

Four Graduate from Summit Academy in Bronson



Jacob Meeks and J.R. Barlow thrust their caps upward to celebrate their graduation from Summit Academy. Robert Holt and Adam MacEdward soon followed. *Photo by Terry Witt.*

By Terry Witt
Senior Staff Writer

Four young men at Summit Academy in Bronson Friday night thrust their caps skyward in jubilation. They had met the challenges of a public school education and won the right to join the working world of adults.

They graduated. Principal Dennis Webber encouraged

J.R. Barlow, Adam MacEdward, Robert Holt and Jacob Meeks to face the future and take advantage of employment opportunities that arise before them.

“You have to expect things for yourself before you can do them,” Webber said, quoting Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest basketball player in the history of the game.

Summit Academy is part of Hilltop Alternative School, part of the Levy County School District. The school is housed in the former Bronson High School behind the Levy County Courthouse. It stands at the top of a hill in Bronson.

The boys each gave a speech, including Meeks.

“I’ve waited 16 years to graduate. Now the battle is won,” Meeks said.

MacEdward was applauded by his fellow firefighters from Bronson Fire Rescue who showed up in uniforms to watch him graduate. They parked fire trucks outside the school in support of MacEdward. Interim Fire Chief Dennis Russell was on hand with his firefighters.

“To those who follow in our footsteps at Summit Academy, keep going and don’t give up,” MacEdward said.

Barlow told the gathering, which included other Summit Academy students, “If I can do it, you can do it.” He said all they have to do is work hard and stay committed to graduating.

Webber said Summit Academy is a center school for the district. The school has smaller class sizes that allow the students to learn faster and more effectively.

“What is such a blessing and an asset is the classes are small to allow better concentration,” he said.

The students come to the school with emotional challenges. They work closely with Rachael Almeida, administrative assistant. She said she grew close to all four of the boys.

“She has done an awesome job,” Webber said. Her fingerprints are all over the program, but she also touches the kids.”