

STAR-GAZETTE

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VETERAN GRADUATES



KELLY GAMPEL / STAFF PHOTO

Edward Taylor, of Elmira Heights, receives his Thomas A. Edison High School diploma from superintendent Mary Beth Fiore Friday night alongside the district's Class of 2016. Taylor was issued the honorary certificate after dropping out of school to join the Navy during World War II.

90-year-old Edward Taylor walks at Thomas A. Edison graduation; realizes life-long dream

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Edward Taylor finally got the opportunity he missed when he dropped out of school: walk at graduation.

He didn't drop out of high school due to bad grades or apathy rather he left the Elmira Heights school district to serve in the Navy during World War II. He just never returned to school.

But that life-long dream of walking across the stage and getting a diploma was fulfilled Friday night as the 90-year-old Elmira Heights man participated and walked in the Thomas A. Edison High School commencement.

"I'm so happy," Taylor said as he became emotional. "I'm overwhelmed."

The man of few words blended in with the teenagers dressed in white or blue gowns, but his worn skin and slower pace set him apart. Whenever Taylor was recognized throughout the ceremony, the full house cheered and applauded, and gave the veteran a standing ovation when he received his diploma.

The hour-long graduation ceremony where 62 students graduated was filled with traditions - from the award ceremony, to the speeches and singing the alma mater, and topping off the event with the seniors tossing their caps near the flagpole. The speeches were delivered by valedictorian Michael Beach, salutatorian Leena Trinh and honor

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KELLY GAMPEL / STAFF PHOTO

Thomas A. Edison High School's Class of 2016 toss their caps near the Elmira Heights Central School District flagpole - per tradition - after graduating from the school just moments before.



See a photo gallery with this story at

stargazette.com



Akeem Williams is accused of shooting an Elmira man to death early Thursday and was jailed without bail following his arraignment.

Murder suspect jailed

Accused of killing an Elmira man

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The suspect police accused of shooting an Elmira man to death early Thursday was jailed without bail following his arraignment Friday.

Elmira police Thursday charged Akeem J. Williams, 29, of Elmira, with second-degree murder in connection with the death of Tiko Head, 44.

Head died of a single gunshot wound, police said.

Williams was taken into custody Thursday at a residence at 327 Highland Drive in West Elmira.

He did not enter a plea at his arraignment Friday morning in City of Elmira Court. Williams was assigned a public defender and committed to the Chemung County Jail without bail.

He is scheduled to return to city court at 1 p.m. Tuesday for a preliminary hearing.

City police officers responded around 1 a.m. Thursday to the 100 block of West Second Street for a report of an unresponsive male. The call was made by members of the Elmira Fire Department, according to Police Chief Joseph Kane.

Fire headquarters is directly across the street from the crime scene at 106 W. Second St. Firefighters saw a person stumble out of the residence and collapse on the sidewalk before they called 911, Kane said.

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Tioga Downs license delayed

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It will be at least mid-July when Tioga Downs gets its state license to operate a full-fledged casino as it moves to become a destination gaming resort and nearly triple its number of jobs.

Consideration of the Nichols entertainment complex's casino license is not on the agenda for the state Gaming Commission's June meeting, scheduled for Monday in New York City. That means it will be at least another month before the license can be officially considered.

Company officials say they aren't concerned and are moving ahead with plans to open, which they hope to do in the fall. It's their understanding the delay is simply because it's taken longer for the commission to read and review

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