

## PAA GRADUATES A SENIOR SENIOR

**S**eventy years in the waiting, a former Portland Adventist Academy (PAA) student received his diploma and was counted among the class of 2014 on graduation day.

Growing up in a home without a mother was hard for Imer Henry. It was the 1930s, and his single father struggled to provide for Henry and his two younger siblings during the Depression. As soon as Henry was old enough he began working to help the family. Keeping Henry and the younger children in church school was an expensive priority to this single father.

The United States entered World War II during Henry's freshman year at Portland Union Academy (PUA, now

Imer Henry shows off his diploma from PAA.



Seventy years in the waiting, Imer Henry receives his diploma from PAA during this year's commencement ceremony.

PAA). Henry attended school as he could but continued to work long hours in the Portland shipyards.

In the fall of 1943, Imer Henry was a senior at PUA and had just been elected sergeant at arms for the class of 1944. But his plans for his future were interrupted he when was called to serve his country.

Henry did serve his country. He then married, had children, and lived a full and good life.

It wasn't until his wife's recent passing after 63 years of marriage that Henry began thinking about his blessed life and the foundational years at PUA.

"I was so heartbroken when my wife passed," said Henry. "It was hard to see what was left for me. But I finally heard God urging me to get out and live for Him. And that's what I'm doing."

This spring, Henry attended PAA's alumni weekend for what should have been his 70-year reunion. He met with old acquaintances and friends, and he had the chance to visit with staff and share all that God had been doing for him. Dan Nicola, PAA principal, was moved by Henry's story.

During PAA's commencement ceremony, Nicola shared Henry's story. The audience and the class of 2014 celebrated

with Henry as he was presented with an honorary Portland Adventist Academy diploma — a moment 70 years in the waiting.

"Imer is the embodiment of that determined and selfless spirit we work to inspire in our students," says Nicola. "The senior class quickly recognized this and unanimously agreed to welcome him into their ranks. It was an honor — a very emotional moment — to present Imer with his PAA diploma."

Watch Imer Henry receive his honorary PAA diploma, as recorded by his son, Norman, on YouTube: [glnr.in/1sSjyqQ](http://glnr.in/1sSjyqQ).

*Liesl Vistaunet, PAA Gleaner correspondent*