

\$64,876,332

and counting in

SCHOLARSHIPS!

ENLIGHTEN · ENGAGE · EMPOWER

HIGH SCHOOL	# OF STUDENTS	# OF SCHOLARSHIPS	COLLECTIVE TOTALS
Center Point	53	147	\$3,118,955
Clay-Chalkville	83	226	\$9,914,660
Corner	76	147	\$1,989,240
Fultondale	8	21	\$1,185,002
Gardendale	97	269	\$4,715,368
Hueytown	50	121	\$2,536,275
McAdory	75	145	\$4,575,648
Minor	71	169	\$4,483,644
Mortimer Jordan	76	213	\$4,632,595
Oak Grove	52	147	\$3,403,428
Pinson Valley	55	85	\$3,296,152
Pleasant Grove	26	54	\$896,645
Shades Valley	83	200	\$8,145,848
JCIB	75	236	\$11,982,872
TOTALS	804	1967	\$64,876,332



SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

FIND OUT THE STORIES OF THESE JEFCEOED SENIORS

ROBERT SELLERS Pleasant Grove High School

Robert Sellers is preacher man's son, a barrel-chested offensive line captain of his football team, a member of the National Honorary Society, and is chaplain of his SGA, Student Government Association. His Dad taught him servant-leadership and showed him how to seek ways to express ministry in creative ways. Today Robert serves his church in many ways. His wide work service involves a step ministry for step siblings in a marriage, a mime ministry, and sign language ministry as well as being a choir member.

His leadership on the field and off the field can be summed up in three comments. Don't be a boss. Instead from behind and don't ever use a soapbox. Stay down to earth to accomplish and achieve. Be a vocal leaders, using words effectively, and express opinions and listen and sometimes a scream in athletics is alright. Believe in a Supreme Being and seek His guidance often.

He is vice president of Kappa League, a youth league development program involving the top juniors and seniors in Jefferson, Shelby, and Cullman counties. They include intense activities with notable speakers to open one's eyes to what's happening and what needs attention in the community and state. He is active in Future Engineers of America, visits shut-ins, goes caroling at Christmas with his youth choir, and works with the Jimmie Hale Mission at Thanksgiving feeding the hungry.

Robert learned the value of balance in life from a busy Father who had to juggle family time, and always secured it in his schedule for his Dad a popular pastor had to be away from home so often from the demands of the responsibility that goes with being a preacher. But he always had made time for family because it was important. It is a skill that serves him well today in carving out time



for Robin, his 15-year-old sister who sees him as a popular role model and talks to him often about teen challenges.

The best advice he ever received was never let anyone tell you can't do something. "Whenever that happened to me, I took that advice, and it emboldened me, became a driving spirit to prove them wrong. I don't see ceilings and not to believe in them is a good feeling. My Mother keeps an instant supply of humility when needed with, "You used to look up to me, then equal to my eye level, and now you look down to my physical size, but I can always chop you down to my size because I am your Mother...and don't forget it."

If he had President Barak Obama's ear, he would say to him, "Anything is possible and thanks for showing the nation this through your presidency." He plans to be an electrical engineer with a double major in computer science. UAB and University of Alabama have both expressed interest with a \$12,000 renewable offer; Birmingham-Southern is wooing him with a \$100,000 four-year offer; Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York has offered \$9,000 per year renewable on grades, and Maryville College in Tennessee has offered a \$112,000 four-year invitation.

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EMILY SEARS Mortimer Jordan High School

Mortimer Jordan senior Emily Sears considers herself a “big huge nerd” because she loves studying all parts of the body, orthopedics, cardio, and in EMT classes there were all of these cool procedures she learned about. Emily has always been impressed with medicine, even as a little girl watching television and dreaming that she would be a surgeon.

How a month can change things! Sue Henry, a Mortimer Jordan High counselor came to Emily’s art class in March to share she had nominated Emily for a scholarship opportunity at Emory University in Atlanta. It was called the Jenkins Scholarship. Emily filled out the long application detailing the highlights of her life which included losing her Mom to cancer when she was 11 years old and a dad who was out of her life, and her beloved aunt’s legal guardianship of her and her brother Mark to keep the family together. From the seventh grade to now a senior, she has let sports medicine be her front and center love. It was her favorite class even though she is a stellar student in all academic subjects. Her aunt’s guardianship of her solved many challenges, giving that home environment in which children thrive. Her aunt’s husband, the beloved surrogate dad passed away 18 months ago so Emily has had more than her fair share of grief in such a young life.

Her passion for emergency medicine remains and today she is working on a basic EMT license which allows her to work during high school in her favorite subject, medicine. Her teacher Chris King provided through his connections for Emily to shadow an orthopedic practice and to observe some in-office procedures giving valuable experience and entrenching her in her dream. Today she knows that she wants to become a trauma surgeon.

Emory University was so impressed with Emily’s application that they sent her an airplane ticket, sent a car to the airport to pick her up, and gave the red carpet treatment through a junior student Alexis Kosiak from South Dakota to be her personal guide through this look/see orientation to college life at Emory.

She took classes, ate awesome food, met new people from all over the world and had this amazing experience at Emory that rocked her young world and galvanize that her dream. She learned that she had been awarded a full-ride with all expenses paid for four years to Emory University. This Jenkins scholarship includes a yearly \$66,000 stipend over four years which she intends to bank and save for med school and beyond. Her assistant principal, Catherine Shields, a graduate of Emory herself, said that she had never heard of such a



generous scholarship given by Emory and was proud of her alma mater for selecting Emily as a student.

In giving feet to her medical dream career, Emily believes this. “I have noticed throughout many encounters with different medical professionals that some of them have tunnel vision regarding patients. They forget that there is a person on the treatment or operating table and just see a body and focus on removing the ailment inside instead a body rather than saving someone’s father, brother, or friend’s life. I have realized that medicine is not just about science, it is more importantly about people. Knowing more about the diverse people we are treating will be a huge step for medicine, and I am excited to bring that to the table in the medical field.”

Another dream of Emily’s is to start a body-confidence group when she gets to Emory. She believes many teens and young adults struggle about accepting their own appearance and especially for younger boys and girls need to realize that they need no validation about how they look. A quote she wants to base her support group upon is, “Just be you and love yourself, no matter what that means, for you.”

On a personal side, Emily is a happy teen from Morris, Alabama who likes chicken and dumpling, thinks Hugh Jackman is terrific and her favorite movie is Les Miserables. Her favorite place to visit is Disney World, because “it gives me motivation to reach for my dreams.”

On her ideal real world change, Emily shares, “If Christians want to see a movement across the world, we have to truly show God’s love. That means loving and tolerating and everyone and their religion and choices in life. We must be there as a helping-hand and supporter of people who are lost from God’s light.”

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CALEB GENTRY Shades Valley JCIB

Three University presidents have offered Caleb Gentry their highest scholarship available, the Presidential Scholarship offering. Those offers come from UAB, Troy State University, and Montevallo University with all expenses covered. Purdue wants to give him a \$64,000 ride, DePauw in Indiana says they will give \$100,000 for his four years, and Loyola in New Orleans will provide a full ride of \$80,000 spread over four years.

But he has made his decision. His college home will be Tulane University and his expenses will be paid by the Dean's Honor Scholarship comprising full tuition and all fees paid, an offer worth \$200,000 over a four-year period, renewable dependent upon grades.

A soft spoken young man, Caleb comes across as a diplomat and a discerning math whiz. His athletic choice is cross country and he was on the math team for four years and attended mathematics camps during the three summers before his senior year. His leadership roles at school also included being vice president of The French Club and now is serving as president of the National Honor Society.

When asked about the qualities that make him a leader, Caleb says, "I think I am an agreeable fellow with a goal of consensus building and a keen ear for active listening. I think leaders do that. They take into account other ideas and perspectives and then make a decision. Leaders are not polarizing."

In looking at the world and its challenges, his teen perspective is that the strength of the United States is in its great influence on politics worldwide and whose decisions have far-reaching effects on the state of the world and its problems. "This country's greatest weakness and something we need to work on is the inability to see the point of view of



others, their way with a totally new perspective. In 10 years he wants to be with a law firm after finishing Tulane's Law School. To achieve that goal, his undergraduate degree will be in political economy. He also would like a double major, math and cognitive studies showing a relationship between the brain and behavior on economics.

An ideal date for him would be attending a film festival and watching films all day and the date would need to be like him: agreeable, quiet, no bickering at all, and be able to get along well with others.

The greatest influence on his life was his sister and her JCIB schooling, skills, and work ethic. She is studying to be a French teacher. She and her other younger brother all went to Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School. "My family has been in this rigor much longer than most families and I had the benefit of their huge support."

When asked if God, gold, and glory determine most of our human decisions, Caleb said, "There is some truth is that. Actions from those influences help determine our morality and well being, wealth stability, and glory could be about grades, bettering yourself and developing self-confidence.

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KAYLA WHEELER Shades Valley High

She is the third Gates Millenium Scholar (GMS) from Shades Valley High and the tenth one from JefCoEd Schools. She is Kayla Wheeler with a 4.2 GPA, president of her SGA, Student Government Association, and a member of her school's National Honorary Society a host of memberships in the national honor societies for specialty areas, such as science, music, and thespians. With a scholarship worth \$500,000 and a guarantee of post graduate work through a PH.D. level, she knows something about leadership and has a steady eye on her goal of wanting to have a law practice serving the entertainment world and live in California. But, first of all she is headed for Howard University probably majoring in liberal arts, before setting off for USC, University of Southern California and her goal of three years of law school.

"My Mother, Counselor Natalie Adkinson, and former GMS Will Fuller were her cheerleaders through the tedious application process. I almost thought this mountain was too big for me to climb, but with their help, I survived. There are 53,000 applications each year and 1,000 are selected from across the nation

She is an older soul in a most youthful body and already sings professionally with a band, has her own non-profit, and is anything but a super bookworm which could be her image from all of her accomplishments.

"I learned early on about time management skills and having a healthy balance of family, academics, church, and outside activities," Kayla says. She has two regular jobs, sings with a band on special occasions, and was the Headliner for the Magic City Classic last October.

Last summer, she started Kings and Queens for elementary students through middle school in the Adamsville and Forestdale area with her church as a non-profit organization.

"We wanted to involve the students in the arts and STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math and expand their world for education to avoid dropouts and to rock their world with fresh opportunities that they may not know about."

"We have made homemade ice cream together. We have math workshops for them and we celebrated Harlem Renaissance with songs and skits and food in that time



period. There are about 20 mentors and 50 students and this project is year round. We are having school tours to recruit more mentees. My mentee is Lakeria and I stay with her closely about grades and she talks with me if she has family challenges."

Three qualities she deems essential for leaders are honesty, being a leader and not a BOSS, and respect. "It is not what you say but how." Best advice she ever got was from her Mother who said birds of a feather flock together. Choose peers who have your values and are like-minded with you.

If she had President Obama's ear she would say to him, "Thanks for opening our eyes on the LGBT Community and unmasking our eyes to give them a voice and freedom to live a full life."

Her ideal date would be quality time with a person who was equally yoked and had the same values, beliefs, motivation, dreams, goals, and aspirations. Kayla's quick tip for any teen is to stay away from any situation in which you were setting yourself up for trouble. For instance, being home alone without parents present.

She has already cut one CD of her original music entitled "This is Who I Am" which involves neo/soul/inspiration, and is currently on itunes. She is working on a second CD.

The University of Alabama, Auburn University, UAB, Spelman College in Atlanta, and Howard University have all expressed an interest in having her as a student and the value of her scholarship offers are \$587,600 before the Spelman offer is added.

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MADISON COLE Clay-Chalkville High

After meeting a college ROTC official in Miami at a softball tournament, Madison Cole was asked if she would consider the possibility of playing softball for West Point Academy. She received an application and after two and one-half years of an arduous nomination process including interviews, intense testing medically and physical endurance, she has reached her goal. She has her Congressional Appointment from Congressman Gary Palmer. The nomination was official in January 2016, and after her letter of assurance as an athlete, her congressional appointment came shortly afterwards March 2, 2016.

She has played softball since she was six years old and was on a club team for 10 years which took her all over the country. She appreciates the continuous support her family gave during those early years of travel, hardship, and significant financial obligation.

In high school softball she played short stop, third baseman, and pitcher. She is currently the captain of her team and a Student Ambassador. For Madison, softball is a great stress reliever, “it is how I focus and the game itself is like appreciating the Army and athletics at the same time for needed strategies and mental endurance.” When asked the qualities which made her successful in school and on the field, she said, “We must react to failure positively. I want better. After a four-hour practice and a determination to succeed and a work ethic coached into me and my team, I think it is important not to stop there. I want to help a teammate feed off of more positive support and help them push themselves as I push myself. To me that’s why teamwork is so important. We help one another. That’s the key.”

The best advice she ever received? “Life is not handed to you. You must go after what you want. When I applied to West Point, I knew it would be tough academically and physically. In fact, West Point is the Ivy League among the Military Academies and their intense physical training and my softball philosophy was that I



wanted to stand out.”

Madison was offered softball scholarships to Alabama, Samford University and to the University of Georgia, ranging from 25% to 65% for a full ride. Also expressing interest in her as a softball athlete were University of Massachusetts, Iowa, LSU, and Oklahoma State.

In the Army, she wants to pursue a double major, psychology and strategic thinking, learning how to think as the enemy thinks. She looks forward to overseas service either in the infantry or intelligence and learning to speak Arabic. Upon graduation from West Point, she will be a second lieutenant, but wants to be a captain in 10 years and she also wants a family. Eventually, she will own a permanent resident in Colorado, and not just a cabin.

Her ideal date would either be hiking or doing some indoor rock climbing or fishing for she loves the outdoors. That ideal date would have to love the outdoors and be as flexible as I am. Although she plays four sports well volleyball, basketball, softball, and soccer, volleyball and softball are her favorites.

She credits Corey Myers, an assistant softball coach from Auburn University for his workouts that were “intensely one on one and how hard a coach he was on me, but when I was discouraged, he pushed me to strive harder and not quit. He helped me become the Madison I am today.”

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

MEET CLAY-CHALKVILLE'S DANA JACOBSON, ALABAMA'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Clay-Chalkville High School teacher Dana Jacobson was named Alabama's 2016-17 Teacher of the Year May 11 in Montgomery. Dana has taught at Clay-Chalkville High School since 1999 and is known for creating new activities and avenues for engaging students and teaching important values.

"Teachers are visionaries who see that light at the end of the tunnel and find ways to help students get to that light." Jacobson said. "Some children require unanticipated methods or paths, but effective teachers persist. What differentiates the teacher from the student is the teacher's obligation to engage the student."

Michael Lee, her principal said, "On most days, Dana is the first teacher at the school and the last to leave. She does not stop. She is a true giver to students, student teachers, and colleagues." Ms. Jacobson is the fifth TOTY from Jefferson County Schools. Others have included Dr. Addie Rhodes Lee, 1988; Joann Webber Watts, 1989; Dr. Betsy Rogers, 2003 and named National Teacher of the Year; Roy Hudson, 2008; and now Ms. Jacobson.

Superintendent Craig Pouncey said, "She exemplifies all the qualities of a memorable teacher and is beloved of her students for her rigor and her special ways to engage them into learning."

