

32 'beautiful graduates' saluted at Hungerford

BY SUSAN LUNNY
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Thirty-two Hungerford School students received their diplomas yesterday as proud families, faculty members and honored guests, including Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines, looked on.

The ceremony marked the 47th annual commencement at the Clifton school.

Cortines commended the graduates, who are developmentally and physically disabled, for their hard work and achievements.

"Not only are you special graduates but you're beautiful graduates," said Cortines. "I'm so proud of you."

Cortines also lauded the graduates' parents and the Hungerford School faculty and staff for their remarkable efforts with the graduates.

Borough President Guy V. Molinari said that Cortines' appearance, just hours after announcing his intention to resign as chancellor, should reinforce to the graduates just how special they are.

"The fact that... he saw fit to come here to pay tribute to our graduates... not many people would have had the strength to do that," Molinari said.

"I thought it appropriate at this day and at this time in my career that I am with people who really care," said Cortines. "I care about you and you care about the young people of New York."

Dr. Mary McInerney, principal, presented Cortines with a school



Carmelo Lazzaro
Valeictorian

yearbook. "This way you'll always remember a New York City Board of Education graduation," she said.

Molinari told the graduates that this was one of the biggest days of their lives and he was happy to take part in the very special event.

"I've made a lot of good friends here at Hungerford. It's an incredible learning facility," he said.

Molinari said he was the personal guest of graduate William (Willy) Washington, who has been a pen pal of his for two years.

Molinari presented him with the Borough President's Achievement Award, claiming that Willy win-



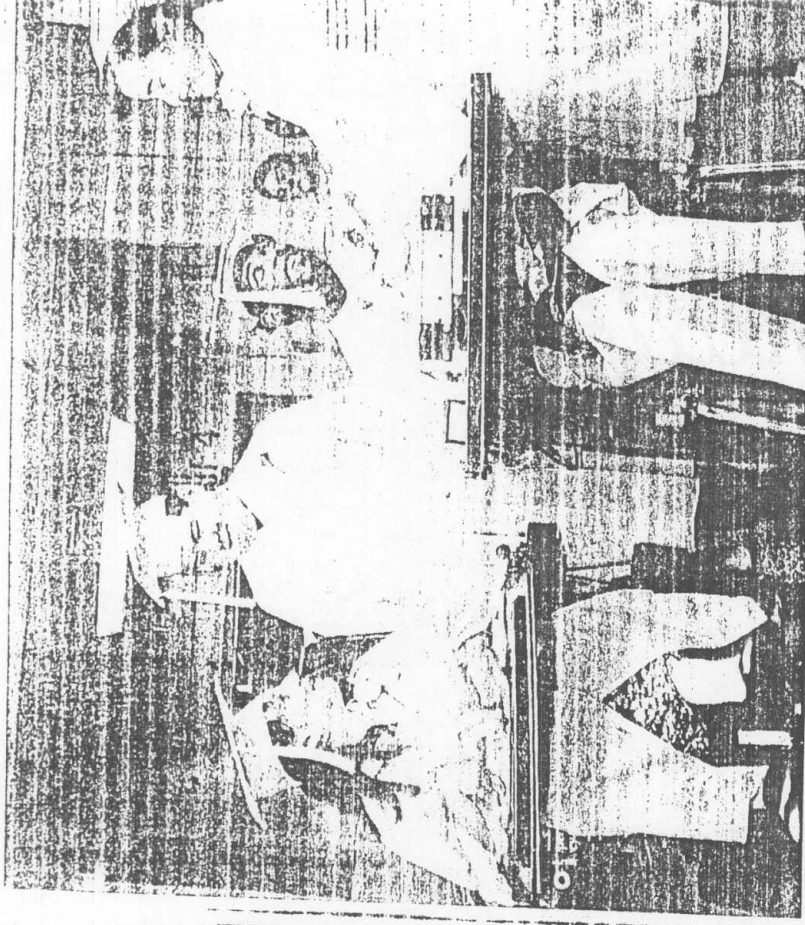
Bridgett Sapp
Salutatorian

ning the award had nothing to do with the fact that he was his "buddy."

Dr. Claire Barabash, deputy assistant superintendent, told the students that this day represented all of their effort, hard work and achievement. "Each and every one of you should be filled with pride."

Valeictorian Carmelo Lazzaro said that he would miss his teachers, friends, the paraprofessionals, and Dr. McInerney. "I will always remember you," he said.

Salutatorian Bridgett Sapp said:



ADVANCE PHOTO BY FRANK J. JOHNSON

Elaine Rodriguez, right, helps Willie Washington straighten his carnation, while Kristi Ambrosini and Peter Falk chat before graduation at the Hungerford School.

she had loved her years at the school and thanked everyone "who taught me the meaning of responsibility."

Willy Washington, class president, and Biagio Friscia, graduate representative, also spoke.

Dr. McInerney also read a letter from State Sen. John Marchi, who could not attend.

Friscia, Diana Gastelo, John Giotta, Della Grado, Jennifer Harkins, Mo Jimenez, Andrew Knapp, Carmelo Lazzaro, Milagros Lopez, Joseph Marcobert Mitchell, Robert Moore, Carole Murray, Melissa Pappas, Jenni Prestia, Luis Reyes, Elaine Rodriguez, Miguel Ruiz, Kristofer Russo, Bridgett Sapp, McShawn Thompson, Christa Varano, William Washington and Jennifer Zarrin.