

'Greatest Generation' makes visit to Milton High

"The Greatest Generation."

That is how my onetime fellow reporter at WSB, Tom Brokaw, described the young men who fought in World War II.

Tom, after leaving Atlanta, covered the news hot spots of the world. Recently, this tough and discerning, but warmhearted journalist retired after years as anchorman at NBC-TV.

His best-selling book chronicled the exploits of the energy-filled, idealistic but indisputably brave youngsters who made up the bulk of the far-flung fighting machine that fought for victory in World War II.

Those guys were mostly in their late teens or early 20s, when they answered Uncle Sam's call to duty.

I learned from a recent visit to my old Alpharetta alma mater, Milton High School, that the very same breed of young men and women make up today's student body in equal measure.

Brokaw's "The Greatest Generation" popped into my mind immediately on that memorable Monday at Milton.

Aubrey Morris
North Fulton Footprints



I was honored to be among a group of nine veterans of World War II, mostly old codgers 80 and upwards, on campus to talk about the war — and all proud to be billed as resource persons for a day's worth of classes in American History.

Our little group included Melvin Coalson, a fellow student of the MHS Class of 1940, long active in Alpharetta American Legion Post 201. Mel recruited an impressive group of vets from all branches of the U. S. military.

The day seemed especially appropriate since Milton High, which has occupied the same location since 1921, will be moving to its new campus at Crabapple in August for the next school year.

As Milton Principal Ron Tesch explained, faculty history teacher

Bob Bordas arranged for various groups of around 75 juniors and seniors to break up into small groups for one-on-one discussions with the old timers. By 2:30 p. m., we were bushed.

There are 519 young men and women in the Milton High Class of 2005. They will be receiving their diplomas May 20. No doubt a rollicking scene awaits the Milton High Stadium, which didn't exist when the MHS Class of 1940, numbering 80, walked down the isle of the old auditorium.

My day's return to school taught me a lot.

The bright scholars of today's techno-world are just as smart and gung-ho, (perhaps, much more so,) than those of the agri-world that spawned the "Greatest Generation" Brokaw so ably depicted.

The biggest gap in human relations is still the divide between youth and old age. Up close, 65 years later, I could see it in the youthful eyes and smiling faces of my fellow MHS alumni.

Our face-to-face communications were positively groovy when I

read from my faded old Milton High scrapbook a column I had written in 1939, just before my own graduation:

"Good that somebody has faith in the young people of today." We hear the older ones say, "It looks like the children of today are going to the dogs."

"But listen, older ones. Did your parents scorn and discourage you as if you had no sense of reason when you were young? Maybe you didn't get all that scolding, but I guess you were as bad as the young set of today.

"The privilege is mine to know a fine lady who has far-reaching faith in our present-day youth. She is happy while talking with young people. She loves to get their views on certain problems and trusts their opinions in matters of importance.

"Those citizens who criticize have perhaps forgotten that the America of tomorrow rests in the hands of the young people. Let them give constructive criticism in hope that it will help build sound,

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clear thinking minds for our youth. Let them talk things over with young people so that both sides will have a chance to give points. Let their thoughts work in harmony toward the establishment of a common understanding.

"There is a gap between the

thinking of the old and that of the young. The gap can be filled when the old realize that the young have some sense of reason.

"The reason many of our young people go "wild" is they consider it an established fact that they have no sense. They give up, lose hope and thus go to the dogs.

"But, yet, we have those older

people who talk with young people, encourage them to do right and lead them on to a happy, successful life. We must have more helpers and not so many critics."

Just like today's generation(s), Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation" really was pretty cool, wasn't it.

Awesome!