



Decatur Education Foundation  
*presents*

# A Celebration of **EXCELLENCE**



**WEDNESDAY**  
**May 16**  
**7:30 pm**

Agnes Scott College  
Letitia Pate Evans Dining Hall



# Order of Events

**Welcome from the DEF Board Chair**

**Notes from the Executive Director**

**Notes from Manal Sidi, DHS class of 2013**

**Notes from the Superintendent of Schools**

**Presentation of Special Recognitions and Teacher Scholarships**

STAR Student and Teacher .....	4
Clarence Strickland Make a Difference Award .....	5
Carriere Family Scholarship for Teachers .....	6
Joan Peirce Early Childhood Education Teacher Scholarships .....	7

**Presentation of New College Scholarships**

Han C. Choi Memorial Scholarship .....	9
Shykia Ward-Reese Memorial Scholarship .....	10
Jeanne Bellville Taffs Memorial Scholarship .....	11
Trinity High School Class of 1965 Scholarship .....	12

**Dinner**

**Presentation of Annual College Scholarships**

Tools for Success Laptop Awards .....	13
Bill Meador, Jr. Memorial Scholarship .....	14
Blue & Gold Alumni Scholarship .....	15
Carl & Mae Renfroe Memorial Scholarship (female) .....	16
Carl & Mae Renfroe Memorial Scholarship (male) .....	17
Coye Foundation Scholarship .....	18
Gladding Family Scholarship .....	19
Imani Thompson Twine Memorial Scholarship .....	20
Madison Lewis Memorial Scholarship .....	21
Mary Elizabeth Brown Wilson Scholarship .....	22
Moore Family Scholarship (female) .....	23
Moore Family Scholarship (male) .....	24
Bailey Family Scholarship for Outstanding Student Athletes .....	25
Beatrice A. Pask Memorial Scholarship .....	26
Harry Edwards Class of 1960 Memorial Scholarship .....	27
Thomas Hauk Memorial Scholarship .....	28
Rotary Club of Decatur Foundation Scholarship .....	29
Sarah Lynn Woolf Memorial Scholarship .....	30
Patrick Family Foundation Scholarship .....	31

**Closing Remarks**



## Remembering Han Choi

**O**n March 28, 2018, DEF Board Member Han C. Choi passed away peacefully after a valiant battle with pancreatic cancer. A beloved member of the Decatur community and a DEF board member for the past six years, he left a tremendous legacy that strengthened the organization and helped it grow. To honor that legacy, Han's family and friends established a scholarship in his name, to be presented tonight. Please see page 9 to learn more about the Han C. Choi Memorial Scholarship and the recipient.

### About the DEF Board and Staff

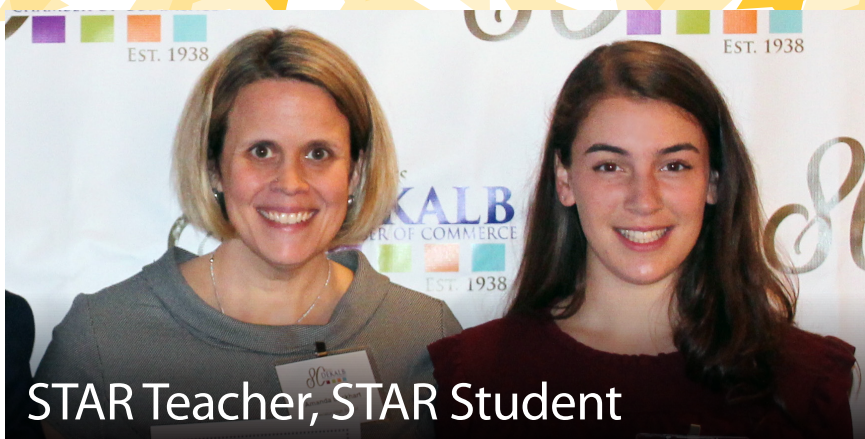
#### The DEF Board of Directors whose terms continue for 2018-2019

Tennielle Bailey	Donald Horace	<b>Ex-Officio:</b>
Erin Braden	Molly Marrah	David Dude
Chris Brown	Todd Ohlandt	Doug Faust
Cathy Carlomagno	Michelle Stevens	Claire Miller
Brad Cornett	Natalie Williams	Tasha White
Joel Gould	Marc Wisniewski	

Each year we recognize the work of board members who have completed their service terms with a gift in their honor to the children and youth of our community. We are deeply grateful for the expertise and guidance of departing board members Irm Diorio and Lilly Pettus.

#### Decatur Education Foundation staff

Gail Rothman	<i>Executive Director</i>
Meagan Berardi	<i>Director of Community Engagement</i>
Elise Drago	<i>Office Manager</i>
Marie McCollum	<i>Mentor Program Coordinator</i>
Erin Murphy	<i>Communications Coordinator</i>



## STAR Teacher, STAR Student

Each year, the student at each Georgia high school with the highest SAT score among those in the top 10% of their class is designated as the STAR Student. Each STAR Student names a teacher who has had the most impact on them as their STAR Teacher.

### **Amanda Lockhart on STAR Student Chiara Darnton**

I have known about Chiara and her “Mathmagician” abilities for the past three years, but really got to know her this year when she was in my IB Bio II class. Chiara quickly showed herself to be an analytical thinker, hard worker, but also a caring soul. Chiara is always willing to help others understand material - offering alternative ways to explain a process in class or tutoring another student while waiting for the practice bus; she wants to help others pursue excellence. She is a quiet but mighty force in this world – whether in the classroom, in the kitchen, or running – Chiara always gives 100%. Her passion and dedication is admired among many, and will surely be missed next year.

### **Chiara Darnton on STAR Teacher Amanda Lockhart**

Ms. Lockhart is easily one of my favorite teachers this year. Although I have her biology class during the last period of the day, it’s always something I look forward to and it’s never tedious. Teaching seniors is challenging, to say the least, but Ms. Lockhart excels at keeping the attention of her students and encouraging curiosity. Through her lectures and labs, biology has unexpectedly become one of my favorite subjects. I admire Ms. Lockhart as both a teacher and a person.

Chiara will attend Harvard University in the fall and likely major in mathematics.



# Clarence Strickland Make a Difference Award

The Clarence Strickland Make a Difference Award recognizes a school system employee who shows compassion and care in reaching out to a student in a time of great need. The award is named in honor of Clarence Strickland, longtime CSD employee and custodian at DHS.



**Susan Carroll,  
intervention teacher  
at Renfroe MS**

Nominated by a parent for the personal connection that Susan made with her daughter as she faced the challenges of a traumatic brain injury.



**Dawn Durham, school  
nurse at Oakhurst  
Elementary School**

Nominated by a parent for going above and beyond in providing compassionate support and a safe place for her son grieving his father's sudden death.



**Quonisha Jackson,  
paraprofessional  
at Clairemont  
Elementary**

Nominated for being a tireless advocate and mentor for two students facing significant challenges at home and at school.



**Bill Roberts,  
graduation coach at  
Decatur High School**

Nominated by a parent for the kindness and empathy he showed for her son who suffers from acute social anxiety.



**Dr. Rebecca Root,  
counselor at F.AVE**

Nominated by a parent for the great care and compassion to her daughter after the sudden death of her father.

# Carriere Family Scholarship for Teachers



## Ashlea Edwards

Ashlea is pursuing a master's degree in educational leadership from Georgia State University.

**From Ashlea:** I teach every student – regardless of ability, social status, struggles and ethnicity – how to be successful, lifelong learners. As an educator, I take the time to teach my students a set of skills beyond academic standards. I teach them how to struggle and grapple, how to build stamina and not give up when something is hard. I teach them about craftsmanship, perseverance, and collaboration. I find the best way to teach my students is by modeling these skills. They need to know that not everything in life is easy – you are going to struggle. How you handle that struggle is what sets you apart. As a special education teacher, people assume my students can't do it or won't learn it the same as other students. But this is absolutely untrue. When you set high expectations for an individual and you know they can meet that expectation, somewhere along the way, they know they can meet that expectation. And then something beautiful happens; they meet that expectation. Not because you only taught them the standards, but because you taught them how to grapple and how to persevere.

Ashlea Edwards has an accurate, deep, and current knowledge of special education. Ashlea is a teacher leader. She has served as the special education lead teacher, created the school's master schedule, and has led professional learning on student-engaged assessment practices. She facilitates the kindergarten data-inquiry team by analyzing and using assessment data to measure student progress and design instructional interventions. Ashlea has great rapport with her students and promotes respect and understanding of students with disabilities. Ashlea is a valued member of the Clairemont Community. – *Billy Heaton, Clairemont Elementary principal*

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## CARRIERE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FOR TEACHERS

This scholarship is given to a City Schools of Decatur teacher who is pursuing advanced education and is either a K-5 classroom teacher, a math or science teacher for grades 6-12, or a K-12 Exceptional Student Services teacher.

# Joan Peirce Early Childhood Education Teacher Scholarships



## **Artesha Chaney, Paraprofessional at Oakhurst Elementary**

Artesha will be attending Georgia State University to pursue a degree in early childhood education.

**From Artesha:** When working with children, I've learned you should help the child discover their talents and offer them positive redirection. Children should leave a classroom knowing that there is an advocate there on their behalf to ensure that they feel academically successful regardless of challenges. As we all know, school can be challenging, but if you have the right teacher encouraging you, you can be very successful. I believe completing this degree program will give me the opportunity to exercise different learning styles for each learner.

As a team member, Ms. Chaney demonstrates her commitment to success and professional growth by enthusiastically pursuing a number of staff development opportunities. She shows strong leadership within collaborative teams, has the ability to communicate well, and offers valuable insights with respect to children and developmentally appropriate practices and tasks. She manages her time well, has enviable attention to details, and possesses a strong vision for craftsmanship and excellence. – *Marcia Fowler, interim principal, Oakhurst Elementary*



## **Tamara Walker, Pre-K Paraprofessional at College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center**

Tamara will be attending Georgia State University to pursue a degree in early childhood education.

**From Tamara:** I believe that when working with young children, the most important thing is love – showing that child that you care. I believe that each child should be able to walk in the classroom and feel safe. I also believe that each child learns differently. Learning the needs of each child in your class makes you a better teacher. After completing my degree, I would love to give back by returning to College Heights as a lead teacher in the two-year-old classroom. I started at College Heights as a young girl in my twenties. I know that going back to school at my age will be hard, but I know I can do it. I feel like I'm

not only doing this for myself, but for those at College Heights who believe in me. I also want to be the first in my family to graduate from college.

Tamara is self-motivated and helps keep the teacher on track so that she can keep up with the many requirements of a state-funded, pre-K classroom. She is highly professional and easily recognizes children's needs, both academic and emotional. She is wonderful with the children and parents. She is kind, compassionate, and patient. I full heartedly believe Tamara is an asset to the City Schools of Decatur community and deserving of this scholarship.

– Sarah Garland, early childhood director, CHECLC



### **Quonisha Jackson, Title 1 Paraprofessional at Clairemont Elementary**

Quonisha is pursuing her bachelor's degree in elementary interdisciplinary studies through the online program of Western Governors University.

**From Quonisha:** I believe that when working with children, you are the other parent. You aren't just the one that teaches reading, writing, and math, but you are also the one that teaches those important social skills to ensure that they become a thriving adult. I love what I do. I would love to continue to further my education so that I can continue to help those students who are struggling, and to fight for those who might not have a voice. I plan on continuing my efforts to close the achievement gap between our minority sub groups.

Quonisha is an amazing human being with great passion for children. Finishing my second year as the principal of Clairemont Elementary, Quonisha is one faculty member who has had the greatest impact on students. I recognized her talents immediately and suggested she become a teacher. I am excited for the day that she receives her certification. I will be the first principal to offer her a job! She is a great candidate for the DEF scholarship!

– Billy Heaton, Clairemont Elementary principal

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## **JOAN PEIRCE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHER SCHOLARSHIPS**

Joan Peirce was a gifted educator who taught high school English and drama for 30 years but she was also known as someone who mentored new teachers, supported them, and encouraged them to persevere during challenging times. The Joan Peirce Early Childhood Education Scholarship, started by Annie and Greg Caiola, honors her legacy by supporting and encouraging Decatur paraprofessionals to obtain their teaching credentials.





Lauren Odom

### **Han C. Choi Memorial Scholarship**

Lauren excelled in my challenging IB Biology Higher Level Year 1 class. She not only managed a rigorous workload, but she also used that foundational knowledge to ask thoughtful scientific questions. Lauren is also highly motivated to learn and will persist until she understands something, even when it is extremely challenging. She is not satisfied with doing something that is good enough; she strives for all of her work to be excellent.

– *Caroline Sumners, RMS 7th grade science teacher*

Lauren first came to the Writing Center as a student seeking help, and then she realized she could share her love of writing while helping others. She has been a tutor ever since. Other teachers have observed her while she is tutoring, and they have complimented her for her straightforward and gentle way of working with the students who come for help.

– *Cara Cassell, DHS English teacher and department chair*

Lauren Odom is a humble treasure who has distinguished herself as a debater, a volunteer, and a scholar. She has a keen intellect and a strong work ethic. Lauren is no extrovert, but she is a fierce debater and the captain of the DHS debate team. She is a role model for younger students on the team, and she volunteers her time in the DHS Writing Center to help other students hone their writing skills. Any challenge that life has thrown at Lauren, she's tackled it with calm determination. Lauren's tenacity, compassion, and intellect have been a gift to DHS, and will continue to serve her well wherever she lands next.

– *Cheryl Nahmias, IB instructional coach*

Lauren will attend North Carolina Central University in the fall.

**From Lauren:** I would like to double major in biochemistry and political science in college because I want to do something in science when I get older, and I would also like to be an activist.

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#### **HAN C. CHOI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Honoring Han Choi's board service to DEF, this scholarship is awarded to a student who has overcome significant challenges with determination, faith, and resiliency, qualities that were characteristic of Han Choi. The student must demonstrate leadership, service, academic excellence, and integrity.



## Chenoa Tyehimba

### **Shykia Ward-Reese Memorial Scholarship**

Chenoa is a bright light in this world. When she walks into a room and smiles it can brighten anyone's day. I appreciate Chenoa because she is real and honest. She is one of those rare students who enjoys a conversation with an adult in which she is not afraid to tell you what she means – and will challenge what you say.

– *Amanda Lockhart, DHS science teacher*

When I think of Chenoa, I think of social awareness. She uses her activism to inspire others, make connections, and (much to her own surprise) push herself. Even as a freshman, she had big thoughts and lofty goals. She has always been a crusader and a person who wanted to make a change. As she grew up, her activism also matured. She used her journalism background, her intellectual curiosity, and her own passion to pursue the things that mattered to her. I am proud to see the woman she has become, and I know as she moves on to our nation's capital, she will continue to march, rally, and pass out flyers.

– *Kristin Embry, IB world history teacher*

Chenoa is willing. Willing to take on that job that nobody else will. Willing to keep contributing when there is no guarantee of personal benefit. We were lucky to have Chenoa on our team. She is positive, intelligent, and witty. She is motivated by the greater good. She approaches all tasks with confidence. And my personal favorite quality of hers: she listens and empathizes beyond her years.

– *Ben Skillman, DHS Convergence Media teacher*

Chenoa will attend Howard University in the fall to study communications with a concentration in media, journalism, and film.

**From Chenoa:** I am most proud of winning the Coretta Scott King award, helping to start the DHS Black Student Union, and helping organize the No Place for Hate March.

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### **SHYKIA WARD-REESE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Honoring the life of Shykia Ward-Reese, an eighth grade student whose life was tragically taken earlier this year, this award goes to a high school senior who demonstrates a commitment to non-violence and social justice. The award is sponsored by Deborah Mitchell of R.B. Communications, Inc. whose son, former DHS student Gregory Lamar Lucas, was killed by gun violence in 2008.



## Berkeley Reed

### **Jeanne Bellville Taffs Memorial Scholarship**

One of the many ways that Berkeley shines is how she cares for others. She takes time to connect with her fellow students and teachers. She humbly welcomes each of us with a kind smile, a genuine question of what we are up to, and always makes time to write personal letters or birthday cards. Berkeley's leadership in this way has created a culture of caring and community for our school. She has earned her teachers' and classmates' trust and respect while making our school community brighter with her positive attitude and genuine care for others. – *Beth Lewis, special education department co-chair*

Berkeley is an excellent student with great academic and personal potential. She has a positive attitude about school and diligently works to overcome learning difficulties to make good grades. She has a positive spirit and attracts kind-hearted friends from various backgrounds. She also volunteers with young children at Color Wheel in Decatur three days per week, where she helps to create art-based programs aimed at promoting self-discovery and high self esteem. – *Ashley Payne, DHS English teacher*

Berkeley is one of the hardest working students I have seen in a classroom. I admire her effort, kindness, and conscientiousness. These traits have made Berkeley successful in high school and will continue to serve her well into the future. – *John Sommer, DHS social studies teacher*

Berkeley's calm demeanor, outstanding work ethic, and the amount of effort that goes into her work are some of her finest qualities. Her concern for others and her willingness to help others keeps her held in high regards at Decatur High School. – *Annette Brown, DHS 12th grade literature co-teacher*

Berkeley is still deciding where she plans to attend college in the fall.

**From Berkeley:** I want to go into the childhood education field and to study abroad.

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#### **JEANNE BELLVILLE TAFFS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Awarded to a female student who is well regarded by her peers – the kind of person they would describe as kind to all, warm-hearted, nonjudgmental and friends with a variety of students – qualities that were all characteristic of Jeanne Bellville Taffs.



## Mariah Cooper

### Trinity High School Class of 1965 Scholarship

By mid-high school, Mariah had become somewhat famous for her incredible talents in Model UN. Before she entered the club, the group was small in numbers and rather apathetic. Mariah's passion for Model UN completely revolutionized the group. As a young sophomore, she became the captain of the team and actively recruited new members. Her talent for oration inspired her peers to begin to attend (and win) conferences. Her oral skills may be the most impressive that I've ever seen in my nine years at Decatur. By the end of the year, she was a model of what I hope for all of my students: determined, gracious, and hard-working. – *Katie Crouse, DHS English teacher*

Mariah Cooper has a voice, and she's not afraid to use it. Whether she's arguing a case in mock trial or speaking in front of hundreds at a Drum Major for Justice Gala, Mariah demonstrates a clarity of perspective that's rare in someone so young. She cares about her community in Decatur—mentoring younger students for Model UN, organizing the painting of a mural for DHS—but she also cares about the wider world and issues of social justice, in particular. When she's not using her voice for good, she is completing the IB Diploma program while pursuing her passions like helping chaperone younger students on a trip to Japan, or completing a summer internship in a law firm. Mariah is a young woman with a keen intellect and clear vision that will take her far and light the way for others. – *Cheryl Kopec Nahmias, instructional coach/IB coordinator*

Mariah plans to attend the University of Georgia in the fall where she plans to major in international business in hopes of becoming a public relations strategist.

**From Mariah:** I am proud to have been accepted into the Atlanta Bar Association summer law internship program to work for Judge Courtney L. Johnson.

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#### TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1965 SCHOLARSHIP

Created to honor the legacy of Decatur's African-American high school (prior to desegregation), this award goes to an African-American student who demonstrates leadership skills, a strong work ethic, a determination to achieve, and a commitment to furthering their education.

# Tools for Success Laptop Award

Tools for Success is a program that provides laptops for students who are pursuing post-secondary education and who demonstrate that a laptop will help them achieve their goals.



## Maynun Ahmed

Maynun is a hardworking kid with a great attitude. She works very hard in class and genuinely cares about those around her. She is simply a very nice and caring person.  
– Alex Sawyer, DHS social studies teacher

Maynun plans to attend Columbus State University in the fall.

**From Maynun:** I'd like to become an ob-gyn or an astronomer.



## Amina Atik

Amina is an extremely bright and talented young lady who exhibits leadership abilities daily through her interactions with both staff and students. She is both a self-starter and hard worker who is always willing to assist her fellow classmates. – Joe Lee, DHS career coordinator

Amina plans to attend Agnes Scott College in the fall.

**From Amina:** People might not know that I speak three languages and love to travel.



## Matthew Poindexter

Matthew is a good student who is very intelligent. When he applies himself, he is able to think through and solve challenging questions. He cares about others, and is a respectful student. – Stan Flemons, DHS math teacher

Matthew plans to attend Kennesaw State University in the fall.

**From Matthew:** I plan to major in actuarial science and work in investment and banking following graduation.

**Akpofure Ehrenede** | Learn more on p. 31

**Faiza Haji** | Learn more on p. 26

**Fartun Sheikh** | Learn more on p. 29



## Brandon Benton

### Bill Mealor, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

Brandon is one of the best students in my pre-calculus class. Every day, he is involved in the classroom discussion by asking questions, commenting on the topic at hand, or answering a question posed to the class. He shows a keen desire to learn and perform at his best. Brandon is well-rounded and very open-minded. He respects people from all walks of life. He works well with other students in the class and gets along well with everyone.

– *Stanton Flemons, DHS math teacher*

I was Brandon Benton's 10th grade American literature teacher and 11th grade IB language teacher, and over the course of those two years, I witnessed exponential growth in his confidence, writing, and analytical skills. Brandon is a pleasure to teach and has demonstrated potential as he has matriculated through high school. His maturity indicates that he will utilize the opportunities offered in college to grow as an individual. Many teenagers are afraid of becoming individuals, but Brandon realizes the beauty and importance of differences in people. – *Yvonne McVann, DHS English teacher*

Brandon will attend Kennesaw State University in the fall, where he will pursue a degree in finance to achieve his goal of becoming a financial advisor.

**From Brandon:** I am most proud of my wrestling endeavors, the improvements I've made as a student, and my social relationships.

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#### BILL MEALOR JR. MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This award honors the life of former DHS student Bill Mealor, Jr., who passed away during his senior year in 1986. It is given to a male student who exhibits tenacity, determination, spirit, and enthusiasm in the face of adversity – all qualities that were characteristic of Bill Mealor, Jr.



Gary Reid

### **Blue & Gold Alumni Scholarship**

I was very fortunate to coach Gary on the football field and get to know him throughout his high school years. I have watched Gary mature over the years into an outstanding student athlete and an even better young man. He has a great attitude and work ethic and is willing to do what it takes to be successful in anything he does. – *Cody Cory, DHS Head football coach*

Gary Reid is the type of kid to quietly include someone in class that would normally be excluded – he has been part of the Partnership for Success which pairs students with a special needs peer. Although he's only been a student here for two years, he has found a variety of ways to be involved in addition to holding down a part-time job – from running track to playing basketball to serving as a volunteer basketball coach for his senior project. He approaches his work with good humor and is respectful to peers and adults alike. – *Beth McMahon, DHS English teacher and department co-chair*

Gary is always upbeat and making those around him laugh. He is definitely the reason that I have been stuck with the Lion King opening song (the part chanting in Zulu) in my head many times this year, as he would come into the chemistry room belting it out. You can't pass him in the hall without getting a friendly smile and hello! – *Dalhya Lusk DHS chemistry teacher*

Gary is a very cooperative and respectful student. He cares about his learning and desires to be the best that he can be. He frequently asks questions and participates in the learning process. – *Stan Flemons, DHS math teacher*

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### **BLUE & GOLD ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship, founded in 2010 by Chantrice Rogers, Decatur High Class of 1994, is awarded to a senior who demonstrates entrepreneurial and leadership skills, and has given back to their community through service.



Iris Quam

### **Carl & Mae Renfroe Memorial Scholarship**

Iris is a very passionate student, and one who puts her heart into assignments. She is a responsible young woman who has proven her time-management ability in juggling a loaded schedule. Iris somehow finds time to excel in her academics, always with a positive attitude and an uncompromised work effort. Iris chose to take a Forensics course on top of her required coursework, which shows her dedication to learning, as it is a difficult course. In addition, she has spent time volunteering with MedShare, which serves as yet another example of her selflessness. – *Lucas Cross, DHS science teacher*

Iris is not a traditional AP student. She is very bright and can understand complex ideas by breaking them down analytically, but she also has some learning challenges that her peers in AP/IB Psychology don't face. What's more, she has an interest in learning and a steady focus that is very rare in a kid this age. She just keeps on moving, overcoming, and then taking the next step. So this is how Iris leads. She leads by example, she leads by gently encouraging others, and by fearlessly continuing to ignore the obstacles in her life. Iris is a high-achieving kid because she has learned how to deal with adversity. I have no doubt that Iris will be successful and will accomplish great things because, as we know, it is not the ease with which we achieve our goals, it is the grit in the face of struggle that determines our success. – *Jennifer Gonzalez, DHS psychology teacher*

**From Iris:** I want to get my four-year degree in criminal justice with a minor in sociology and anthropology. I would like to work toward getting into Quantico and becoming an FBI agent. I would also like to pursue my doctorate in criminal justice and maybe even sociology.

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#### **CARL & MAE RENFROE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

This award is presented to the female member of the Decatur High School graduating class who exemplifies the qualities of scholarship, hard work and determination to achieve, and shows a positive attitude toward teachers and fellow students.





## Anderson McKiernan

### **Carl & Mae Renfroe Memorial Scholarship**

It has been an honor to work with Anderson these past three years. He is committed to his personal growth as well as a stalwart champion of his peers' success. His giving and positive nature and his unwavering capacity to share his creativity have been the cornerstone of our ensemble's accomplishments.

– Lynn Hosking, DHS drama teacher/theater director

Anderson has continued to build his leadership, mentoring, and coaching abilities in high school. He is very personable and other kids gravitate towards him. When he moved to Decatur in 10th grade, he contributed greatly to the Cross Country team. Last year mid-season, he was named Team Captain. This year, Anderson is a drama intern. He is constantly talking about "his students," remembering to bring them candy on their birthdays. He talks about the "shy" kids and how much he wants to encourage them and help them grow as performers on stage. The fact that Anderson continues to have a positive attitude and engaging spirit is a testimony to his grit, resilience and strong faith. Of the students at DHS who do what Anderson does, he is by far one of the best. However, you would not know it by passing him in the hall or having a conversation with him. He is not high-minded or cocky about it. He's just good old Anderson, a really good guy, a truly sweet kid, who I'm gonna miss like crazy.

– Dr. Kimberly Jones, DHS counseling department head

Anderson will attend Oklahoma City University in the fall where he plans to double major in musical theater and vocal performance.

**From Anderson:** I am very proud of being one out of six people nominated in the 2016-2017 season for best supporting actor in Georgia for my role as Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*.

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### **CARL & MAE RENFROE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

This award is presented to the male member of the Decatur High School graduating class who exemplifies the qualities of scholarship, hard work and determination to achieve, and shows a positive attitude toward teachers and fellow students.



## Derek Walker

### Coye Foundation Scholarship

During the past three years, I have come to know Derek as an extremely mature, talented, creative, and motivated student. It is apparent in his work ethic and attitude that

Derek wants to make the most of his high school educational experience. He is also one of the most genuine students I know. As the theatre director, I hired Derek last year to film our school's spring musical. Not only was he professional, but he also delivered an incredible product. He obviously has the skills with film and media work, but he also has the passion to pursue a career in it. – Amy Rawlins, DHS drama teacher and director

Even as he's pursued his passion for film by devoting countless hours to working on the Convergence Media staff, earning industry-standard Adobe certification and winning accolades for his documentary film-making, he's also successfully completed the IB diploma program in his junior and senior years. But what stands out most about Derek is the irrepressible positivity that he carries with him in his endeavors. His smile lights up every room he enters. Derek is a friend to anyone he meets, which is no doubt why his peers in the senior class recently conveyed upon him their highest honor: Class of 2018 Prom King!

– Cheryl Kopec Nahmias, DHS instructional coach/IB coordinator

Derek is deciding between Emerson, University of Georgia, and Savannah College of Art and Design. He wants to work toward becoming a movie or television director.

**From Derek:** People might not know that I have a personal challenge to fill a sketchbook page every day to improve drawing for animation. I've been doing the challenge since June 28, 2017.

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#### COYE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship, founded in 2010 by Allan Coye, Decatur High Class of 1997, is awarded to an African-American senior who has shown a commitment to leadership, community service, scholarship, and personal growth while at Decatur High School.



## Mary Iris Allison

### Gladding Family Scholarship

Mai was serious and dedicated to her studies, and yet she was a fun-loving and entertaining person. She has a wonderful sense of humor and always got along with all of her peers. While maintaining almost perfect grades, she was always willing to help others and work with partners. She inspired many in the class with her hard work and intelligence. – *Mary Souther, DHS math teacher*

Mai impressed me most in her ability to balance the class and prioritize her needs as an individual. Mai is an impressive member of the chorus and participated in our musical last year. She, along with the other chorale members, had a chance to go on a fieldtrip, a treat that students almost never pass up, but on the day of the fieldtrip, she entered the classroom and sat in her seat. Concerned, I asked her if she was okay and if she remembered the trip. She replied that she chose to stay in class because we were going to work on a skill that she needed to improve upon before the next summative. She said that she had experienced many fun and engaging activities and trips through chorus, and that being in English class was what was most valuable to her at that time. Mai so impressed me in that moment, as she was able to reflect on her greater life and assess what was most important for her at the time. – *Katie Crouse, DHS English teacher*

Mai plans to attend Scripps College in the fall.

**From Mai:** Two accomplishments about which I'm proud are going to GMEA All State Chorus for three years in a row, and serving as a member of the Decatur Youth Council.

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#### GLADDING FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship, founded by DHS alumnus Sam Gladding in memory of his parents, Russell Burton and Gertrude Templeman Gladding, is awarded to a student who is hard-working, service-minded, focused on bettering humanity, unselfish, humble, outgoing, fair, and who plans to attend a four-year liberal arts college/university.



Nyah Morgan

**Imani Thompson Twine  
Memorial Scholarship**

Nyah is empathetic. She takes other people's feelings into consideration. She genuinely loves to help others and see other people succeed and achieve their goals. That is what has made Nyah such an integral component of the DHS color guard leadership team. She helps people who are new to spinning flags, rifles, and dancing. Nyah gives thoughtful corrections and helps them get through learning drills and the challenges that come with the marching band season as a whole! Nyah brings energy to every room she enters. Is it the eyes, the flawless smile, or the little squeal she lets out when she's super excited? I don't know, but when Nyah's present, everyone is ready to perform at their best academically, socially, or on the field. – *Dr. Kimberly Jones, DHS counseling department head*

Nyah is a thoughtful, articulate student and a pleasure to teach. Outside of the academic day, I've had the pleasure of watching her in the school musical and as part of the color guard. She volunteers at the Decatur Book Festival and Maker Faire in addition to working part-time at the school daycare - a job which requires her to be at work by 7:15 AM when most seniors miss first period. Her time management skills are a particular strength and will help her achieve her goals in college. – *Beth McMahon, DHS English teacher*

Nyah plans to attend University of Mississippi, where she will pursue a pre-law course track.

**From Nyah:** People might not know that I love studying psychology and criminal cases.

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**IMANI THOMPSON TWINE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Created in memory of Imani Thompson Twine, this scholarship is awarded to a female member of the senior class who exhibits the qualities that defined Imani: leadership, academic excellence, perseverance, maturity, love for others, and the ability to impact all types of people.



## Audrey Wheeler

### **Madison Lewis Memorial Scholarship**

Audrey is a bit of a reluctant star. While she may not be the most vocal in class, her understanding of topics and concepts are often well-thought-out, which becomes obvious in her writing. She is always quick to help those around her who struggle with grasping concepts, often taking additional time to assist others, without making them feel diminished for not getting it the first time.

— *Cherith Johnson, DHS social studies teacher*

Audrey has been a captain on my softball team for the past two years, and a player in our softball program for eight years. She has been the region player of the year, first team, all-region player all four years, all-county player, all-academic team, and second team all-state. Audrey is self-motivated and hard-working. She is a leader on the softball team, a member of the National Honor Society, and has been a part of several different student leadership teams. She knows how to multi-task and complete work independently. Audrey motivates other students to work hard and helps keep the standards high in our school. I believe that Audrey will be an asset to any college that she attends. I look forward to hearing of the success that will inevitably follow this young woman.

— *Allison Paul, DHS head softball coach*

Audrey plans to attend The King's College in the fall to pursue a degree in politics, philosophy, and economics, and to work in animal rights and advocacy.

**From Audrey:** I am proud to have made a perfect score on my A.P. psychology exam!

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### **MADISON LEWIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship honors the life and legacy of Madison Lewis and is awarded to a graduating senior who participated in DHS athletics and exemplifies the best of Bulldog spirit. The recipient demonstrates leadership, good sportsmanship, a strong work ethic on and off the field, and serves as a role model to teammates.



Amina Hull

**Mary Elizabeth Brown Wilson Scholarship**

She has been a delight to teach and an inspiration both to me and to her peers. She is one of the few in the class who is consistently scoring top grades on all assessments. She was incredibly successful and she positively influenced others in the class to study, come to tutoring, and achieve their best. Her wonderful sense of humor contributes to class discussions and her studiousness once again is a good influence on others. – *Mary Souther, DHS math teacher*

Amina is a brilliant kid; she knows how to work hard. Her earnest desire to help others, to learn more, and to stretch herself will make her a college success. She is a naturally intelligent kid with a leg up on most in the class, but it is her determination and effort which really push her to succeed. What I appreciate most about Amina, is her care of her fellow classmates. She honestly wants to help people. She is a kid who will take notes for someone else, help that kid in the hall who dropped their books, and squeal with delight at another student's success. –*Jennifer Gonzalez, DHS psychology teacher*

"Amina has been a great role model for students who suffer from anxiety and has participated in activities that help remove the stigma for students who may be struggling. She has courageously shared her own experiences on a panel in conjunction with a movie viewing that was shown to Decatur High students and members of the community and has helped us let students know where they can turn for help." – *Dianne Thompson, DHS student success coordinator*

Amina plans to attend the College of Wooster in the fall to work towards a master's and then Ph.D. in clinical psychology. She plans to become a psychologist in a state mental institution where it is her goal to help make such institutions more like wellness centers and less like prisons.

**From Amina:** People might not know that I am working on writing a book series.

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**MARY ELIZABETH BROWN WILSON SCHOLARSHIP**

This scholarship is awarded to a senior who demonstrates ongoing involvement in community service, achievement that reflects a commitment to education, and resilience in overcoming adversity.



## Grace Tozer-Rich

### Moore Family Scholarship

I have taught Grace over the past two school years. Grace is focusing on the Teaching as a Profession pathway.

Grace's consideration of all is one of her greatest attributes as a person. Grace is an outgoing person who is super-sensitive to the plight that others face in life. Her presence, emotional intelligence, and determination will put her over the top in any challenge that she faces. She is a fully engaged student who makes me proud to be part of the field of education.

– Duane Sprull, DHS director of career and technical education

I have taught Grace for the past four years, and she has become one of the most motivated students that I have ever taught. This year, she has a two-period internship with a kindergarten class. She truly wanted to work with our most vulnerable students, and she now spends two hours every day working with the students in the community who need her most. Grace's reliability and consistency have afforded her many opportunities and much responsibility. Grace is a rare student, whose maturity and interests dovetail perfectly to the life of an educator. – G. Brent Eickhoff, DHS German teacher

Grace plans to attend University of Georgia in the fall. She would like to become fluent in Spanish by studying abroad, and to become an elementary school teacher.

**From Grace:** I am proud that I have taken Spanish for all four years. Many students, especially those who are not in the diploma program, drop Spanish. Although the class is difficult, I have discovered that I really enjoy being able to speak another language.

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#### MOORE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

The Moore Family Scholarship was started in 2016 by Decatur residents Elizabeth and Patrick Moore. The award is given to a graduating senior who is well-rounded and who has demonstrated an exemplary work ethic in one or more of these areas: academic preparedness, extracurricular activities, community service, or part-time employment.



## Alexander Hall

### Moore Family Scholarship

Alex is smart on his own, but he also works hard and is determined and motivated. He is willing to put in the extra work and has a great attitude. He is willing to learn and accepts constructive feedback well. Alex is interested in learning for learning's sake and is interested in improving his community. In a six-week campaign for the Leukemia Society, he and two friends raised \$9,000! He found this opportunity through a service club at school, which demonstrates his initiative. Even on the soccer field, Alex perseveres; he has had several serious injuries that required physical therapy, and he kept up with it and sat on the bench for a season to support his team. – *Briana Dayton, DHS social studies teacher*

Alex is a multi-talented individual; between athletics, extra-curricular activities, and academics, he is extremely well-rounded. He is an exemplary student, always putting forth 100%; he does it with purpose, intention, and success. His outstanding character constantly amazes me - he is kind, polite, and has a way with people that puts them at ease. These skills will serve him well in life.

– *Amanda Lockhart, DHS science teacher*

As a student, Alex is exceptional. He is focused, responsible, and always striving for success. Alex has great critical thinking and organizational skills and, be it participating in a Socratic Seminar or constructing a literary analysis essay, always rises to any challenge that he faces to produce quality work.

– *Akoya Shakir, DHS English teacher*

Alex plans to attend Georgia Tech in the fall.

**From Alex:** I'm most proud of completing the LLS Students of the Year campaign, a six-week fundraiser for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Every day for six weeks, I worked for several hours on fundraising events while playing varsity soccer and maintaining straight As.

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## Beatrice Rodi

### **Bailey Family Scholarship for Outstanding Student Athletes**

Bebe is one of those well-rounded students who seems to have time to do everything. She takes her learning seriously, and I have seen her make great strides in her writing. She is involved in varsity soccer and a club soccer team as well. She is in NHS, Key Club, and swimming. In addition, she is the consummate babysitter, being called on by a variety of families because she is responsible and has sound judgment. Is it too informal to just say: "Bebe is awesome"? – *Erika Leach, DHS English teacher*

Bebe is the epitome of an athlete scholar. She lives her life with integrity on and off the field. In the classroom, she brings an inquisitiveness and a positivity that elevates the room. She is the first to ask or answer a question. She respects the perspectives of others and leads by example. She has distinguished herself as a scholar in the IB Diploma Program. On the soccer field, Bebe is the heart of the team, working hard to support her mates so that they can all be their best. She is tireless in her work ethic, and a fierce competitor who exhibits the highest ideals of sportsmanship. When people think of Bebe Rodi, they think of sunshine. Her light shines at DHS on and off the field and will continue to light the way for herself and others. – *Cheryl Nahmias, DHS IB instructional coach*

BeBe plans to attend University of Georgia in the fall.

**From BeBe:** I am most proud of my accomplishments on the Varsity Soccer team since my freshman year, including making it to the elite eight and final four during playoffs, earning the most improved award, and generally just enjoying being a part of the team.

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#### **BAILEY FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FOR OUTSTANDING STUDENT ATHLETES**

This scholarship, started by local Decatur residents Scott and Denise Bailey, is awarded to a Decatur High School senior student-athlete who demonstrates the best of the Bulldog spirit and shows leadership and good sportsmanship on and off the field.



## Faiza Haji

### Beatrice A. Pask Memorial Scholarship

Ms. Haji is an excellent student who is motivated and takes great pride in her academics. She is very creative and expresses herself in a very compassionate manner. As a student, Ms. Haji has a quiet and positive demeanor, and is very focused on her future career goals and aspirations.

– Joe Lee, DHS career coordinator

It is easy to see when you meet Faiza that she clearly has goals for herself, and she knows the steps she needs to take to achieve them. She is talented, caring, intuitive, dedicated, and focused in her pursuits. In addition to being a driven student, Faiza is a kind and compassionate person. I am certain that through college and beyond, Faiza is going to continue to do great and creative things.

– Leah Locke, DHS science teacher

Faiza Haji was born in Kenya to Somalian parents and immigrated to the US in 2006. Faiza has embraced the Somalian tradition of poetry which is embedded in the culture of the people. "I love being able to communicate with different groups of people and move them with my writing. I want to go into civil law because I want to stand up for people who don't have a voice. That's what I do with my poetry." – Beate Sass, photographer, *I am Decatur*

Faiza plans to attend Agnes Scott College to major in nursing and minor in sociology and anthropology.

**From Faiza:** I am most proud of participating in Mr. Lee's Black History Program for the four years that I have attended Decatur High School. It has been an honor to be able to use my spoken word poetry to pay homage to the men and women who have made it possible for me to even attend Decatur High School at the cost of sometimes their own lives.

Faiza is also a recipient of a DEF Tools for Success Laptop award, which provides laptops for students who are pursuing post-secondary education and who demonstrate that a laptop will help them achieve their goals.

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#### BEATRICE A PASK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Beatrice A. Pask Memorial Scholarship is presented to a student who exhibits a commitment to education, a history of involvement in meaningful community service that enhances the lives of others, and who is a first-generation college attendee.



## Chiara Darnton

### Harry Edwards Class of 1960 Memorial Scholarship

I have taught almost 2,000 high school students and 300 AP chemistry students. In that time, I have never encountered a student who so embodies the highest ideals of a scholar and a citizen with calm, humility, and good cheer. What really sets Chiara apart are the generosity and zest she brings to every intellectual pursuit. I launched a new extracurricular activity, and Chiara enthusiastically signed up to be among the first students in our school to complete a tutor-training course created by Purdue University. Since then, she has given countless hours to other students, guiding them to improved achievement. In the meantime, Chiara has also mentored our fledgling math team into a thriving team and club.

– *Debra LeDoux, DHS math teacher*

She is soft-spoken and kind-hearted, but has a strong personality that is respected by both teachers and her peers, and she gracefully shepherded a large number of students through their mathematical struggles. Watching her graciously step into that leadership role was only the beginning of her numerous and selfless commitments to our school. I can give you a dozen examples of her authentic involvement, both academic and extra-curricular – like how as captain of our cross country team, she gave up her varsity spot because she wanted a hard-working sophomore to have it. – *David Custer, math department chair*

Chiara plans to attend Harvard University in the fall.

**From Chiara:** All throughout high school, I have continued choral singing and running cross country and track. These are activities that I love to do, however I've never been the best or even second-best at either of them. I believe that it's easy not to quit something when you're the best in the room. However, I have more pride in the activities I didn't quit, regardless of my skill. These activities have allowed me to develop other parts of my character and form relationships with people outside of academic circles.

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#### HARRY EDWARDS CLASS OF 1960 MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This award, named for Harry Edwards, whose plane was shot down in Vietnam, recognizes a student who exemplifies citizenship, school spirit, honesty, integrity, and self-discipline – character traits that Harry demonstrated as a student and an officer.



## William Whatley

### Thomas Hauk Memorial Scholarship

William Whatley has been an active participant in the performing arts at DHS during his time here - from lending his lovely tenor voice to the chorus, to appearing on stage in several DHS musicals and plays. His joyful smile and positive attitude have always been a welcome sight in the Performing Arts Center. He is a great team player and is always willing to jump in, take a risk, and try something new. —*Amy Rawlins, musical theatre director*

One of the many things that I admire about William is his confidence. He is always willing to listen to instruction from authority, as well as admit when he is wrong. These are two traits that are not common among a lot of his peers. William takes great pride in running his own race and not following trends. He is always very attentive in class and excited to learn new material that will challenge him. He seems like a really quiet kid at first glance, but the truth is he is observing everything around him. He has a real passion for working with food and immersing himself in the culinary industry. With this passion at such a young age, I have no doubt in my mind that he will succeed in his future endeavors. —*Chef Kyle Hires, DHS Decatur Career Academy*

William will attend Georgia State University in the fall.

**From William:** I am proud of the fact that I have managed to graduate in three years while still making an impact on my school and the people in it. I've received an education and experiences that are much different from many other places in Georgia. The people that I got to spend time with and learn from have also given me an outlook on the world that fills me with hope.

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#### THOMAS HAUK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship honors the life of Thomas John Anthony Hauk, who died in 2002 at the age of 16 from complications related to Addison's disease. The award is given to a graduating senior who embodies Thomas' personal qualities of courage, friendship, and peace-making.



## Fartun Sheikh

### Rotary Club of Decatur Foundation Scholarship

In the classroom, Fartun never fails to impress me with her work ethic and her drive to learn. She is the type of student who takes pride in her work, and will always find a way to complete her work to the best of her ability, regardless of the difficulty of the task. She is only satisfied if she has put her whole heart into her work, and she does so every day. – *Kimberley Buckley, DHS science teacher*

Fartun's drive continues to impress me. At the end of the year, when most seniors are less focused on their school work, Fartun is a light shining through giving her work her all and trying her best. She is a pleasure to know.

– *Debra Lydon, DHS English teacher*

Fartun has been a great participant in our programs. She has participated in our STAR after-school program for several years. She mentors students from kindergarten to middle school and helps tutor some students with homework. She has played a major role in our Teen-N-Action club. Fartun has the right character, personality, and drive to become successful. – *Melvin Whitlock, Decatur Housing Authority resident services supervisor*

Fartun will attend Georgia State University in the fall to pursue her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing to work in the field of pediatric nursing.

**From Fartun:** What I love most about Decatur High School is that the teachers always make sure that you are passing, and give additional help so that you are able to understand the work. The school has really amazing, unique clubs and learning connections, so it's not hard to find something that you would like to do, and it's a really safe environment.

Fartun is also a recipient of a DEF Tools for Success Laptop award, which provides laptops for students who are pursuing post-secondary education and who demonstrate that a laptop will help them achieve their goals.

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#### ROTARY CLUB OF DECATUR FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Rotary Club of Decatur Foundation Scholarship is an award designed to support the mission of the Rotary Club to promote ethical business practices, peace and goodwill in local communities and the world. The recipient each year must demonstrate a strong commitment to community service.



## Whitney Westbrook

### Sarah Lynn Woolf Memorial Scholarship

As a member of our inaugural International Baccalaureate German class and a student in my Teaching as a Profession pathway, Whitney has constantly impressed me. Her love for Germany, its people, and its language is amazing. Her leadership in our German program at DHS has been one of the major reasons for its growth. She has taken part in our exchange program. She has worked tirelessly to pass the DSD I test. She is the president of our German club. She has taken part in the Governor's Honors Program for German. The combination of her intelligence, disposition, and work ethic make her one of the most impressive students that I have ever taught. – G. Brent Eickhoff, DHS German teacher

Whitney Westbrook lives life to the fullest, every single day in everything she does. Whitney's walk down DHS hallways tells you who she is—energetic, purposeful, eager, fit. She is a scholar and an athlete. She is a friend and a helper. Above all, she is the hardest working person in every arena. Whitney does everything with integrity, on the field or in the classroom. She has distinguished herself as a German scholar at Governor's Honors, as a runner and soccer player, and as a student in the IB diploma program.  
– Cheryl Nahmias, DHS IB instructional coach

Whitney is confident and independent but simultaneously so incredibly humble. She writes more words, runs more miles, and smiles more often than most high school students. She truly is a remarkable young woman that I have been so honored to know. – Kristen Embry, DHS social studies teacher

Whitney plans to attend University of South Carolina where she will study international relations and continue improving her proficiency in German and Spanish.

**From Whitney:** I enjoy running very long distances, and one day I hope to be an ultra-marathoner! I hope to run 100-mile races all over the world.

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#### SARAH LYNN WOOLF MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is presented to a female student who exemplifies high scholarship, achievement in a variety of endeavors, and a positive approach to whatever life brings – attributes of the late Sarah Woolf, a DHS student who died of bone cancer in 2002.



## Akpofure Ehrenede

### Patrick Family Foundation Scholarship

Akpo always has a good attitude that I appreciate. His quiet sense of humor added much to my class, and his good example of studious behavior in class can't be underestimated. He asks great questions both in class and privately, and will work on a topic until he is sure that he understands it. If he doesn't like a test grade, he will come in outside of class to go over the test so that he knows that he can re-take the test more successfully.

– *Mary Souther, DHS math teacher*

Akpofure has a strong intellect and a natural gift for analysis, often considering problems or topics in far greater depth than his peers. It was a great benefit having him in the class because he constantly worked with his fellow students, tutoring them and helping them understand concepts and vocabulary. During his time at DHS, he has participated in both the soccer and swimming programs. Outside of athletics, Akpo has been a member of the DHS Ping Pong Club since 9th grade. He has gained work experience as a CPR-certified lifeguard and as an official Georgia Certified Soccer Referee. Akpofure Ehrenede is an extremely motivated young man who is a prime candidate for university studies.

– *Matthew Unwin, DHS science teacher*

Akpo plans to attend University of Georgia in the fall to study economics, finance, and statistics to pursue a career in actuarial science, and ultimately have the title of Actuarial Fellow.

**From Akpo:** People probably don't know that I am Roman Catholic and I usually order my pizza without cheese.

Akpo is also a recipient of a DEF Tools for Success Laptop award, which provides laptops for students who are pursuing post-secondary education and who demonstrate that a laptop will help them achieve their goals.

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### PATRICK FAMILY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship, established in 2002 by members of the Patrick Family, who are DHS alumni, is the largest scholarship available to Decatur High School students. Recipients are exceptional students whose selection is based on accomplishments, academics, and potential to reach academic goals.



# Special thanks

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... and to Agnes Scott College for providing such a lovely space!

Learn more at  
[decatureducationfoundation.org](http://decatureducationfoundation.org).

