



Two members of the JP II Class of 2018 celebrate their graduation after commencement exercises at the Grand Ole Opry on Sunday, May 20.

## ALL HAIL THE CLASS OF 2018

Four years of hard work, accomplishment, fun and friendships came to a close for the Pope John Paul II High School Class of 2018 at commencement exercises held Sunday, May 20, at the Grand Ole Opry.

The Class of 2018 included two valedictorians, Connor McCain (Cainie) Brown, a St. Joseph graduate and parishioner at Our Lady of the Lake, and Aubrey An Mei Little. Alexandria Jane Ficarro was the salutatorian.

At the Baccalaureate Mass, celebrated on Saturday, May 19, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Owen Christopher

Patrick McGrath and Savannah Rhea Smith, received the Bishop Kmiec Award, the highest honor given to a graduating JP II senior each year. Owen McGrath, of Bowling Green, Kentucky, is a graduate of St. Joseph School in Bowling Green and a parishioner at Holy Spirit Catholic Church there, and Savannah Smith is a graduate of St. Joseph School in Madison and a parishioner at the Cathedral.

The 129 students in the Class of 2018 have been accepted to 119 colleges and universities and will be attending 43

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# SENIORS SAY FAREWELL TO JP II

One of the most treasured traditions at Pope John Paul II High School is the annual Senior Walk, when the graduating class takes a last stroll through the halls of the school saying goodbye to teachers and classmates. Below are photos from this year's Senior Walk.



## Important dates for new school year

The 2018-19 school year is about to begin. Some of the important dates leading up to the start of the year include:

- July 26, Diocesan New Faculty In-service.
- July 26-27, New Faculty In-service at JP II.
- July 30, Registration.
- July 31-Aug. 1, Faculty/Staff In-service.
- Aug. 2-3, New Student Retreat.
- Aug. 3, Faculty/Staff Administrative Day.
- Aug. 6, First Day of School.
- Sept. 3, School closed for Labor Day.
- Sept. 4, End of the First Mid-Quarter.
- Sept. 24, Diocesan In-service (no school for students).
- Oct. 5, End of First Quarter.

# ALL HAIL THE CLASS OF 2018

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different schools in 15 states. They have been offered hundreds of scholarships totaling just over \$20 million during their college careers.

At JPII's graduation ceremony, Dr. Therese Williams, retiring superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Nashville, was the

inaugural recipient of the "Friend of Pope John Paul II High School Award" in recognition of her years of service to Catholic education in the diocese.

English teacher Josh Mauthe was the featured speaker at the graduation ceremonies.



Class Co-Valedictorian Aubrey An Mei Little, left photo, Salutatorian Alexandria Jane Ficarro, left, and Co-Valedictorian McCain (Cainie) Brown address their classmates during the ceremonies. English teacher Josh Mauthe was the featured speaker.



The recipients of this year's Bishop Kmiec Awards, the top honor given to a JPII graduating senior, were Savannah Smith, left, and Owen McGrath, Center. They were honored during the Baccalaureate Mass at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville on Saturday, May 19. In the photo at right, Ryan Duffin, left, and Lille McNatt, celebrate after the graduation ceremonies. Duffin led her classmates in moving their tassels after they received their diplomas.

## GOLDEN TATE COMES HOME TO SUPPORT TATE SCHOLARS

Golden Tate, a star wide receiver for the NFL's Detroit Lions and a 2007 graduate of Pope John Paul II High School, returned to his alma mater June 8 and 9 to host the third annual Tate Scholars Dinner and Tate Athletic Skills Camp for elementary school-age girls and boys.

"I'm excited to be back at JPII. These couple of days represent one of my favorite weekends of the year . . . coming back to the school that helped make me the man I am today," Mr. Tate said during a press conference before the dinner on Friday, June 8, while holding his 4-month-old daughter Londyn.

Tate brought along several of his current and former teammates to the dinner and clinic, including: Steven Longa, a linebacker for the Lions; Jimmy Clausen, Tate's quarterback at Notre Dame; former Tennessee Titan and current Detroit Lions quarterback Matt Cassel; and Mark Mariani, a former Pro-Bowl kick returner for the Tennessee Titans and the keynote speaker for the dinner. Others on hand for the dinner were Jim Arnold, a former star punter for Vanderbilt University and the Lions; former Vanderbilt women's basketball star and St. Matthew School physical education teacher Libby Crow; and several of Mr. Tate's teammates from his high school days at JPII, including his brother Wesley Tate, Jay Wilson and Bobby Kotsadine.

Mr. Mariani talked of his journey from a walk-on at the University of Montana to becoming an NFL Pro-Bowler with the Titans. "I made a commitment to myself to attack every day with focus, with passion, with excitement," Mr. Mariani said. His motto was "Win the day," he said. "There is a 24-hour scorecard. Did I get better today?"

Mr. Mariani worked himself up from a walk-on playing on special teams to become one of the team's best receivers. He ultimately was drafted by the Titans and he again worked his way from the bottom of the depth chart to earning a spot in the Pro Bowl as a kick returner.

"Whatever your dreams are, big or small, it takes time, it takes commitment," Mr. Mariani told the crowd attending the dinner, including members of the JPII football team. "Nothing is given to you in life. There are going to be setbacks." But, he added. "You never know what you can accomplish if you believe in yourself."

The funds raised at the dinner support the Tate Scholars program, which provides need-based financial aid to JPII students. This year's Tate Scholars include: sophomore Hugh Gebhardt, son of Sherry Gebhardt and Kent Gebhardt; junior Brendan Keaton, son of Matthew and Marquenta Keaton; sophomore Antwan Roberts, son of Antwan Roberts and Alondra Woodard; sophomore Keonna Chumbley, daughter of Stacy Davis; sophomore Kaelyn Bullard, daughter of Dwayne and Angie Bullard; and sophomore Matthew Shipley, son of Darren and Mary Shipley.

The presenting sponsors for this year's Golden Tate Scholars Dinner were Kevin and Kathy McNatt, whose daughter Lille graduated from JPII this spring. "We still want to be connected to the school," Mrs. McNatt said. "Our daughter Lille had such a great high school experience at JPII. We just thought it was very important that kids who may not have the



JPII grad and NFL star Golden Tate poses with this year's Tate Scholars: (front row, L-R) Kaelyn Bullard, Brendan Keaton, Hugh Gebhardt; (back row) Antwan Roberts and Keonna Chumbley. Not pictured is Matthew Shipley.

financial means be given that opportunity?"

The dinner "was fantastic. It was so positive," Mrs. McNatt said. Her family's support of the Tate Scholars program is "a great way to be impactful in kids' lives . . . and stay connected to the JPII community throughout the coming years," she said.

Other sponsors of the dinner included: Miracle Ford and the Jim Galvin family; Saint Thomas Medical Partners and Drs. Mark and Jennifer Uhl; Smile Solutions and the Dr. Joe and Kim Fox family; Barber Cabinet Co. and the Kevin and Michelle Barber family; Doug and JJ Ebelhar; Marcia and Tom McCarthy; and Clark and Carolyn Baker.

On Saturday morning, hundreds of girls and boys swarmed across the JPII football field for the Golden Tate Athletic Skills Clinic, sponsored by BodyArmor and USA Football. JPII Football Coach Justin Geisinger, his staff and players shepherded the campers through all the drills.

The dinner was "a huge success," said Dean of Advancement and Admissions Michelle Barber. "Mark Mariani's message was spot on. It was a good reminder for all of us to make the most of every day, whether you're a student athlete or not."

The dinner and camp continue to grow, Mrs. Barber said. "We just can't underestimate the impact of Golden's efforts. The ripples of positivity generated by Golden's support of students in need is far reaching. His personal and professional mission touches people who may or may not have a particular interest in football or even in sports in general but they support what Golden is all about, his core values. I think that's why so many people are drawn to Golden, and we at JPII couldn't be more proud.

"It's not only exciting to see an alum have success but even more so when that person remembers where he came from, and attributes much of his formation to his high school alma mater, his town, and his family," Mrs. Barber said.

## ATHLETES SIGN TO CONTINUE CAREERS IN COLLEGE

During the spring, seven more members of the Pope John Paul II High School Class of 2018 signed to participate in college athletics.

■ Benny Ennis signed to play baseball for the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee. Sewanee is an NCAA Division III program that competes in the Southern Athletic Association.

■ Hannah Peach signed to play soccer at Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Florida. Ave Maria competes as a NAIA school in the Sun Conference.

■ Nicholas Zanger signed to play soccer for Elmira College in Elmira, New York. Zanger was a three-year starter at center back for the JPII soccer team and a defensive back, wide receiver and kicker for the Knights' football team. Elmira is an NCAA Division III program that competes the Empire 8 Athletic Conference.

■ Kameron Slaughter signed to play lacrosse at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Slaughter plans to major in chemical engineering and has been awarded a full academic honors scholarship. UAH is an NCAA Division II program that competes in the Great Lakes Valley Conference in lacrosse.

■ Ed Agholor signed to play football at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, an NCAA Division III program that competes in the

Southern Athletic Association and has won 16 conference titles and made two NCAA playoff appearances in its history. A two-year starter at offensive tackle for JPII, Agholor was recruited as an offensive lineman. During his high school career, he was named All-Region for the Division II-AA Middle/East Region, and first team All-Summer County.

■ Saydi Arms accepted an athletic scholarship from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to be a member of the university dance team. The dance team performs at university events and competes in the UDA College Dance Team Nationals in Orlando, Florida, every year. Arms competed with the dance team from Spotlite Dance Studio in Murfreesboro, winning a national championship with the team and being named Miss Dance America.

■ Chelsea Espeleta accepted a scholarship offer to be a member of the competitive dance team at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Espeleta was a three-year member of the JPII Knight Stars Dance Team and served as co-captain her senior year.



Benny Ennis



Hannah Peach



Nicholas Zanger



Kameron Slaughter



Ed Agholor



Saydi Arms



Chelsea Espeleta

## JPII SINGERS SHINE AT MTVA FESTIVAL

Members of the JPII Singers participated in the MTVA Solo and Ensemble festival in Spring Hill on Saturday, May 5. The a cappella ensemble, Voices uKnighted, sang a Pentatonix cover as well as an original song composed by JPII student Josh Humphries. The ensemble was awarded with a Superior rating, the highest rating given.

In addition to the ensemble, six soloists were adjudicated on a prepared solo they each worked on over the several months in their voice lessons. Of the six, five received Superior ratings and one received an Excellent rating!

"I am incredibly proud of their commitment, work ethic, and overall passion for making music," said Mike O'Neill, Director of Choirs and Fine Arts Department Chair. "These young musicians continue improving their craft and this event was another affirmation we are doing great things at JPII!"

Among the students participating were: Brooke Hayes, Jayna Edwards, Megan McCormick, Russell Fernandez-Selles, Clare Steiner, Annabelle Callister, Catherine Bender, Chris Muller, JP Quiampang, Josh Humphries, Miles Robinson, Jenna Rose Ledford and Felicity Grant.

## NAHS INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS

Twenty-three students at JPII High School were inducted earlier this year as the newest members of the National Arts Honor Society chapter at the school. The new members are: Gabrielle Bolyard, Paul Buckett, Tiegan Clausen, Anna Cole, Florian Echelmeyer, Sean Kerzel, Luke Kroeger, Canace Li, Lena McCaslin, Kennedy McGee, Max Modrall, Cody Phillips, Mia Roettger, Samuel Ruiz-Ballard, Katherine Rutenbur, Lindsey Semrow, Patrick Singer, Cade Smith, Maxwell Stansell, Carissa Surber, Lucy Szocska, Luke Wiley and Dylan Wood.

## RUCKER EARNS HONORS FOR BASEBALL EXPLOITS

Awards and honors have continued to pile up for Jake Rucker, who just finished his senior year at Pope John Paul II High School where he was a star on the baseball diamond.

Rucker was named to the Tennessee Sports Writers Association All-State Baseball Team for Division II schools. Earlier this spring he was a finalist for the Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association Mr. Baseball Award for Division II-AA.

The other two finalists were John Bolton of Memphis University School and the ultimate winner of the award Connor Shamblin of Briarcrest Christian School in Memphis.

Rucker also was named Sumner County "Player of the Year" by Main Street Media of Tennessee. He was a four-year starter for the baseball team at JP II, playing primarily infield and pitcher. During his senior year, when



Jake Rucker

he was the Knights' shortstop and closer. He finished the season with a .346 batting average, a .425 on-base percentage, .543 slugging percentage, .968 on-base plus slugging, 44 hits, 13 doubles, 3 triples, 2 home runs, 29 runs batted in, 32 runs and 26 stolen bases.

Joining him on the All Sumner County first team was senior catcher Benny Ennis with a .304 batting average, .422 on-base percentage, .402 slugging percentage, 34 hits, one home run, 20 runs batted in, 18 runs and 11 stolen bases.

Pitcher Dominic Pianto was named to the All-Sumner County Second Team, with a 6-3 record, one save, 61 innings pitched, 65 strikeouts, a 3.90 earned run average and 1.50 walks and hits per inning pitched.

Rucker, who has accepted a scholarship to play college baseball at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, first came to prominence as a key member of the Goodlettsville Little League All-Star team that won the U.S. Championship at Williamsport, Pennsylvania. He is the son of Jill and Andy Rucker.

## ARTS UKNIGHTED SHOWCASES STUDENTS' TALENTS

All the fine arts programs at Pope John Paul II High School, including singers, musicians, actors, painters and sculptors, were on display for the community this spring during the Arts uKnighited event.

"It's basically a celebration of all things fine arts at JP II," said Mike O'Neill, the fine arts department chair and the director of choirs at JP II. The event, held on Sunday, April 29, showcased some of the many talents of JP II students, he said.

The day included performances by all of JP II's choirs: the Beginning Choir, Intermediate Choir, the all-girl Bella Voce choir, the mixed ensemble Chamber Choir, and the a cappella group Voices uKnighited.

Contributing to the musical showcase were performances by the Symphonic Band, the Percussion Ensemble and the rock band Center Point Indecision, which is a class offered at JP II.

The Advanced Acting class performed the play "The Bible in 30 Minutes or Less" in the school's Common Area.

And in the Library was an exhibit of the visual arts. The pieces were judged by outside adjudicators and the award winners were announced during the event, he added.

The Best in Show Award was presented to Maxwell Stansell for his sculpture "Tree III." Other winners included:

- Painting: Best Painting, Mia Roettger; honorable mentions for Reilly Aldrich, Hanna Tan, Danielle Rosselli and Dylan Wood.
- Printmaking: Best Print, Dalton Cantrell; honorable mentions for

Virginia Campbell, Dylan Wood and Cuinn Owens.

- Drawing: Best Drawing, Weston Johnson; honorable mentions for Mia Roettger, Hao Yi and Ian Leonard.

- Mixed Media: Best Mixed Media, Alex Delmotte; honorable mentions for Cainie Brown, Chris Wells and Alison Gerstner.

- Photo: Best Photo, Madison Daniel; honorable mentions, Kyle Winter, Jake Rucker, Patrick Singer and Canace Li.

- Sculpture: Best Sculpture, Maxwell Stansell; honorable mentions, Lindsey Semrow and Tiegan Clausen.

- Superlatives: Best Use of Light, Danielle Rosselli; Most Compelling, Danielle Rosselli, Most Haunting, Kyle Anthony; Most Dangerous, Kyle Anthony; "There's just something about this one", Joe Kniery; Future Graphic Designer, Dylan Wood.

For the children who attended, there was canvas painting and face painting. Throughout the day, the Fine Arts Booster (FAB) Club provided a face painting booth and refreshments for all guests.

It was more than just the fine arts students who were involved in the event, Mr. O'Neill said. Organizers called on the Innov8 marketing class to help spread the word about Arts uKnighited, he said.

Since, it's opening, the arts have been an important part of JP II's curriculum. Fine arts is one of the four pillars at JP II, including: academics, athletics and faith. Emphasis on the arts is part of the renaissance model that has been part of the school's mission since its inception.

## CLASS OF 2018 COLLEGE CHOICES STRETCH ACROSS THE U.S.

Members of the Pope John Paul II High School Class of 2018 were accepted to colleges and universities from the East Coast to the West Coast and everywhere in between. They will be attending 43 schools in the fall, including Ivy League schools, top state universities, leading private schools, and small liberal arts schools. The largest contingent of JPII grads, 23, will attend the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and another 16 will be studying at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Below is a list of colleges and universities that accepted members of the Class of 2018, with the schools where the students will be enrolling in bold.

Alderson-Broadus College, American University, Appalachian State University, Arcadia University, Auburn University, Augustana College, **Austin Peay State University**, **Ave Maria University**, **Baylor University**, **Bellarmino University**, **Belmont-Abbey College**, **Belmont University**, Benedictine College, **Berry College**, **Birmingham-Southern College**, Boston University, **Brescia University**, Butler University, **Campbellsville University**, Case Western Reserve University, **Centre College**, Christian Brothers University, Clarkson University, Clemson University, **Coastal Carolina University**, College of the Holy Cross, College of William and Mary, **Columbia University**, DePaul University, Duke University.

**East Tennessee State University**, Eckerd College, **Elmira College**, Emerson College, Emory University, Florida International University, Florida State University, Fordham University, **Furman University**, Georgia Institute of Technology, Goucher College, Hanover College, Hendrix College, **High Point University**, Indiana University at Bloomington, Johns Hopkins College, Johnson State College (Northern Vermont University), Lincoln Memorial University, **Lipscomb University**, Louisiana State University, Loyola University

Chicago, Loyola University of New Orleans, Lynn University.

Mercyhurst University, Miami University Oxford, **Middle Tennessee State University**, Millsaps College, **Mississippi State University**, Missouri Valley College, Murray State University, **New York University**, **Northern Kentucky University**, Oxford College of Emory University, Pepperdine University, Regis University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Rhodes College, Roanoke College.

Saint Joseph's University, **Saint Louis University**, Salve Regina University, **Samford University**, Savannah College of Art and Design, Seton Hall University, **Sewanee: The University of the South**, Skidmore College, **Southern Illinois University Carbondale**, Spring Hill College, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, **Tennessee State University**, **Tennessee Technological University**, Texas A&M University, Texas Christian University, **The University of Alabama**, **The University of Alabama in Huntsville**, The University of Iowa, The University of Memphis, Transylvania University, Trevecca Nazarene University, Trinity College, Trinity University, **Tusculum College**, University of Arkansas, University of Colorado at Boulder, **University of Dayton**, University of Denver, University of Evansville, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, University of Miami, **University of Mississippi**, University of Redlands, University of Richmond, **University of South Carolina**, **University of Tennessee at Chattanooga**, **University of Tennessee at Knoxville**, University of Tennessee at Martin, University of the Cumberland, University of the Pacific, **University of Wisconsin at Madison**, **Vanderbilt University**, Villanova University, Virginia Tech, **Volunteer State Community College**, Washington and Jefferson College, Washington and Lee University, Washington University in St. Louis, **Western Kentucky University**, Wofford College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, **Xavier University**, **Yale University**.

## THREE JPII STUDENTS RECEIVE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Since its founding in 2002, part of the mission of Pope John Paul II High School, open to students of all faith traditions, has been to inspire students to answer a call to a deeper union with God. Rooted in the Catholic faith, the school calls students to excellence and invites them to study and live out their faith in service to the world beyond themselves.

This year, three students followed that call into communion with the Catholic Church. On April 12, Ryan Duffin, Chloe Harper and Dulin Kelly received the Sacrament of Confirmation during an all-school Mass by Nashville Bishop J. Mark Spalding, who was visiting the school for the day.

Standing with them as they were anointed by Bishop Spalding were their sponsors: Pamela Strobel, a teacher, for Ryan Duffin; Karina Swauger, a student, for Chloe Harper, and JPII student Chelsea Espeleta for Dulin Kelly.



Bishop J. Mark Spalding of Nashville confirmed three JPII students this spring: from left, Chloe Harper, Dulin Kelly and Ryan Duffin.



The recipients of this year's Harvest Awards were, from left, Patrick Connolly, Mark Crowley, Josh Mauthe, Betty Mayberry, Amanda Peper, Dr. Brad Peper, Paul Saboe, Jennifer Smith and Ellie Walsh.

# FACULTY AND STAFF HONORED WITH HARVEST AWARDS

JPII's annual Harvest Award Assembly was held May 10, recognizing the faculty and staff members who have demonstrated their commitment to advancing the mission of the school. The awards are voted on by students, faculty and staff members and approved by the administration.

This year's winners of the Excellence In Teaching Awards were: Mr. Patrick Connolly, Mr. Mark Crowley, Mr. Josh Mauthe and Mrs. Jennifer Smith, all of the English Department; Mrs. Betty Mayberry and Mrs. Amanda Peper, of the Math Department; Dr. Brad Peper of the Theology Department; Mr. Paul Saboe and Ms. Ellie Walsh, of the

History Department.

The award for Most Inspirational Teacher was given to Mrs. Kim Childress of the Math Department. The Most Inspirational Coach award went to Mr. Chris Parker, the school's baseball coach. And the Headmaster's Award was given to the JPII bus driving staff: Mr. Mike Carter, Mrs. Dot Johns, Mrs. Kathy Lackey, Mr. Brad Dorr, Mr. Bob Sneed, Mr. Phil Sneed and Mr. James Estes.

Congratulations to all of these deserving faculty and staff members! Thank you for your continued service to our community.



Headmaster's Award winners, left photo, include Mike Carter, Dot Johns, Kathy Lackey, Brad Dorr, Bob Sneed, Phil Sneed and James Estes. Most Inspirational Teacher was Kim Childress and Most Inspirational Coach was Chris Parker.