

DR. LATITIA MCCANE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE APPRENTICE SCHOOL

WELCOME TO THE 2019 GRADUATION OF THE APPRENTICE SCHOOL. AS WE CELEBRATE THE CLASS OF 2018 IN THE YEAR OF OUR CENTENNIAL. TODAY 157 GRADUATES ARE BEING RECOGNIZED AS THEY CULMINATE THEIR APPRENTICESHIP, RECEIVE THEIR CERTIFICATES AND RING THE CEREMONIAL BELL. OUR GRADUATES REPRESENT SIXTEEN TRADES AND SIX OPTIONAL ADVANCED PROGRAMS.

JENNIFER BOYKIN, PRESIDENT, NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING

TODAY IS YOUR DAY. YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED DEDICATION AND DETERMINATION AND SACRIFICE TO WALK ACROSS THIS STAGE TODAY. YOU ARE OUR FUTURE AND OUR LEGACY IS SAFE IN YOUR CAPABLE HANDS. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE DEDICATION, THE DETERMINATION AND THE SACRIFICE THAT LED YOU TO YOUR SUCCESS TODAY WILL ENSURE OUR COLLECTIVE CONTINUED SUCCESS TOMORROW AND IN THE CENTURIES TO COME.

DR. JILL BIDEN, FORMER SECOND LADY OF THE UNITED STATES

YOU ARE STARTING A NEW JOURNEY. ONE WHERE YOU ARE PART OF A FAMILY WITH A HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS. ONE THAT WILL SHAPE AMERICA'S FUTURE. YOU SHOULD NEVER FORGET THAT YOUR WORK IS NEEDED AND REVERED BY SO MANY. THAT OUR NATION IS MORE SAFE AND SECURE BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU DO. I NOW HAVE THE DISTINCT HONOR TO PRESENT TO YOU THE CLASS OF 2018 HOMER L. FERGUSON AWARD WINNER, AND OUR FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN TO EARN THIS AWARD, KEVIN MCNEILL.

KEVIN MCNEILL, CLASS OF 2018 HOMER L. FERGUSON AWARD WINNER

OFTEN WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THE LITTLE THINGS THAT ARE DRASTICALLY CRITICAL IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE THE DESIRE TO BUILD GREAT SHIPS, BUT WE NEED OUR HANDS TO CARRY OUT THE MISSION. EVERY APPRENTICE IS AN ARTIST AND THE WORK WE DO HERE REQUIRES HEART AND MUCH DEDICATION. AS WE BEGIN A NEW CHAPTER AS APPRENTICE GRADUATES I CHALLENGE EACH OF YOU TO REMEMBER WHAT YOU STARTED IN YOUR APPRENTICESHIP YEARS AGO, AND BE THE MODEL OF EXCELLENCE OF THOSE APPRENTICES AND CRAFTSMEN THAT ARE HERE NOW AND THOSE YET TO COME. I HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL USING THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE GAINED IN YOUR APPRENTICESHIP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, NOT ONLY IN THE SHIPYARD, BUT IN YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE. THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2018!