

Valedictorian Defies Controversy, Leads Class in Lord's Prayer

The 70-year tradition of singing the Lord's Prayer during a high school graduation was nearly eliminated by the nation's largest atheist group. The valedictorian chose to deliver it anyway.

Traditionally, the Lord's Prayer was sung by East Liverpool's choir and was considered a significant part of their graduation ceremony.

When the Freedom Foundation for Separation of Church and State claimed East Liverpool school's tradition was a violation, school administrators chose to oblige their wishes, cancelling the song, avoiding a legal battle.

Larry Walton, school board president said the decision not to fight against the atheist group was a basic matter of economics.

"We said, 'OK, we just won't do it anymore.' It was a decision made because we don't have a lot of money and we'd rather hire teachers than pay lawyers," Walton said. "It's a war we can't win."

However, the graduating class of 2016 wanted to honor the school's tradition. They did not back down.

Class Valedictorian Jonathan Montgomery took the stage and led the class in reciting the Lord's Prayer. The defiant move was met with a standing ovation for the graduates who stood up for their school.

It is reported that Walton is looking to have a nondenominational graduation ceremony in 2017. {eoa}

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