

**Gainesville  
High School**

**Class Night 2020**



**Senior Awards  
May 26, 2020**

## **Welcome by Kameron Brock, Class Night Senior Speaker**

Greetings. On behalf of the graduating class of 2020, we welcome you. To our family, friends and others that have supported us through this journey we say thank you. Appreciation is also given to the administration and faculty who have contributed to our success at Gainesville High School. Mattie Stepanek stated that, "Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."

For many of us, graduation symbolizes a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. Approximately 130 months of our lives have been spent behind the closed door of a classroom preparing us for life after high school. If the kindergarten me would have known that recess and naptime would one day become extinct during my educational journey, I probably would have taken way more naps. If we would have known about the different challenges and obstacles that we would face along the journey, many of us would have chosen a different path.

I do not know personally the circumstances that each one of you has braved, but the truth of the matter is that "you were designed for accomplishment, engineered for success, and endowed with the seeds of greatness". Famous words spoken by Zig Ziglar. Graduating is not just another "task on the to-do list" but it is one of the first major accomplishments that we all should revere. In the years to come, you will often be asked, "What school did you graduate from?" You will be able to say with pride, "Gainesville High School, Class of 2020."

If we are honest with ourselves, we can admit that the last two months of what should have been the ending to a great senior year, were overshadowed by a global pandemic that none of us could have imagined. I did not expect to spend the last few weeks of my senior year quarantined at home with no opportunity to make final memories. Each of us began our senior year with an idea of what we hoped these final moments would be like. We all have had to accept the outcome that has been given to us. We have two choices. We can remain focused on what "could have been", or we can focus on what is ahead of us in the future. We can learn from the lessons that life taught us and remember our own ability to "adult". We had to adjust to receiving full-time instruction online as well as being responsible for maintaining a schedule. We have proven to

ourselves just how resilient we are, and that same resiliency will be the ultimate factor when determining our success and capabilities.

Being a Hurricane has been a great privilege. From meeting at 9th-grade orientation to our group tanning session while forming the number 20 for our senior photo. It's these moments that we shared together that will be cherished reminders of our time at GHS. We may not be able to look back on the last few months as fond memories, but we will always remember what it felt like at this moment.

I want to personally congratulate each one of you on your success in the future, and not only your future success, but the success that starts right now at this moment. I say congratulations to ideas, hard work, and talent that will produce recognition known around the world. It's not about your past, but the lessons the past has provided to get you to your future. Your future begins right here, right now! Today will be one of the best days of your life. In the words of Mr. Shelnutt, "It's a great day to be a hurricane!"

## **Congratulations!**

This is the 64<sup>th</sup> annual awards program for the Gainesville High School Senior Class, recognizing the accomplishments of these students in all areas: scholarship, the arts, leadership, and citizenship. Gainesville High School faculty, staff, and administrators would like to extend our most sincere congratulations to all of the students included in this 2019-2020 awards program. We honor you for your hard work and dedication, and we thank you for your positive contributions to Gainesville High School. Thank you, parents and guardians, for supporting your students and their academic, athletic, and co-curricular endeavors.

## **Club of the Year**

Each year, we recognize one club at Gainesville High School that has demonstrated exemplary service and involvement, both at school and in the community. Gainesville High School's Club of the Year for 2019-2020 is: **Drama Club**.

## **Hall of Fame**

These students were recognized by Gainesville High School teachers, staff, and administrators as outstanding students in academics, athletics, the arts, leadership, and citizenship.

**Academics** – Bryan Han

**Academics** – Richard Q. Ye

**Art** – Jack A. Manfredi

**Athletics** – Kinn'zon M. J. Hutchinson

**Athletics** – Susan M. Ryan

**Citizenship** – Angel Ruth O. Amigo

**Drama** – Kameron O. Brock

**Drama** – Robert G. Cutter

**Instrumental** – Julia K. Lanni

**Leadership** – Darius L. Galloway

## **Leadership Award**

We would like to take this time to acknowledge the 2019-2020 Senior Class Officers and Student Body Officers and thank them for their faithful leadership this school year.

### **Senior Class Officers**

Kayla Williams, Senior Class President  
Ashley Ray, Senior Class Vice President  
Morgan James, Senior Class Secretary  
Jacob Hanson, Senior Class Treasurer

### **Student Body Officers**

Darius Galloway, Student Body President  
Sidney Karas, Student Body Vice President  
Angel Amigo, Student Body Secretary  
Robbie Collins, Student Body Treasurer  
Nicholas Hanson, Student Body Speaker of the House

## Presidential Academic Achievement Award

Congratulations to the following students for earning the Academic Achievement award, presented to students with a 3.5 and higher cumulative, unweighted GPA.\*

ANDERSON, CARSON M.	FRYE, LACEY T.	OYENARTE, NATALIE A.
ARUN, VINAY	FRYE, LINDSEY A.	PADILLA, ANA S.
AVERY, LUCAS G.	GAMBLE, ETHAN A.	PITTS, MAYA R.
BAKER, ALEXANDER J.	GIL, PAOLA E.	PROIA, ALEXANDER T.
BAKER, ARTHUR F.	GILLAND, REBECCA J.	PUGH, ERIC J.
BANKO, ANALISE S.	GITZENDANNER, JONATHAN D.	RAMIREZ FEUERSTEIN, DANIEL R.
BANSEL, SONIA M.	GRAY, KATHERINE E.	RAY, ASHLEY C.
BAUERLE, HAVEN R.	GREGG, ROSEMARY M.	RAYE, SILAS G.
BEACHY, EMMA D.	HACKETT, BENJAMIN C.	REED, STERLING N.
BEAUFIT, JARED M.	HAMMERSMARK, LARS D.	REEVES, HANNAH E.
BISHOP, NICHOLAS A.	HAN, BRYAN	REEVES, NATHAN L.
BLASKOWSKI, ZOE C.	HANSON, NICHOLAS A.	ROTH, MADISON N.
BREWER, JUSTIN J.	HENNIS, ANNA R.	RYAN, SUSAN M.
BROCK, JUSTIN M.	HOWARD, HOPE K.	SCHOONMAKER, RYAN L.
BROWN, LILY E.	JACINTO, SAMANTHA M.	SHIELS, EILEEN N.
BRUGGEMAN, MALAKAI J.	JACKSON, DAKOTA E.	SIQUEIRA DE CARVALHO, MARIA S.
BRYANT, OLIVIA K.	KARAS, SIDNEY L.	SMITH, ALEXIS T.
BUCHANAN, KATHERINE L.	KEY, TALEYA L.	SMITH, HANNAH N.
BUMGARNER, PAYTON L.	KITCHING, KEILAH A.	SOPKO, NICHOLAS M.
CAIN, NICHOLAS A.	KRAMER, ANDIE S.	STIRIZ, COURTNEY T.
CAMACHO-BETANCOURT, ANDREA N.	KRAUS, MAKAYLA L.	STUCKEY, ERIN N.
CHOWDHURY, MOMTAHIN A.	LANCER, THOMAS M.	SWANGER, NICHOLAS L.
COLLINS, CHARLES R.	LANNI, JULIA K.	SWEENEY, HANNAH M.
COZZY, AMANDA M.	LEDNICKY, ISABELLE B.	TU, TUAN H.
DAVIS, ALIYAH R.	LEVESQUE, KYRA G.	VASCOTTO-SCHRIBER, CAITLIN A.
DELL, ELIZABETH P.	LEVESQUE, VIOLET R.	WHYTE, ANNALICE A.
DETURRIS, AIDEN F.	LEVIN, CLAIRE R.	WILKINS, DAVID F.
DO, HUONG N.	LUNA-VICTORIA, WILLIAM W.	WILLIAMS, WILLIE C. III
DUFFAUT, ALEXANDER T.	MADRIGAL MORALES, ANDREA C.	WILLIAMSON, HOLLI J.
EBY, JULIA S.	MARCANO, MARIA D.	WINKEL, JOB
EWELL, BRIANA A.	MARSHALL, KATHERINE J.	WORTHY, RACHEL M.
FELKER, EMMA M.	MARTINEZ-CHOI, MARK A.	WYCOFF, TYLER C.
FERNANDEZ-AMBITE, JAVIER A.	MCDAVID, EMMA C.	YE, RICHARD Q.
FIFE, KEELYN J.	MOORE, VICTORIA L.	YOUNG, BRIAN Y.
FORZIANO, DAVID M.	NOLEN, STACEY L.	ZASIMOVICH, ANASTASIYA
FREEMAN, ZACHARY W.	ORTIZ-CARRERO, YEIRALY A.	ZHANG, MAIQI

*\*Qualification for the Presidential Academic Achievement Award is determined at the end of the first semester and does not reflect grades from the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.*

### **Top 10% of Senior Class by Unweighted Cumulative GPA**

Alexander J. Baker	Briana A. Ewell	Hannah E. Reeves
Sonia M. Bansel	Javier A. Fernandez-Ambite	Madison N. Roth
Emma D. Beachy	Keelyn J. Fife	Susan M. Ryan
Jared M. Beaufait	Zachary W. Freeman	Ryan L. Schoonmaker
Justin J. Brewer	Lindsey A. Frye	Eileen N. Shiels
Lily E. Brown	Lars D. Hammersmark	Maria S. Siqueira de Carvalho
Katherine L. Buchanan	Bryan Han	Nicholas M. Sopko
Payton L. Bumgarner	Nicholas A. Hanson	Nicholas L. Swanger
Nicholas A. Cain	Anna R. Hennis	Hannah M. Sweeney
Andrea N. Camacho-Betancourt	Julia K. Lanni	David F. Wilkins
Momtahn A. Chowdhury	Claire R. Levin	Job Winkel
Charles R. Collins	Katherine J. Marshall	Tyler C. Wycoff
Amanda M. Cozzy	Yeiraly A. Ortiz-Carrero	Richard Q. Ye
Elizabeth P. Dell	Natalie A. Oyenarte	Brian Y. Young
Aiden F. DeTurris	Alexander T. Proia	Anastasiya Zasimovich
Alexander T. Duffaut	Eric J. Pugh	

### **Distinguished Scholars**

The following students are recognized as Gainesville High School's top graduates in the Class of 2020.

Emma D. Beachy	Jared M. Beaufait	Payton L. Bumgarner
Nicholas A. Cain	Alexander T. Duffaut	Javier A. Fernandez-Ambite
Zachary W. Freeman	Bryan Han	Nicholas A. Hanson
Claire R. Levin	Katherine J. Marshall	Natalie A. Oyenarte
Madison N. Roth	Nicholas L. Swanger	Hannah M. Sweeney
Tyler C. Wycoff	Richard Q. Ye	Brian Y. Young

### **Cambridge Awards**

**Top in the World for English Language – Sterling N. Reed**

## National Merit Achievement Awards

### National Merit Commended

Jared M. Beaufait  
Malakai J. Bruggeman  
Nicholas A. Cain  
Charles R. Collins  
Aiden F. DeTurriss  
Alexander T. Duffaut  
David M. Forziano  
Lindsey A. Frye  
Ethan A. Gamble  
Rebecca J. Gilland  
Lars D. Hammersmark  
Nicholas A. Hanson  
Julia K. Lanni  
William W. Luna-Victoria  
Mark-Anthony Martinez-Choi  
Ana S. Padilla  
Hannah E. Reeves  
Susan M. Ryan  
David F. Wilkins  
Anastasiya Y. Zasimovich

### National Merit Finalists

Vinay Arun  
Javier A. Fernandez-Ambite  
Keelyn J. Fife  
Zachary W. Freeman  
Bryan Han  
Anna R. Hennis  
Thomas M. Lancer  
Claire R. Levin  
Natalie A. Oyenarte  
Sterling N. Reed  
Nicholas L. Swanger  
Tyler C. Wycoff  
Richard Q. Ye

## Straight A Awards

### Category 4 Hurricane (4 Years of Straight A's)

Alexander T. Duffaut	Javier A. Fernandez-Ambite	Bryan Han
Nicholas A. Hanson	Claire R. Levin	Natalie A. Oyenarte
Madison N. Roth	Nicholas L. Swanger	Hannah M. Sweeney
	Richard Q. Ye	

### Category 3 Hurricane (3 Years of Straight A's)

Amanda M. Cozzy	Keelyn J. Fife	Tyler C. Wycoff	Anastasiya Zasimovich
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### Category 2 Hurricane (2 Years of Straight A's)

Payton L. Bumgarner	Nicholas A. Cain	Aya El Ladiki
Thomas M. Lancer	Ana S. Padilla	Hannah E. Reeves
Ryan L. Schoonmaker	Maria S. Siqueira de Carvalho	

### Category 1 Hurricane (1 Year of Straight A's)

Andrew C. Baker	Justin J. Brewer	Sidania S. Demps
Julia S. Eby	Kayleigh V. Flinchum	Alexander T. Proia
	Ashley C. Ray	

## Advanced Placement (AP) Awards

### AP Scholars

*Students with scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams on a full-year course (or the equivalent).*

Carson M. Anderson	Analise S. Banko	Haven R. Bauerle
Alexander M. Berceci	Justin J. Brewer	Justin M. Brock
Malakai J. Bruggeman	Katherine L. Buchanan	Andrea N. Camacho-Betancourt
Joshua M. Cohn	Elizabeth P. Dell	Aiden F. DeTurriss
Julia S. Eby	Keelyn J. Fife	Lindsey A. Frye
Ethan A. Gamble	Lars D. Hammersmark	Anna R. Hennis
Alexander C. Hood	Riley C. Kurz	Julia K. Lanni
Mark-Anthony Martinez-Choi	Ana S. Padilla	Eric J. Pugh
Silas G. Raye	Nathan L. Reeves	Michael S. Ridgeway
Madison Roth	Gage P. Sposato	Hannah M. Sweeney
David F. Wilkins		

### AP Scholars with Honor

*Students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and scores of a 3 or higher on four or more of these exams on full-year courses (or equivalent).*

Michael P. Ahlquist	Lucas G. Avery	Jared M. Beaufait
Zoe C. Blaskowski	Logan G. Fernandez-Smith	Zachary W. Freeman
Lacy T. Frye	Rebecca J. Gilland	Makayla L. Kraus
William W. Luna-Victoria	Patrick L. Piard	Maya R. Pitts
Susan M. Ryan	Maria S. Siqueira De Carvalho	Rachel M. Worthy
Anastasiya Y. Zasimovich	Maiqi Zhang	

### AP Scholars with Distinction

*Students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of a 3 or higher on five or more of these exams on full-year courses (or equivalent).*

Vinay Arun	Nicholas A. Cain	Alexander T. Duffaut
Javier A. Fernandez-Ambite	Bryan Han	Thomas Lancer
Claire R. Levin	Natalie A. Oyenarte	Alexander T. Proia
Ryan L. Schoonmaker	Nicolas L. Swanger	Job Winkel
Tyler C. Wycoff	Richard Q. Ye	Brian Y. Young



## **Department Top Senior Awards**

Every year, each department chooses one “Top Senior,” who excelled in courses offered in that department throughout their high school career and demonstrated a unique interest in the given subject area.

**Academy of Future Teachers**

Michael J. Reyes

**Academy of Health Professions**

Avia L. Washington

**Career and Technical Education – Hospitality and Tourism**

Jett C. W. McNeill

**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

Paula V. Quero Añez

**English Language Arts**

Maiqi Zhang

**Fine Arts**

Zoe C. Blaskowski

**Performing Arts**

Jessica L. Mobley

**Mathematics**

Jared M. Beaufait

**Physical Education**

Alexander P. Reinhardt

**Science**

Anastasiya Zasimovich

**Social Studies**

Kayleigh V. Flinchum

**World Languages**

Faith D. Garone

## Department and Subject Area Awards

### Academy of Future Teachers

Introduction to the Professional Internship

Michael J. Reyes

### Academy of Health Professions

EKG Technician

Darius L. Galloway

Nursing Assistant

Avia L. Washington

Pharmacy Technician/Allied Health

Julia S. Eby

Physical Therapy Aide/Allied Health

Jakob T. Schenk

### Career and Technical Education

Nutrition and Wellness

Ashante' A. Burney

Principles of Food

Ashante' A. Burney

Hospitality & Tourism Marketing Management

Jett C. W. McNeill

### English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

English Language Development

Carla C. Collazo

English Language Development

Paola V. Quero Añez

English Language Development

Nohely C. Sanchez-Alvarez

11-12 Intermediate ESOL

Trang Thi Thuy Pham

11-12 High Intermediate ESOL

Huong Nguyen Minh Do

### English Language Arts

English IV

Macayla E. Danburg

AP Literature and Composition

Jett C. W. McNeill

AICE English General Paper

Ziyanah C. Anderson

AICE English Literature

Anastasiya Zasimovich

AICE Global Perspectives and Research

Susan M. Ryan

AICE Global Perspectives and Research

Nicholas L. Swanger

**Mathematics**

Math for College Readiness

Jayde A. T. Adams

Math for College Readiness

Richard J. Williams

Algebra II Honors

Aya El Ladiki

AP Calculus AB

Avery C. Sperbeck

AP Calculus BC

Alexander T. Duffaut

**Performing and Fine Arts**

Chorus I

Paola V. Quero Añez

Theatre I

Tatiana G. Patterson

Acting I

Aya El Ladiki

Theatre III Honors

Ethan D. Canterbury

Theatre IV Honors

Yaree' L. James

Theatre IV Honors

Jessica L. Mobley

Technical Theatre III

Alexander J. Baker

Technical Theatre III

Arthur F. Baker

Technical Theatre III

Kameron O. Brock

AP 2-D Design

Analise S. Banko

**Physical Education**

Driver Education & Traffic Safety

Carla C. Collazo

Team Sports I Semester 1

Anthony Y. Oquendo

Team Sports II Semester 1

Chauntavious L. Brister

Team Sports II Semester 2

Jaylen T. Jordan

Basketball Semester 1

Jacques L. Hardy

Basketball Semester 2

Alexander P. Reinhardt

Weightlifting

Tobin J. Wagstaff

## Science

Biology I	Jacob L. Torres
AICE Biology	Anastasiya Zasimovich
AP Biology	Natalie A. Oyenarte
Chemistry I	William C. Kaleel
Chemistry Honors	Trang Thi Thuy Pham
Chemistry Honors	Caleb T. Washington
AICE Chemistry	Aiden F. V. DeTurris
AICE Environmental Management	Keelyn J. Fife
AICE Marine Science	Lucas G. Avery
AHP Anatomy and Physiology Honors	Nicholas-Jay M. Marquez
Anatomy and Physiology Honors	Jayde A. T. Adams
Physics Honors	Carson M. Anderson
AICE Physics I	Alexander J. Baker
AICE Physics II	Zachary W. Freeman
AP Physics C-Level	Charles R. Collins

## Social Studies

African & African American History Honors	Ajalan B. Carter
American Government	Drake R. English
American Government	Kameron J. Jones
American Government Honors	Gabriella K. Whisler
AP U. S. Government and Politics	Maria S. Siqueira de Carvalho
Economics	Farah F. Battle
Economics	Jacob M. Finley
Economics Honors	Jayde A. T. Adams
AP Microeconomics	Keelyn J. Fife

## World Languages

American Sign Language II	Faith D. Garone
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## **Class of '68 Writing Prize**

**Student Award Recipient:** Aya El Ladiki      **English Teacher:** Ms. Nicole Harris

## **Canes Helping Canes Alumni Scholarships**

**Larry Awbrey Memorial Scholarship** – Charles R. Collins

**GHS Alumni Scholarship** – Julia S. Eby

**GHS Alumni Scholarship** – Susan M. Ryan

## **Principal's Leadership Award**

Each year, Gainesville High School's Principal, Mr. David Shelnett, honors one graduating senior with the Principal's Leadership Award. This award is given to a student that exhibits leadership in and out of the classroom, building positive relationships with students, teachers, and staff. This year's award goes to **Sean P. Childers**.

## **The David Bagnall Memorial Scholarship**

This scholarship is in memory of David Bagnall Class of 1981. David was a top scholar, excelling in social studies and mathematics. He was a member of the cross country team that won many local, regional and state awards. David attended UCLA in the fall of 1981 and tragically died of an embolism after a bicycle accident. This scholarship was funded by his family in 1982 and has been given out every year. This year's recipient is **Benjamin N. Mock**.

## **Trevor Frazier and Mike Tanner Memorial Scholarship**

Mike Tanner and Trevor Frazier were seniors in 1995. Mike and Trevor were an integral part of the GHS football team. They loved their teammates and, most importantly, their school. Mike and Trevor were killed in a tragic traffic accident in May of 1995. The Frazier and Tanner families established a scholarship in honor of Mike Tanner and Trevor Frazier, to be given to a dynamic football player in the senior class. This year's recipient is **Gentle L. Hunt**.

## **Amalie Alvarez Lehman Memorial Scholarship**

Amalie Alvarez was a 1997 senior. Amalie served as Student Body Secretary, Key Club Vice President, French Club President and Secretary of National Honor Society. Amalie was an integral part of our co-curricular program but also excelled in languages, both French and Spanish. This year's recipient is **Carla C. Collazo**.

## **Alachua County Education Foundation Scholarships**

Believe, Achieve, Succeed Salvamoser Family Scholarship	Nicholas Swanger
Carol French Doughty Memorial Scholarship	Alexis Plimmer
Craig S. Oransky Memorial Scholarship	Olivia Bryant
FAMU Alachua County Alumni Scholarship	Miranda Persinger
Fred Sivia and Beverly Cannon Memorial Scholarship	Julia Lanni
Gainesville Charitable Foundation Scholarship	Paola Quero Añez
Herman J.W. Gauggel and Evelyn H. Gauggel Scholarship	Angel Amigo
Herman J.W. Gauggel and Evelyn H. Gauggel Scholarship	Laura House
Joseph Domenech III Memorial Scholarship	Susan Ryan
Judy Edwards Memorial Scholarship	Carla Collazo Torres
Kiwanis Club of the University City Scholarships	Julia Eby
Martha Stark Memorial Scholarship	Katie Marshall
Mr. John Dukes Jr. Memorial Scholarship	Aaliyah Mims
Robert Alan Eubank Memorial Scholarship	Gabrielle Rembert
Superintendent Doug Magann Trust Scholarship	Haylin Watkins
Venture Afar Scholarship	Vinay Arun

## **Take Stock in Children Scholarships**

Jayde Adams	San'tonia Davis	Andrea Madrigal Morales
Angel Amigo	San'tonio Davis	Demeatria Newell
Elshahdai Berihun	Emma Felker	Mercedes Perz
Chauntavious Brister	Lyric Ivey	Tuan Hung Tu
Kayla Butler	Morgan James	Alexa Vuturo
Kylie Cole	Ariana Johnson	Avia Washington
Carla Collazo Torres	Avery Kasgnoc	Annalice Whyte
Mia Criswell	Kasie-Lynn Kimbrough	De'Shaunta Woods
Mikhia Curry	Aiyana Lacroix	Bea Zoerheide

### **Santa Fe College Foundation Scholarships**

Charles L. Blount General Scholarship	Alexander Baker
Guy & Elizabeth Andrews Scholarship	Andrew Baker
Patricia M. Blount Scholarship	Isabel Bohlmann-Downey
AC Minority/Shands/Rosa B. Williams Scholarship	Mia Criswell
Daniel Maico Grover Commemorative Scholarship	Erica Franklin
Cecil and Christine B. Shannon Automotive Scholarship	David Glass
Nursing & Health Related/Allied Health Tech Scholarship	Jacques Hardy
General Scholarship	Keilah Kitching
Foundation Source Scholarship	Justin Kovacs
Hung-sen Wu Memorial Scholarship	Kayleigh Lofton
Colonel R. James Glikes Memorial Civitan Scholarship	A-lasambrea McCullough
Foundation Source Scholarship	Daniel Ramirez Feuerstein
William and Edward Schwinn Trust Scholarship	Gabrielle Rembert
Bruce P. Walek Memorial Scholarship	Haylin Watkins
Gainesville Charitable Foundation Scholarship	Bea Zoerheide

### **Twenty Pearls Foundation Scholarships**

Ashante' A. Burney  
Zakia A. Stevenson  
Avia L. Washington  
Asia S. Watson  
Annalice A. Whyte

*\*\*\*Due to the closing of school several months early, we recognize that there were many students who earned scholarships that may not have been reported for inclusion in this awards program. This program does not provide an exhaustive list of all the scholarships earned by the GHS Class of 2020.\*\*\**

## **Farewell by Myracle Brown, Graduation Senior Speaker**

Wow! You know, I wasn't sure what to expect for this year's graduation ceremony. I didn't know whether things were going to get better to allow us to do it in person or if it would be conducted over Skype and you'd tragically have to endure an up close and pixelated view of my pores! All in all, I'm just glad we are all here together. That is the most important thing, along with getting our golden ticket to the world... our diploma! This is, of course, not how we imagined this would end when we stepped foot on campus our very first day of freshman year. We began as kids! And now, we're leaving as grown adults, who... Okay, maybe we're still kids, BUT we are a rowdy bunch of kids who want to succeed in life and who have the desire to secure their future! In our class alone, we have so many YouTubers, stylists, nail techs, make up artists, musicians, actors, dancers, YOU NAME IT! I take pride in knowing that my class, Class of 2020, goes after what they want. We didn't give up when school got shut down. We didn't give up when our school year ended so abruptly. We didn't give up when we all got quarantined, and we definitely didn't give up when we faced insensitive remarks on social media by being called, "Class of COVID-19".

Now, this is the part where I'm supposed to tell you all to treat everyone with kindness and that the world can be ours, if we are brave enough to chase after our dreams and get what we want. While all of this is all very true – and, YES, please do all of that and create your own future! – it isn't what I need to hear right now, and it won't be what I pass on to you today. My message is simply this: Be upset! Wallow in your feelings for a moment! Re-post pictures from your Snapchat stories from over the past four, well three and a quarter, years at the G, and have sappy captions about football or basketball games, pep rallies, dance competition recitals, and everything else in between. It's okay to be bitter about not experiencing those once-in-a-lifetime events, like Senior Prom, Grad Bash, sports seasons, and championships. It's even okay to miss acting up on campus one last time and getting dress coded for the 100<sup>th</sup> time! It's okay to feel that way, and we are entitled to feel so! Don't let anyone tell you that you can't! We can make our own transition through this time, and a little bitterness can breed courage in the long run, in its own way. But, while we move on to the next chapter of our lives, no matter the circumstances, remember that what lies behind us and what lays in front of us has no comparison to what is inside of us.



I'm sure everyone has told you all that everything happens for a reason. Well, I'm not sure everything happens for a reason, but EVERYTHING HAPPENS. This isn't the last of difficult times that we will encounter in our lives. But, based on how we all responded to this situation, I have no doubt in my mind that we'll overcome whatever else is thrown at us in life. The universe couldn't have picked a better class to go to war with. No other class could have gone through what we've been through and still come out with this many diplomas about to be passed out! So, here's to the Class of 2020, being reminded every single day by Mr. Shelnuttt that he can't just give diplomas away... you have to earn them. And earn them we have.