor's degree in governmental administration from Christopher Newport University and a master's degree in human resources from Troy University. He is actively involved in Hampton Roads and serves on the Hampton Roads Community Action Program and the Newport News Economic and Industrial Development board of directors. Beale was appointed in 2023 by Governor Glenn Youngkin as vice chair of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and also serves on the board of directors for the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education.

Dr. Latitia McCane

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE APPRENTICE SCHOOL



Latitia D. McCane is director of Education for The Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of HII, located in Newport News, Virginia. Named to this position in 2018, McCane is responsible for overall leadership, vision and strategic direction of craft training, academic delivery, student services, accreditation and recruitment for a student body of 800 in addition to staff and faculty. The school, founded in 1919, has produced more than 11,000 graduates with four-to-eight-year apprentice program certificates.

McCane earned a doctoral degree in urban higher education administration from Jackson State University. She also holds graduate degrees in organic chemistry and chemistry from the University of Alabama and Texas Southern University as well as an undergraduate degree in chemistry from Alabama State University. McCane is a member of the CIVIC Leadership Institute's Class of 2019 as well as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. She is active in her community and serves on boards of directors for the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, New Horizons Foundation, the CIVIC Leadership Institute, *FIRST* Chesapeake Robotics, the Anchor Scholarship Foundation and the 20 Pearls Foundation. McCane is the author of *Giving Daughters a Competitive Edge: Family and Career*.

Joseph Alexander Edwards

HOMER L. FERGUSON AWARD RECIPIENT



Joseph Alexander Edwards is this year's Homer L. Ferguson Award recipient. A Hampton Roads native, Edwards began his career at Newport News Shipbuilding in 2018 when he was hired as an electrician in the In-Service Aircraft Carrier Program. He entered The Apprentice School in 2022 out of a desire to further his education and expand his career options.

As an apprentice, Edwards committed to giving his best effort. He relished opportunities to learn about different areas of the business – including submarines and new construction aircraft carriers – while using his experience to teach others.

Edwards currently works as a deck electrician on aircraft carrier USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), which is undergoing refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH) at NNS. He credits his wife and four children as his most important motivators.

Honors Program

The Honors Program recognizes outstanding shop and academic grades during the apprenticeship. Apprentices who complete the World Class Shipbuilder Curriculum are eligible to graduate “with honors.” Those who complete one of the school’s optional programs or the AAS World Class Shipbuilder Curriculum are eligible to graduate “with honors,” “with high honors” or “with highest honors.” Apprentices with honors designations are wearing a gold stole and have an Honors Program emblem affixed to their diploma.

Frontline FAST

Frontline Foreman Accelerated Skills Training (FAST) is an intensely focused leadership development program dedicated to producing an elite pool of graduates with the desire, aptitude and skill set to be frontline supervisors at Newport News Shipbuilding. Selection for Frontline FAST is determined by conduct and attendance, shop and academic grade point averages and lead craft instructor and craft instructor recommendations.

Associate of Applied Science in Maritime Technology

In 2020, The Apprentice School was approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to operate as a postsecondary institution. The certification gave the school authority to grant associate of applied science in maritime technology degrees in 26 disciplines. This enhances The Apprentice School’s national reputation as the model apprenticeship program.

The Apprentice School Seal



Rarely does an official seal emblem incorporate as much symbolism about an organization as the very detailed Apprentice School Seal. Even more unusual, the seal was created by one of the shipyard's skilled craftsmen who, appropriately enough, was an alumnus apprentice.

A contest was held in 1942, seeking a design for a seal. None of the initial entries were considered suitable. So the school turned to one of their own, Richard B. (Dick) Poythress. What he fashioned won quick acceptance and has been a hallmark of the school ever since.

In 1937, Poythress became the 13th person to complete an apprenticeship in the Paint Department. He worked in the yard's Sign Shop for decades, applying a natural artistic capability to his varied assignments. During his time, he was the art director of the Broad A when it was founded.

Following graduation, he provided guidance and advice to that publication's staff for many years. Poythress also frequently contributed cartoons to the *Shipyards Bulletin* and local newspapers, often poking fun at shipyard practices and officials, as well as local politicians.

His greatest and most lasting contribution, undoubtedly, is this venerable seal.

The chain represents unity; the anchor, security; the propeller, progress; the pilot wheel, guidance; and the stars, lofty aims in life. On each blade of the propeller is an appropriate symbol representing the school's motto inscribed on the hub: Head, Hand, and Heart. On the anchor's flukes, 1919 signifies the year The Apprentice School became a formal entity.

Unfortunately, Poythress is no longer with us, but he left behind this truly outstanding example of his understanding of what our school was, is and should be for generations to come.

#NNSApprenticeSchool



**Newport News
Shipbuilding**
A Division of HII