

Subiaco senior grew in his Catholic faith with nature

written by Katie Zakrzewski |



While Subiaco Academy senior Matthew Mayeux can often be found in student council meetings, in the National Honor Society or on the football field, one of his favorite places to be is in nature.

Originally from Beaumont, Texas, Mayeux moved to Coleville in northwest Arkansas when he was a toddler. Mayeux and his mother moved to be closer to family when his father passed away just a few days after Mayeux's second birthday.

Growing up, Mayeux worked hard to help his mom and has worked different jobs to help his mother where he can.

"We always knew it was just us. So we had to stick together," Mayeux said. "We had to act as a team on everything. Because growing up with a single parent ... income and environment ... it's hard. But we had each other. That is all we needed."

As he grew up, Mayeux became involved in his parish, St. Mary Church in Altus.

"I was part of the youth group," Mayeux said. "I attended a lot of the conferences, like the Steubenville Youth Conference and the one over in Charleston. I always had an awesome time doing that. I always helped altar serve. I've served since the day I could — I started serving at St. Mary's and still haven't stopped."

Throughout his childhood, Mayeux gravitated toward nature. Wildlife fascinated him. Last

summer, Mayeux worked for the U.S. Forest Service.

“It was amazing. Everything you could think of that’s outdoorsy, I did it,” Mayeux said. “Bird watching, tree marking, walking around in the woods. It was perfect.”

Now, Mayeux helps a local farmer in order to learn more about the domestic and agricultural side of animal care.

“I help take care of the cattle, help vaccinate them, feed them,” Mayeux said. “I help tag them whenever they start calving. ... I love nothing more than to be outside ... any time of year.”

But Mayeux’s favorite outdoor activity is riding dirt bikes. A dirt bike enthusiast since he was 9 years old, Mayeux began exploring the hobby when he discovered his dad rode dirt bikes.

A true environmentalist, Mayeux plans to pursue a degree in wildlife biology and a minor in criminology at the University of Texas at San Antonio with the intention of becoming a game warden.

With his mom recently moving back to Texas, Mayeux plans to go there or Florida after college for his career, where the wildlife is incredibly diverse.

He made the decision to become a game warden two years ago after becoming an Eagle Scout.

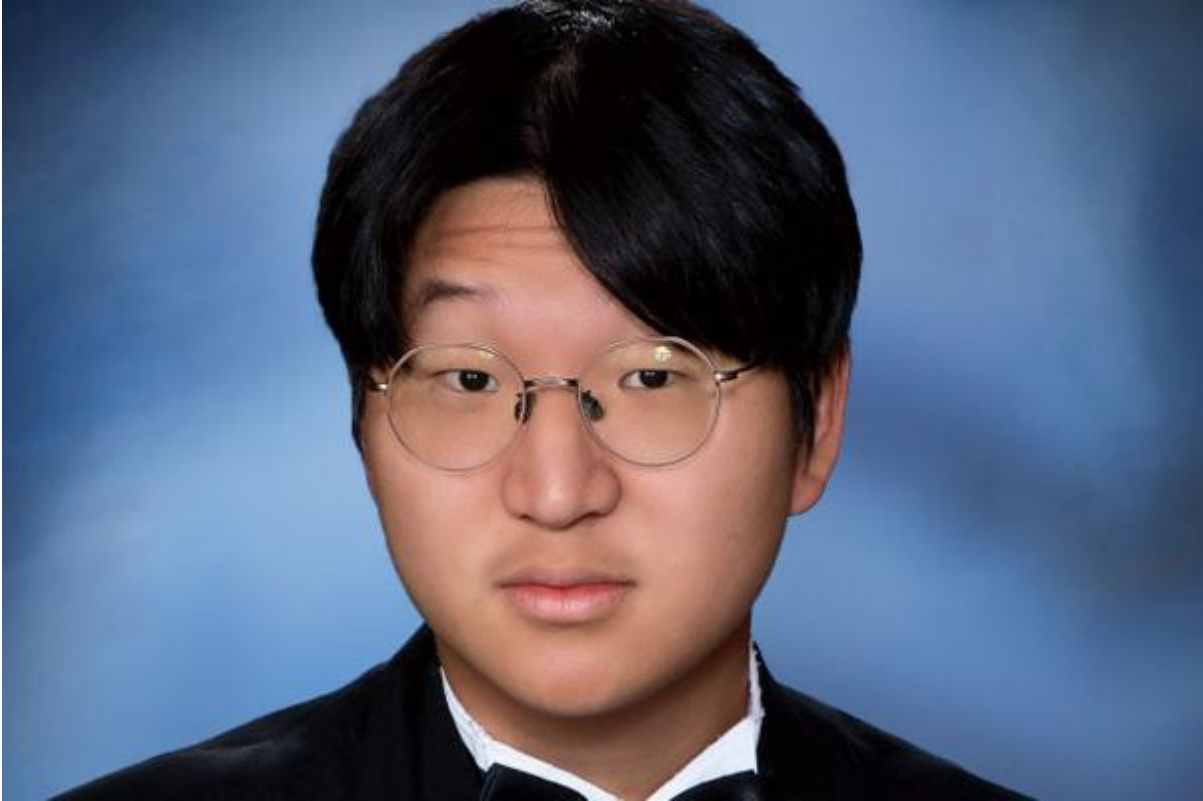
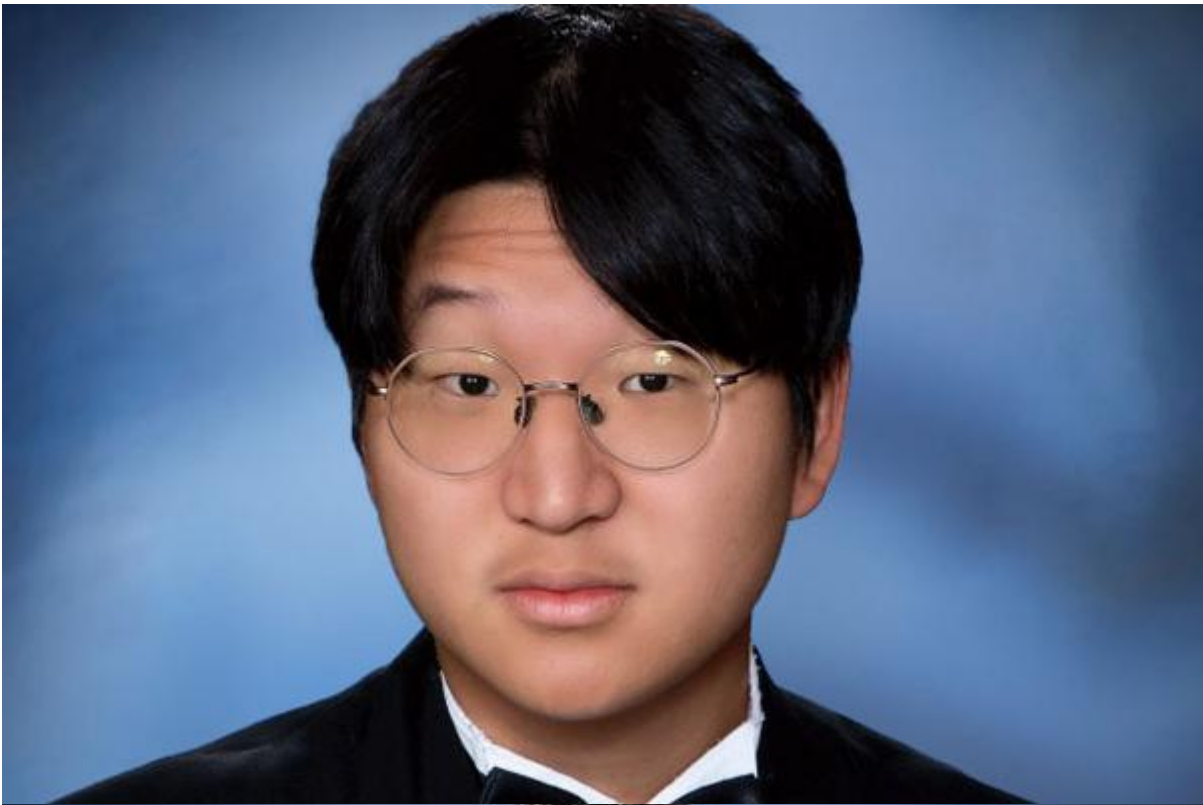
“I got into Scouts because, on my father’s side, almost everybody was in it,” Mayeux said. “I decided I want to one-up my dad by becoming an Eagle Scout because he never did.”

But for Mayeux, no matter what happens, as long as he is close to nature, he is close to his faith.

“As a Catholic, we're all called to be stewards of the earth,” Mayeux said. “I figure there's no way I can serve the Lord better than doing that.”

Subiaco Academy 2024 grads, top students

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Ryan Chung, valedictorian



Charles Daniel Wu, salutatorian

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Subiaco Academy hosted its graduation May 18 in the inner courtyard at Subiaco Abbey. Jesse F. Navarro of the Tohono O’odham Nation Legislative Council was the graduation speaker. The valedictorian was Ryan Chung. The salutatorian was Charles Daniel Wu, son of Charles Wu and Michelle Chuang. He will study biology and Chinese at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Valedictorian

Ryan Chung, 19

Parish: Catholic church in Korea

Parents: Joon Ho Chung and Dong Eun Song

College and major: University of Notre Dame, pre-health

What goals do you want to pursue after college? Go to medical school and work in a field to help others.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? My ability to adapt to new cultures when I left Korea and came to Subiaco

How will your faith be part of your future? I will continue to try to find Jesus in every

person and put God first in everything.

High school honors and awards: Medal for Religious Activities, AP Scholar, College Board National Small Town and Rural Recognition Award; All-State in soccer

Other graduates are:

Nicholas Adams

Aiden Barghash

Noah Bloomdahl

John Ti Anh Bui

Carlos Castillo

Caleb Cowell

Drew Creek

Benjamin Dang

Gabriel Didion

Delo Folson

Matt Friemel

Anthony Gehrig

Andrew Giebel

Peter Giebel

Tior? Hart

Conner Haynes

Spencer Heft

David Kay

Kaleb Kennedy

Hasten King

Brody Koch

Connor Lamboy

Matthew Mayeux

Johnny Miguel

Joshua Nguyen

Emmett Page

Phan Nguyen Danh Vy

Camarion Raino

Elijah Roker

Garreth

Joseph Smith

Dat Tran

Tayshaun Wallace

Zachary Weems

Lane Wilson

Izzie Antony gathers NWA community to remember brother

written by Alesia Schaefer |



TONTITOWN — In the halls of Ozark Catholic Academy, senior Isabella “Izzie” Antony is known for her athleticism, leadership, commitment to her community and resilience.

She demonstrated all of these qualities when she spearheaded the Noah Antony Memorial Run in March, a senior capstone project that not only honored her late brother but brought her community together.

The 5K race, held in Tontitown, drew more than 300 registrants and raised more than \$10,500. Proceeds from the race support scholarships and financial aid for OCA students. Her capstone project, she said, honored her brother, who died in 2017, in a meaningful way by celebrating his life and passion for cross-country running.

“Looking back and seeing how supportive people were, makes me want the race to continue,” she said. “It was definitely bigger than me. I was going through a lot of emotions, and that weekend helped me connect with Noah’s memory in my own way.”

Equally important to Antony in these past four years has been her spiritual growth. OCA’s emphasis on daily Mass and its nurturing environment allowed Antony, daughter of Paul and Susan Antony and niece of Father John Antony of Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith, to deepen her faith. She has been a member of the St. Raphael’s youth group in Springdale where her mom serves as a youth group leader and her family have been parishioners for 27 years.

Antony also found a niche in competitive athletics. She participated in basketball, volleyball and track, achieving All-Conference and All-State honors. Her exceptional performance in volleyball earned her a spot as MVP for four consecutive years and an All-Star game nomination set to be played in June. Additionally, Antony was also a significant contributor to the girls' track team, achieving its first 1A State Championship title this spring.

Kevin Dickinson, Antony's basketball coach of 10 years, commended her versatility and leadership on and off the court.

"Isabella can flip the switch both ways from laughing and joking to locking in on a game," he said. "Her competitive spirit and natural athleticism set her apart as a leader."

In her four years at OCA, Antony has also been an active member of the National Honor Society, served as house president and led fundraising efforts for local charities, including the Children's Safety Center and the American Heart Association.

"Isabella has a holistic approach to her education in that she doesn't simply want to excel academically but strives even more so to push herself and others toward success in all areas of life," said Payton Bryant, OCA's academic counselor.

Antony said she feels what she gained with a Catholic education has given her a great foundation.

"Since coming to OCA, I have a greater understanding of my faith," she said, "OCA also helped me to go deeper and has helped me know how I want to grow in my own life."

She said she hopes to continue this spiritual journey at college, planning to stay involved with St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish at the University of Arkansas where she plans to study psychology and pre-law. She dreams of becoming a child advocacy lawyer.

"My biggest takeaway since freshman year is 'know thyself'," she said. "OCA has given me such a great foundation to grow on."

OCA 2024 grads, top students

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Annalise Stacey, valedictorian



Mary Poe, salutatorian

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Carrie Eben, owner of Classical Eben Education Counseling, adjunct instructor for integrated humanities at John Brown University and co-founder of Sager Classical Academy, was the graduation speaker May 18 at Ozark Catholic Academy. The valedictorian was Annalise Stacey. Mary Poe, daughter of Meranda and Joseph Poe, was named the salutatorian. She was accepted into the University of Arkansas' Honors Engineering Program.

Valedictorian

Annalise Stacey, 17

Parish: St. Joseph Church, Fayetteville

Parents: Drs. Heath and Adriana Stacey

College and major: University of Miami, double major in sport administration and individualized general business

What goals do you want to pursue after college? Although my specific plans may change, I want to pursue my overarching goals of making a difference in my community and living out my faith. Specifically, I plan to either open my own dance studio or pursue a career in law centered on sociology and criminology.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? My proudest accomplishment is starting

the OCA Sapphires dance team, leading our team to two state championship titles and being awarded All-State honors for three consecutive years.

How will your faith be a part of your future? My faith will always be an integral part of my life. I plan to pursue my faith through college and beyond by being an active participant in the University of Miami's Catholic community as well as continuing to grow my faith life through prayer and adoration.

Scholarships: Isaac Singer Scholarship and Foote Fellowship, full tuition for four years

High school honors and awards: Libertas Award, Scholar Athlete Award, Sapphires Dancer of the Year, Sapphires dance captain, Arkansas All-Star Dance, CLT Regional Scholar, tennis captain, tennis conference runner-up, tennis All-Conference, golf All-Conference, basketball Manager of the Year, House of the Elk president, Corporal Works of Mercy president, Coca-Cola semifinalist, GE-Reagan semifinalist, Theology Award, Philosophy Award, Humane Letter Award, Math Award for three years, Psychology Award, NHS vice president, Celiac Disease Foundation ambassador

Other graduates are:

Matthew Abide

Celena Alvarez

Isabella Antony

Abigayle Bohannon

Sara Ashley Borchert

Avery Carter

Gabrielle Dickinson

Citlali Flores

Peyton Goldschmidt

Christopher Haviland

Hayden Johnson

Andrew Koch

Connor Lang

Clara Mariscotti

Bree McAfee

Katherine Menendez

Carlos Ortiz

Mary Ortiz

Isabel Quezada

Andrea Reyes

Gabriel Rocha

John Paul Schaefer

Michael Schultz

Emma Stephens

Ray Trujillo

Mount senior set sights on Air Force Academy

written by Katie Zakrzewski |



There isn't much that Elizabeth Hunter doesn't do.

The senior at Mount St. Mary Academy in Little Rock is involved in her school, church and community.

In addition to being in the top five graduating seniors, Hunter is an active member of the Rockettes dance team, Belle Ambassadors, Chess Club, Book Club, College Coordinators Club and National Honor Society. She has also helped plan retreats and events for her class and MSM and is one of the student tour leaders for open house days.

"I'm an extremely involved person. I love Mount with my whole heart," Hunter said. "And that's what makes it so bittersweet right now — leaving — because I poured I feel like my heart and soul into the school. And not just because it's good for me getting into college, my career — but I truly cared."

She is active in the youth program at her church, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Little Rock.

"I think my faith has been the factor that has gotten me through high school most of my life," Hunter said. "Because I would not be able to do this without knowing that there is someone who always loves me, who always cares about me. At the end of the day, I can turn to God and know that he has given me the strength and ability to accomplish so many insane tasks that I can't even remember all of them right now."

Hunter will be leaving June 22 to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy with the goal of becoming a pilot. Hunter isn't the first in her family to pursue this ambitious goal — her father, Mark, is a retired Air Force pilot and currently serves as a C-130J instructor pilot at the Little Rock Air Force Base.

Hunter laughs as she explains she was always destined for a military academy, given her strict personal regimen, the hard work she put in at Mount and her love of uniforms. But even more compelling is Hunter's heart for service.

"I want to do all the things I do," Hunter said. "So when the time came, and I was like, 'Do I want to be a dentist? Do I want to go into education? Do I want to be a zoologist?' ... I realized that service was the answer. And it had always been with me in the image of my dad and family members. ... And it's just that those people have inspired me to be that way."

For Hunter, it was encouragement — not pressure — that led her to flourish.

"Motivation comes in many forms. And my parents, they've always said, 'We don't care what you do. You could go to McDonald's and flip burgers, but you better be the best burger flipper,'" Hunter said with a laugh. "And so it's not the pressure, it's the encouragement. I think it's that encouragement from my parents and ... who I aspire to be. That means people in my church, people in the media who I highly respect, my teachers who obviously have a passion for what they do or they would not be here. Those are the people who have like shown me that my work is worth it."

Mount St. Mary class of 2024, top grads

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Madeline McNeill, valedictorian



Eliza Jane Null, valedictorian



Savannah Eanes, Salutatorian

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Mount St. Mary Academy held its graduation May 20 at Robinson Center in downtown Little Rock. Errin Calhoun Stanger of the Class of 1994, CEO of Providence Park and former director of the Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub, was the speaker. The co-valedictorians are Madeline

McNeill and Eliza Jane Null. The salutatorian was Savannah Eanes, daughter of John and Jill Eanes. She is attending the University of Arkansas, majoring in mechanical engineering.

Valedictorians

Madeline McNeill, 17

Parents: Nick and Rebecca McNeill

College and major: U.S. Air Force Academy, aeronautical engineering

What goals do you want to pursue after college? After college, I would like to pursue a career as a pilot in the Air Force.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? Maintaining my grades while competing in multiple sports has been my proudest accomplishment.

How will your faith be a part of your future? I believe that my faith will give me the strength and confidence to overcome challenges that may arise as I pursue my goals throughout life.

High school honors and awards: AP Capstone Diploma; AP Scholar with Distinction; Congressman French Hill Educational Achievement Award; Arkansas Governor's Scholastic Honors Award; National Honor Society; Beta Club president; Top Scholar Athlete; two-time Diving Conference Champion; cross county team and track team captain

Eliza Jane Null, 18

Parish: Christ the King Church

Parents: Clay and April Null

College and major: University of Georgia, political science

What goals do you want to pursue after college? After college I plan to attend law school and hope to work with government policy and international affairs.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? My proudest accomplishment is the amount of service I was able to complete while in high school. Mount St. Mary gave me many opportunities to serve others and get involved in the community. I completed volunteer hours for the different clubs and organizations I was in, as well as the Junior Service Learning Program, which is a yearlong theology service project.

How will your faith be a part of your future? I plan to continue growing my faith in college and throughout the rest of my life. I want to join a Bible study, youth groups and the campus parish once I get to college. I will carry what I have learned about my faith in my youth with me as I journey through life. Trusting in the Lord and building a relationship with Him is the only way to ensure that I lead a successful life.

Scholarship: The One UGA Scholarship at the University of Georgia

High school honors and awards: AP Capstone Diploma candidate; AP Scholar with Distinction; U.S. Presidential Scholars Program candidate; United States Senate Youth Program semifinalist; Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame Girl of Distinction; Arkansas Governor's Scholastic Honors Award; ALA Arkansas Girls State delegate; MSM McAuley Achievement Award; National Honor Society; Beta Club; Rockettes Dance Team co-captain; UDA All American Dancer

Other graduates are:

Ashley Taylor Adams

Elizabeth Ann Arnold

Natalie Jasmine Arteaga

Kathryn Isabella Bailey

Elaine Marie Barg

Haven Rose Beers

Riley Grace Benedetti

Charlotte Leighton Bishop

Sophia Grace Blomeley

Brianna Nichole Boggs

Marlee Allen Bond

Savannah Claire Bosley

Sophia Pray Bozeman

Ava Rose Bravo

Abigail Patterson Britt

Ella Virginia Burdine

Rebecca Lin Burnett

Kylie Braeden Carr

Zashenka Janyllet Cervantes

Cecilia Addison Cooper

Carley Marie Cossé
Abby Noelle Crawford
Elizabeth Grace Darnold
Haven Hunter Davis
Mimi Ann Davis
Hannah Elizabeth Day
Novella Lynn Denton
Delilah Feather Spirit Duguid
Faith Nicole Dunlap
Jordyn Olivia Eichler
Ashley Esquivel
Elizabeth Mitchell Fason
Alison Aurora Gambill
Izela Yuridia Garcia
Grace Elizabeth Garrity
Emily Ellen Golden
Tess Katherine Golden
Madelynn Michelle Graves
Kennedy Caroline Griffin
Allie Elizabeth Gunderman
Cora Lynn Hamilton
Miley Thanh Harter
Emily Dianne Harton
Addison Kate Herndon
Malley Shea Holloway
Olivia Grace Hopkins
Ella Grace Horn

Elizabeth Evanthea Hunter

Ellen Adele Jackson

Ashley Sue Kassissieh

Katelyn Elizabeth Lane

Charlotte Jett Lasiter

Doneyce Colleen Leopard

Donna Mary Logan

Isabela Guadalupe Martinez

Maria Isabella Martinez

Ava Christian Masingill

Isabella Grace Rivas McConnell

Haven Blu McCormack

Aubree Jane McCullough

Emily Claire McLeod

Lauren Grace Melton

Taylor Jacqueline Moore

Annalise Kay Mueller

Ava Camille Norton

Ella Rose Pennington

Clara Maeve Livia Principe

Hannah Beth Pruitt

Catherine Anne Raffaelli

Anna Lea Nichols Reber

Grace Anne Robertson

Eliyana Valeria Robledo

Emily Corinne Roper

Savannah Nicole Russell

Rilan Nicole Shields

McKenzie Nichole Shipe

Ava Camille Sims

Emma Carrie Smith

Katelyn Nicole Smith

Annalynn Chrystene Steinkamp

Whitney Sloane Stewart

Savvy Camille Straessle

Brinlee Ryan Sullivan

Sofia Erin Theodore

Sarah Elizabeth Thomas

Lyla Marie Tong

Madolyn Isabelle Townley

Ella Josephine Tucker

Sarah Bailey Velazquez

Natalie Nichole Walz

Ella Paige Ward

Brooke Michelle Weinzimer

Cassidy Rae Wharton

Katherine June White

Abigail Arete Whittaker

Amelia Parker Williams

Olivia Ann Williamson

Olivia Grace Wooley

Zambrzycki soaring to new heights

written by Aprille Hanson Spivey |



Growing up just a few miles from the Morrilton Municipal Airport, Pete Zambrzycki watched in awe as civilian and military aircraft flew overhead.

“From a very young age, I was always fascinated with airplanes. I always loved learning about them, and I loved learning about military technology. It really piqued my interest,” said the 18-year-old graduate of Sacred Heart School in Morrilton.

Since childhood, faith and flying have been constants in his life. He can spot the spiritual lessons as he moves toward his career as a pilot.

“I love the responsibility. It’s making sure what you do is right because it’s your job to safely transport people and being accountable for every person, protecting your passengers,” he said. “A lot of the people I’ll fly I’ll be connecting with other people, for business or seeing family. I take a lot of pride in that as a person and Catholic.”

Zambrzycki, son of Pete Zambrzycki and Jill Seliskar, attended Sacred Heart since pre-K, growing more as a student thanks to the support of his teachers and classmates.

“Even though I didn’t start off strong in school until these recent years, I’ve started to pick it up and put in the effort. I’ve learned to love things like math and college algebra. I enjoy problem-solving,” Zambrzycki said. “... I am so unbelievably thankful for Sacred Heart. My teachers have always been there for me. They really taught me I have control over my life and education.”

Zambrzycki has been active in chess, Beta and Key Clubs. In Key Club, he’s felt the most

drawn to his work with veterans.

“I think being a part of the community and working for the community is very important. I take a lot of pride in helping people, especially the Veterans of Foreign Wars,” he said. “When we put up flags for Memorial Day, it is definitely something that puts things in perspective for me.”

A sense of pride and duty has inspired Zambrzycki to join the U.S. Air National Guard, serving two days each month and two weeks in the summer. Following basic training, he’ll pursue a bachelor’s degree in an applied science to become a commercial airline pilot flying internationally.

He’s close to receiving his pilot’s license after obtaining 50 hours of flying two to three times a week since January.

“It’s an amazing experience, and I love it,” he said of flying. “There’s really no way to describe being thousands of feet above the air and looking down on the earth. You feel very free. I do love taking off and landing. Usually, people enjoy the cruise part of it, but taking off and landing is so exciting because you know what you do has to be right, and there’s little room for error. Every movement and click of a button is precise.”

No matter how high or far his career takes him, Zambrzycki said he’ll always carry the lessons he’s learned at Sacred Heart.

“Be kind to the people around you, and you will see results if you work hard are probably the most important lessons I’ll take away from Sacred Heart,” he said.

2024 Sacred Heart grads, top of class

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Rebecca Hartman, valedictorian



Jack Drilling, valedictorian



Isaac Duvall, valedictorian



Callie Gottsponder, valedictorian



Myisa Ibarra, salutatorian

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Sacred Heart High School held its graduation May 19 at Sacred Heart Church. The valedictorians are Rebecca Hartman, Jack Drilling, Isaac Duvall and Callie Gottsponder. The salutatorian is Myisa Ibarra, daughter of Ashley and J.R. Congine. She will study radiology at

the University of Central Arkansas.

Valedictorians

Rebecca Hartman, 18

Parish: Sacred Heart Church

Parents: Chris and Angie Hartman

College and major: Arkansas Tech University, pre-pharmacy

What goals do you want to pursue after college? I plan to get my doctorate of pharmacy and pursue a career close to home.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? My proudest accomplishment to date is the privilege of graduating with the Sacred Heart senior class of 2024 in a place of great family and faith.

How will your faith be a part of your future? My Catholic faith will remain strong and lead me through all my experiences. I will rely on my faith through the challenges and changes I face.

Scholarships: Arkansas Tech University tier 4 academic and concurrent ATU scholarship, Friends of Quiz Bowl

High school honors and awards: Key Club vice president, Beta Club historian, Student Council treasurer, Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association 1A State Finals runner-up (2023), Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association 1A regional champions (2023), Beta Leadership Summit National Qualifier Awards (2023), Beta Leadership Summit Award in Outstanding Leadership School (2023)

Jack Drilling, 18

Parish: Sacred Heart Church

Parents: Heather and David Drilling

College and major: University of Arkansas Honors College, biology

What goals do you want to pursue after college? I plan to attend medical school and become a doctor, possibly a dermatologist. Afterward, I hope to return to my hometown and possibly open up my own clinic.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? One of my proudest accomplishments is when my quiz bowl team and I made it to the state finals two years in a row. My team and I put in a ton of hard work to make it both years, and I am so glad that we could be recognized for it.

How will your faith be a part of your future? I plan to become involved with the Catholic ministry on campus and make new friendships in that community. Also, I want to let my Catholic faith be a driving force for my success and let that inspire me to be a better person in any way I can.

Scholarships: University of Arkansas Honors College Academy Scholarship

High school honors and awards: Boys State, DAR Good Citizen, Sacred Heart Outstanding Senior Award, Quiz Bowl 1A State Runner-Up 2023 and 2024, HOBY nomination, school winner of the Heisman Scholarship and School Counts

Isaac Duvall, 17

Parish: Sacred Heart Church

Parents: Mary Lynn Duvall and Virgil Duvall

College and major: University of Central Arkansas, computer science

What goals do you want to pursue after college? I want to get a job as a software developer

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? My proudest accomplishment is reaching the Quiz Bowl finals twice.

How will your faith be a part of your future? My faith will always guide me in my decision making, and I plan to join the CCM community of UCA in the fall.

Scholarships: Arkansas Governor's Scholarship, UCA Achievement Scholarship, Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship

High school honors and awards: School Counts graduate, Beta Club member, National Merit Commended Scholar, All Around Student Award

Callie Gottsponer, 17

Parish: Sacred Heart Church

Parents: Kevin and Laura Gottsponer

College and major: University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, speech pathology

What goals do you want to pursue after college? My goal is to attend graduate school to pursue a master's degree. This will allow me to get a job as a speech-language pathologist, whether that be in a school or a hospital.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? I would say my proudest accomplishment to date would be overcoming my ACL injury. Looking back, I am proud of myself for my work

ethic and the determination I showed to get back to playing sports and doing the things I love.

How will your faith be a part of your future? With so many things changing, my faith is the one thing I know I can rely on to carry me through it all. In good times and in bad, I know God will be right next to me as I navigate life and grow into the woman he made me to be.

Scholarships: University of Arkansas Chancellor's Scholarship, Governor's Distinguished Scholarship, Sacred Heart Quiz Bowl Scholarship, GFWC Adelaide Club of Morrilton Scholarship

High school honors and awards: 501 LIFE 2024 Basketball Team Honoree, National Merit Commended Student, State Beta 2024 Accessorized Design Champion, second place in Veterans of Foreign Wars Essay Contest

Other graduates are:

Caleb Carpenter

Seth Chapman

Mason Dold

Megan Fresneda

Chase Glaspy

Emerson Hoelzeman

Drake Huett

Matthew Kersey

Monica Koch

Sydney Koonce

Brianna McCoy

Gabrielle Moore

Carlie Osborn

Elizabeth Rightsell

Emilee Shipp

Avery Stobaugh

Pete Zambrzycki

St. Joseph High School's 2024 graduates

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Valedictorian Carolina Ferrer



Salutatorian Bryce Mallett

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Twenty-six seniors graduated from St. Joseph High May 19 at St. Joseph Church in Conway. Speeches were given by the valedictorian and salutatorian. The valedictorian was Carolina Ferrer. The salutatorian was Bryce Mallett, son of Matt and Meghan Mallett. He is majoring in accounting and finance at the University of Arkansas Honors College.

Valedictorian

Carolina Ferrer, 18

Parish: St. Joseph Church

Parent: Gabe and Karen Ferrer

College and major: Colorado College, computer science

What goals do you want to pursue after college? I would like to pursue a career in computational humanities.

What is your proudest accomplishment to date? My proudest accomplishment is being the assistant leader of a Girl Scout Troop made up of St. Joseph School elementary schoolers.

How will your faith be a part of your future? My faith will be a part of my future because I plan to be involved in Catholic Campus Ministry in college and to continue serving as an

extraordinary minister of Communion. Everything I've learned about my faith here at St. Joseph has prepared me well to further my religious life.

Scholarships: Colorado College Grants & Scholarships

High school honors and awards: National Honors Society president, Girls State delegate, Conway Morning Rotary Club Student Recognition

Other graduates are:

Abbey Brewer

Lucas Covington

Nicholas Covington

Andrew Decker

Nicholas French

Teresa Gomez

Nick Harmon

Christopher Heath

Blakely Holland

Lydia Humphrey

Kaitlyn Kordsmeier

Max Longing

Luke Luyet

Ella Martin

John McWilliams

Leo Moix

Catherine Royal

Matthew Seiter

Logan Simon

Zach Simon

Christian Stobaugh

Ashlynn Vote

Avery White

Chloe Woody

Sports, friendships a big hit for Blakely Holland

written by Aprille Hanson Spivey |



CONWAY — Blakely Holland and her fellow seniors at St. Joseph School in Conway recently paid tribute to a favorite childhood memory, piling in the cafeteria as they did in elementary school for a Saturday movie night.

“We decided to bring back that tradition. We watched ‘Ferris Bueller’s Day Off,’” the 17-year-old said. “It was just fun to remember all the fun little traditions we’ve had and be able to spend time with all of my classmates before we graduate.”

It was one of many senior activities that Holland said was a fitting tribute to her education at St. Joseph, stretching back to preschool.

Throughout high school, Holland participated in several activities, including yearbook along

with morning announcements, was a member of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), St. Joseph Flea Market volunteer, junior class officer and president of the Interact Club, associated with the Rotary Club of Conway.

"I got to organize a lot of different events and things for the community. So that was fun," Holland said of Interact Club.

Her favorite event was the Veteran's Day program Nov. 11.

"I would say because of the impact it had on not only the veterans, but the students got to see and recognize they should be thankful for all the service they put in."

Besides excelling academically, Holland enjoyed playing varsity volleyball as the libero and second base for softball.

"I've played softball since I was 5 years old, and it's been a huge part of my life. I enjoy it a lot," she said, adding her favorite part is interacting with her teammates. "A lot of people focus on the competition aspect of it, but just getting to be with my teammates. To compete, but also to grow friendships."

Though she's more drawn to softball, the past two years she's received all-conference for volleyball.

"When you think of volleyball, you mostly think of the hitters being tall girls, and I'm not very tall," the 5-foot Holland said. "So being able to show you can do it no matter if you're short or tall, you can do it anyway. I think that was a big."

Holland will attend the University of Central Arkansas in Conway and major in marketing to work in sports management. Her dream job would be event planning for Major League Baseball.

"I think the stories behind the athletes and their journeys to get where they are are inspiring," she said. "... Being an athlete is hard, and it's important to keep God at the center of your life. Not just the competitive side."

From lifelong friendships with classmates and teachers to the lessons she's learned, Holland said her Catholic education at St. Joseph changed her life "in a big way."

"I don't know if I would have been able to grow as much in my personality and in my relationship with God if I hadn't been involved in all these things, instilling in me the values I have," Holland said. "... No matter what you face in life, hardships or challenges, you'll have a firm foundation in him."