

CLASS OF 2017

Wharton Journal  Spectator
Wednesday, June 7, 2017



East Bernard
Express
Thursday, June 8, 2017



WHARTON HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 2017



PEADOSO PETER ALAMEDA III



ELSIE YAJAIRA ALVAREZ



AMANDA NUNEZ AYALA



CZARIUS DEMANTE BALFOUR



KASSANDRA RENE BALLEJO



BENJAMIN LAMON BAYLOR II



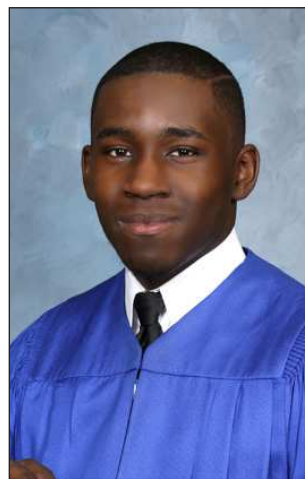
LAWRENCE E BERGLUND III



CAMERON TREVON BRANCH



ESTRELLA CALDERON FLORES



JEREMIAH DESHAWN CALHOUN-JACKSON



NEYDY CANO



ALYSSA MARIE CHAPA



GABRIEL RENE CORDERO



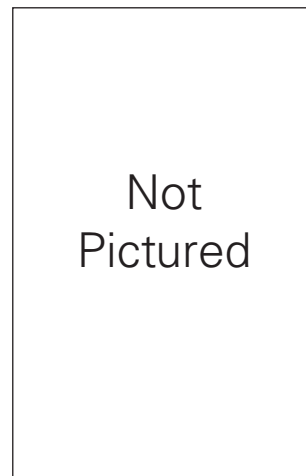
ROLDAN CORTES MARTINEZ



VIVIANN CRUZ



DESTINY SIERRA MARSHAE DENTON



DAYTON RODRIGO DINARTE VELASQUEZ



MARYSSA ROSE DURAN



DANIEL ESCOBAR



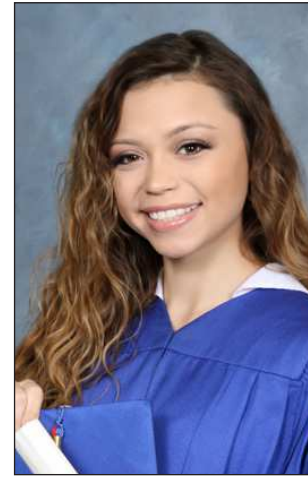
MIANASIJIA LICOLE FOSTON



FAITH MARIE GALVAN



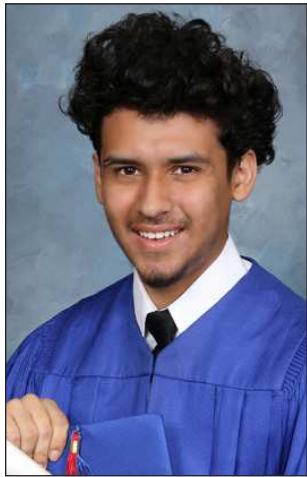
KAYLA LEE GAONA



KINDSEY LEANNE GAONA



DERRICK LARAY GARDNER JR



DAVID NORMAN GARZA



MICHAEL ANTHONY GARZA



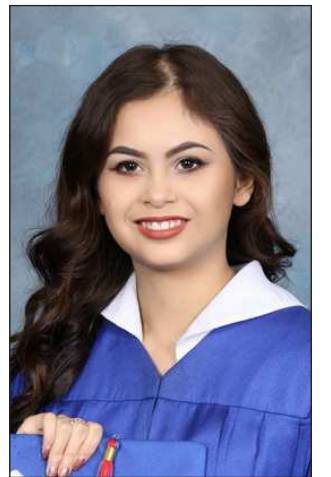
NICHOLAS WILLIAM GARZA



ANGEL MERCEDES GENTRY



DEVIN PAUL GOLLINGER



VERONICA SARAHI GOMEZ SAUCEDO



KOBI ALONZO GONZALES



TYNESHA MONIQUE GRICE



MORGAN ELIZABETH GROSSER



ROY CHARLES GROSSER



ERNESTO GUAJARDO RAMOS



URIEL GUAJARDO JR.



HAILEY REESE GUERRA



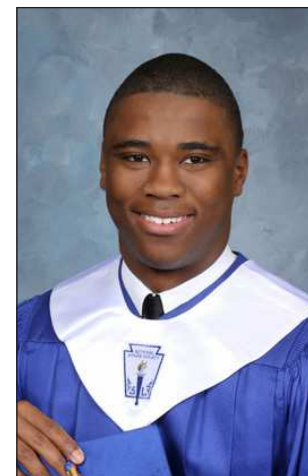
SELENA NICOLE GURECKY



MODESTY RENAE GUTIERREZ



SAMANTHA RENEE GUZMAN



JACOREY LEE HARRIS



DEZ'ARAE NICHOLE HARRISON



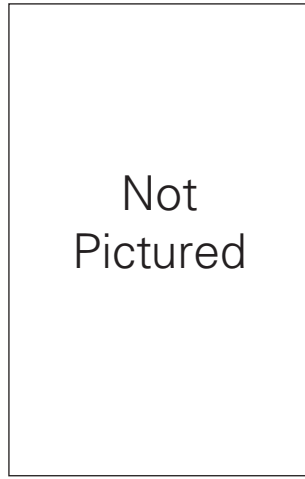
COOPER SAMUEL HAWK



JAYLON VERSHAAD HAYNES



DECLINE FORD HEARD V



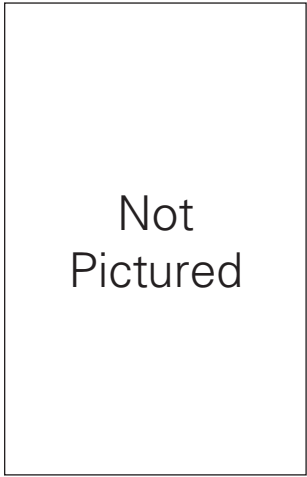
MARKESE DONTRELL HOLMES



ASHLYN BROOKE HUDDLESTON



KYRA NEIL HUGGINS



ESTANISLAO HUERTA



JAMES CALVIN IDLEBIRD III



KILEY FAITH JALUFKA



ROBERT ANTHONY JARVELA



TAYLOR RYAN JETELINA



PAULINO JIMENEZ OCHOA



LUIS DIEGO JIMENEZ PANIAGUA



COLTON WAYNE JOHANSEN



A'LEXUS SHANAE JONES



JUSTIN DUPREE JONES



AMOS JERWAYNE KEMPER JR



DESTINY CHARDE KNIGHT



TEAIRRA NICOLE KNIGHT



GRANT CHRISTOPHER KOENG



GRANT ROBERT KOLACNY



KYLE JOSEPH KOLACNY



LAUREN NYCOLE LATHON



TRACE ANTHONY LEE



DIANA LIZBETH LOPEZ MUNIZ



LUZ ELENA MACEDO



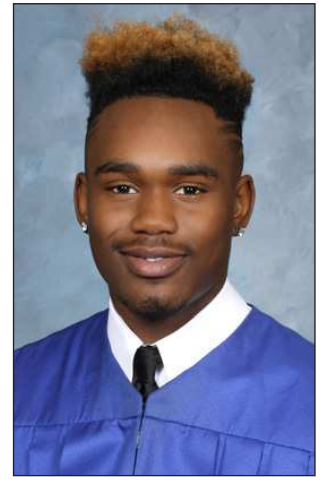
ERIK BRYANT MARTIN



MIRIAM ALEJANDRA MARTINEZ



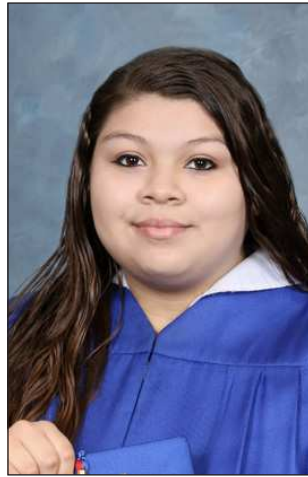
TARA KAYLYN MCDUGALL



ROBERT LLOYD MCGREW III



KAMI MENDOZA



CELESTINE MERCEDES MESA



ESLY MORALES



MARIA DEL ROSARIO MORENO



HALIE AMANDA MUNOZ



NICHOLAS JOHN NIEMEIER



JENNIFER LEE NUSPLIGER



ELIZABETH ANNE OLSON



CORY BERNARD OWENS



SELESTE RENEE PALACIOS



YAMILETH PEREZ PALMERIN



ARELI PALMERIN MARTINEZ



GESELLE PANIAGUA PANIAGUA



TIMESHA NE'SHAE PATTERSON



TIMOTHY NESHO PATTERSON JR



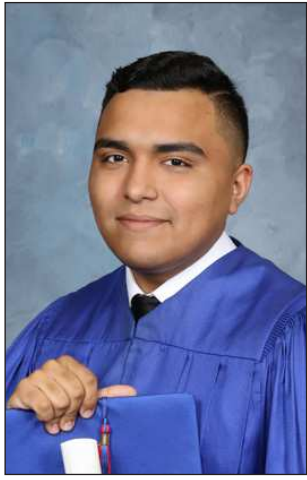
BRANDY LEE PHILLIPS



ELONZO PHILLIPS JR



SANTIAGO PLAZA-ARROYO



TIMOTHY RAY RAMIREZ JR.



SKYE MONET RAWLS



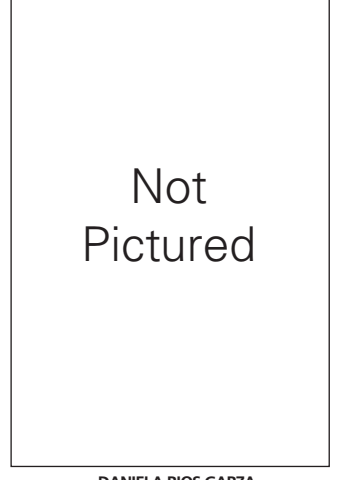
MICHAEL ANTHONY RESENDEZ



JESSICA RENEE REYNA



SERGIO RIOJAS JR.



DANIELA RIOS GARZA



ALYSSA RIVERA



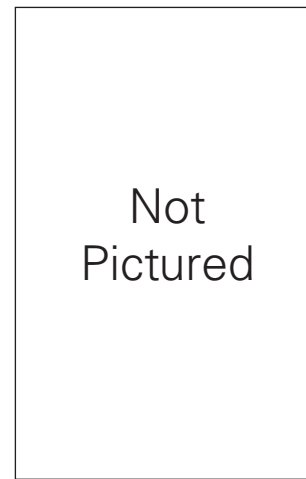
MONTIE NORA RODDY



DAVID RODRIGUEZ



VALERIA MONTSERRAT RODRIGUEZ



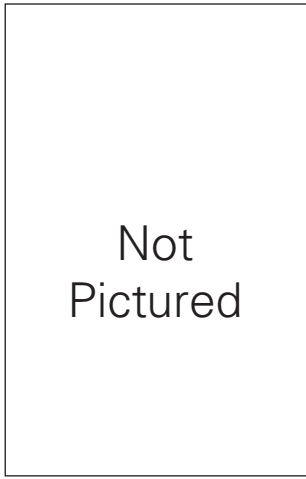
DOMINIQUE TYRELL ROY



KELLY RENEE SALYER



MONA ASHLEY SAMHOURI



EMILY VANESSA SANCHEZ



MADISYN DESIREE SCARLETT



SHARNIECE DESMONAE SCOTT



DA'IZA MONAE SHAVERS



CALISTA PAIGE SILVA-FORD



LEANGCHENG SOK



ANDREA MAR'CHEYLL SOLOMON



CHRISTIAN EMANUEL SPARKS



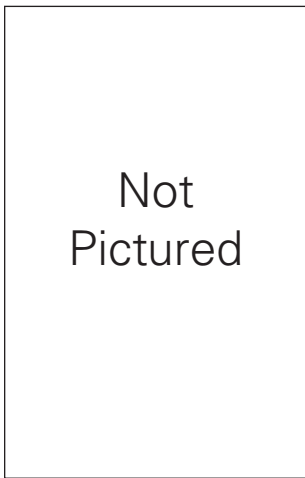
EVAN REECE STAVENA



MATTHEW RYAN STEPHENSON



SARAH ANN SVATEK



Not Pictured

JACOB MATTHEW TAYLOR



MYA HOPE GRACE TAYLOR



RODERICK VAN TEMPLE JR.



KATIE MARIE TOOMES



CHRISTOPHER CHASE TORRES



KEA'RA DALE TURNER



ANTHONY UGALDE JR



DANIELA VEGA JIMENEZ



ISABEL CRISTINA VILLANUEVA



DE'AMBUR GE NIQUE WARD



JOSHUA ROBERT WELLS



KENNETH DA'RON WHITE



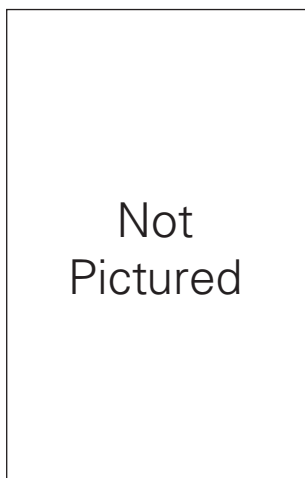
KIERRA JACQUELYN WILLIAMS



JIMMIE LEE WOODS III



REBECCA ELLEN WRENCH



Not Pictured

TIMOTHY SCOTT YOUNG



ALLISON MARIE ZEMANEK

Vision is Necessary

"The vision that you glorify in your mind, the ideal that you enthrone in your heart – this you will build your life by, and this you will become."

–James Allen

Alicia's Beauty Salon

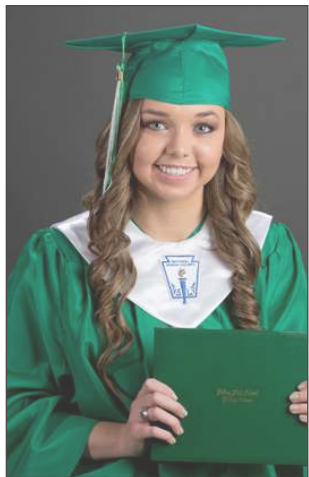
Congratulations to the Class of 2017!

Alicia Rodriguez
(979) 531-0678
 1501 N. Fulton St.
 Wharton, Texas 77488



BOLING HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 2017



JORDAN PAIGE SPACEK



AMBER MARIE WOYTEK



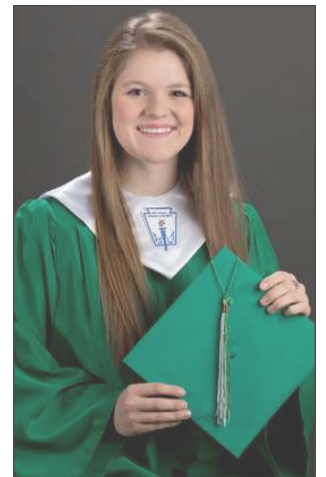
JASON MATTHEW GMITTER



MARCO ANTONIO JIMÉNEZ



CAROLINE MARIE GAVRANOVIC



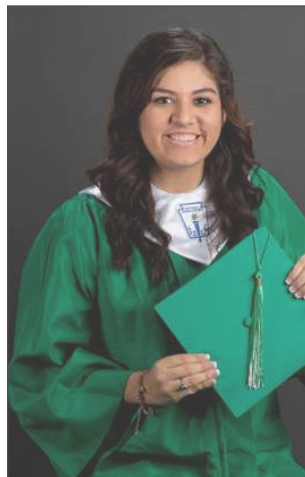
MEGAN ELISE CHUMCHAL



SERENA YSABELLE ANTONE



KIRBY ELIZABETH EVELO



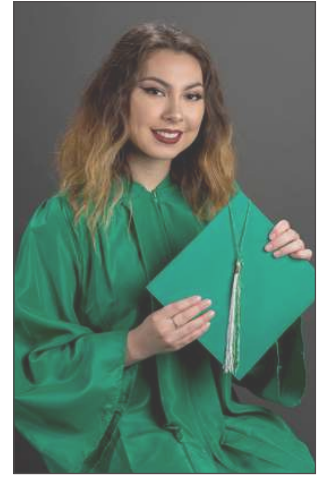
AUBREY ELISE ALCALA



JOSEPH LOUIS DELUNA



CRAIG DONOVAN ACOSTA



KIM ELIZABETH ADAMS



JUANITA ISABEL ANDRADE



BRIANA FAITH BENTANCUR



JAZMINE NICOLLE BERNAL



BURLIS KADE BICKHAM



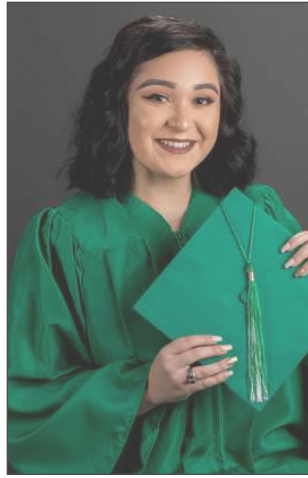
DOMINIC JOSEPH BOURQ



AMY MICHELLE BUSTAMANTE



BRIONNE KIERRA BUTLER



DANIELLE MARIE CASTILLO



KALLIE ROSE CLIFTON



JUAN FRANCISCO CONDE



ROBERT NOAH COVINGTON



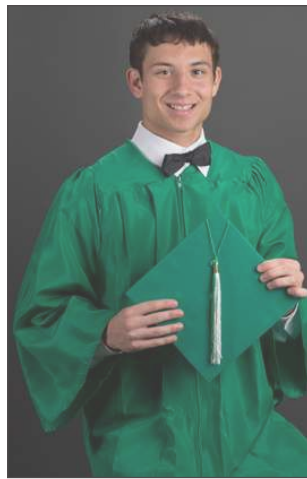
ALYX PAYTON CUNNINGHAM



KORY BROWN DIDEAR



DAVID JOHN FLORES, JR.



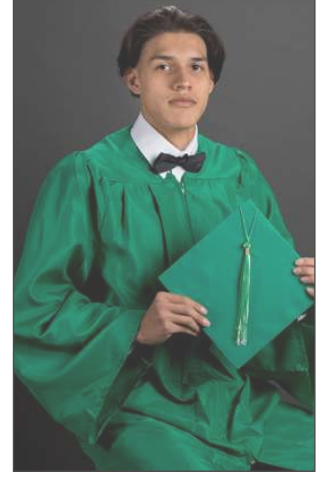
CHRISTOPHER RAYMOND FRENCH, JR.



JAYME LEE GARCIA, JR.



JEFFREY MILES GARCIA, JR.



RICHARD GARCIA



BRANDON LEE GARZA



KYMBERLYN HALEY GARZA



WILLIAM R. GENZER



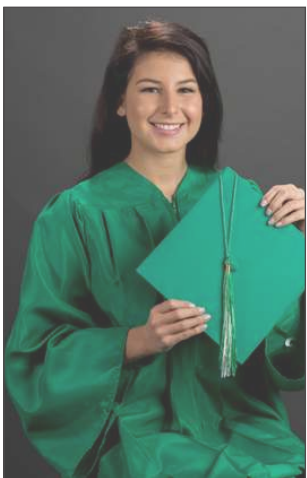
XAVIER RENE GONZALES



ELIJAH COLE GOODEN



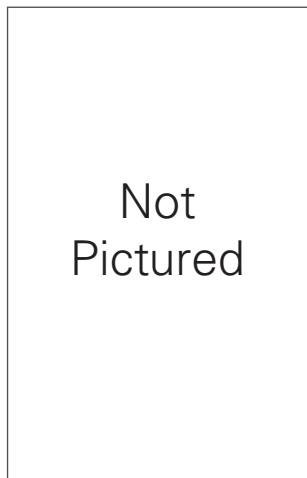
BRIANNA LEIGH GRAYS



ANNABELLE LEE HANKA



JACK DEAN HELMS

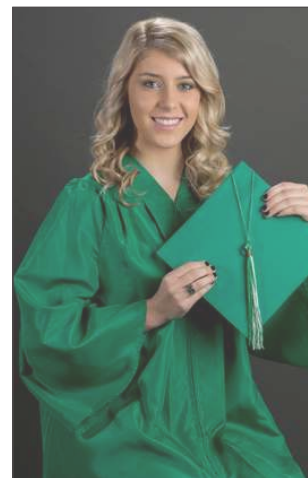


Not
Pictured

CELESTÉ ROSE HERNANDEZ



STEVEN SAMUEL HODGE



JASMINE DENISE JOHNSTON



MICHAEL LYNN JOYCE, JR.



Congrats Nick!

We are so Proud of You!

Love, Mom, Blake, Momo and Ashleyle

To a Wonderful Granddaughter

East Bernard High School
Class of 2017



Kaechele Ann Linder

Kaechele

will be Attending
Tarleton State University



Go Confidently in the Direction of Your Dreams.
Live the Life you've Imagined. So Proud of You!
Love, Granny

KGIBSON

PHOTOGRAPHY

979-533-1409

7497 FM 1301 WHARTON, TX
WWW.KGIBSONPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Boling High School Class of 2017



Danille "Daniskelly"
We are so Proud
♥ of You ♥

Love,
Grandpa & Grandma



Caps off to

There's a good reason graduation is called "commencement"—it's the beginning, not the end of another chapter in your life. Wherever your dreams take you, go with all your heart — but never forget the people and community that helped you get there.



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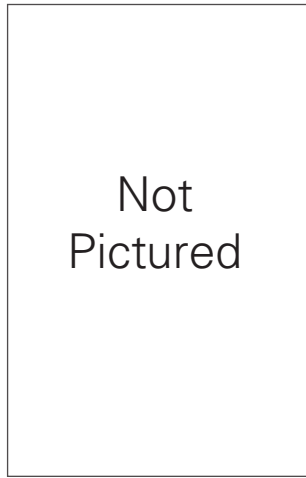


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PAITON NICOLE KALINA



TIANNA LANAE KING



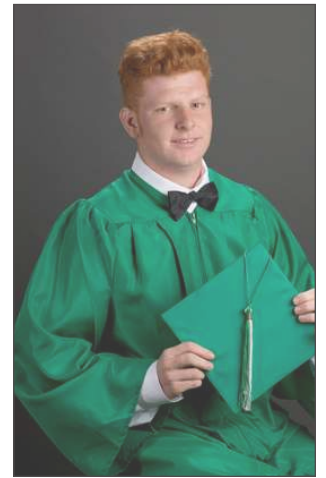
LARRY LEE KRUSHALL III



RONALD MIGUEL KRUSHALL, JR.



ZOE BELOU KRUSHALL



LANDON WAYNE LAMASCUS



ROBIN KC LLANAS



HUMBERTO LUNA



HENRY JACKSON MABLE IV



CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM
BROWN MACHART



MEGAN RUSSELL MALONE



BRADY LANE MEARS



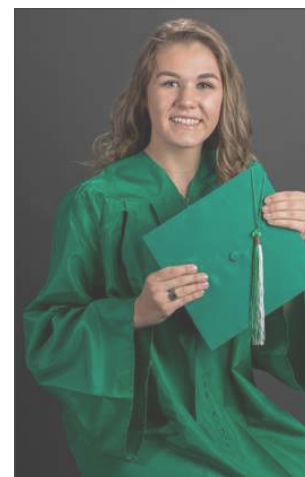
KAYLIN ANNE MEEK



DYLAN T. MILLER



GARRETT WAYNE MONROE



KASSIDY MAE MURPHY



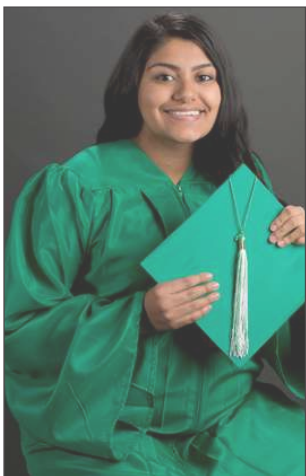
FRANCISCO XAVIER OLVERA



RAY ANTONIO OVALLE, JR.



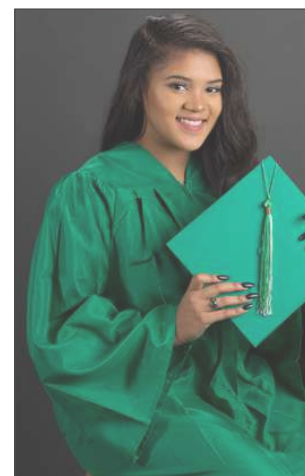
ANTONIO PEÑA III



KARINA PEREZ



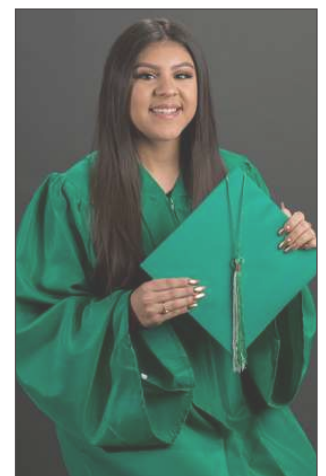
HALEY LYNN PLUNKETT



AALIYAH NICOLE PREJEAN



PABLO RAMIREZ, JR.



MELISA JANETTE RAMOS

Valedictorians



Uriel Guajardo Jr.
Wharton valedictorian

Uriel Guajardo Jr. is the son of Liliana and Uriel Guajardo. He is the 2017 Wharton High School valedictorian.

Uriel has exemplified excellence in many areas over the past four years including community and academic achievement.

He has maintained a 4.0 GPA his entire high school career and has been invited to attend the Awards of Excellence all four years.

He is a member of the National Honor Society, Anchor Club, Spanish Club and Robotics Club. He has also been a member of the WHS band for four years.

This year, he led his Computer Science team to a first place victory at the regional UIL meet. He also received a first place individual medal in computer science.

He received the state level Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award and was recently named Mr. WHS.

He plans to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he will major in Computer Science.



Valori Prazak
East Bernard valedictorian

Valori Prazak is this year's valedictorian at East Bernard High School. She is the daughter of Ronnie and Deanna Wilson, and Kenneth Vacek and Andrea Henry.

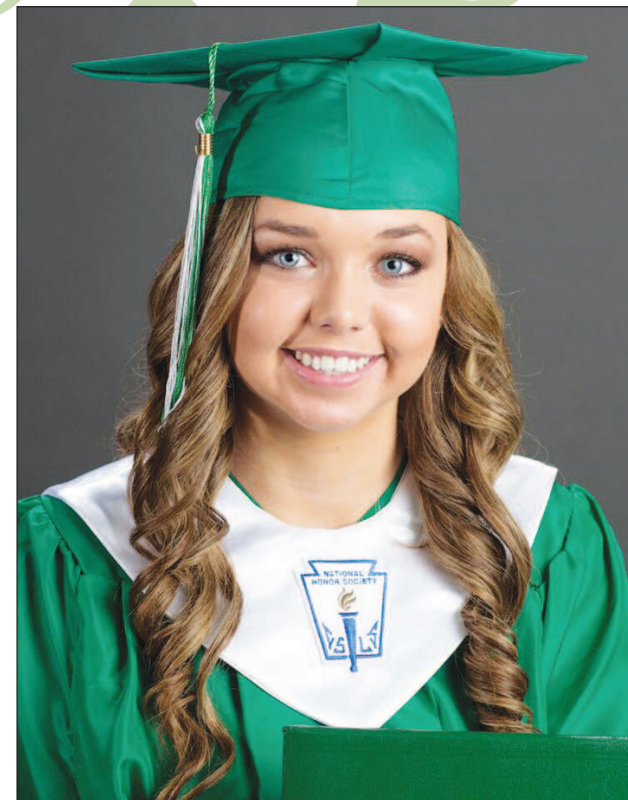
During her high school years, Valori has been a member of the National Honor Society (currently Treasurer), Future Business Leaders of America, Green Team, Spanish Club, Texas Association of Future Educators, UIL Ready Writing, and varsity tennis. This year, Valori advanced in tennis to compete at the Regional Tournament in College Station.

She has also donated many service hours to her church, school, and community. She has been a member of ACT NOW, a youth group at the Holy Cross Catholic Church in East Bernard.

She has participated with their pancake breakfast, made blankets for the Texas Childrens Hospital, helped with creating the Live Nativity during Christmas, Holy Cross Bazaar, and church choir. She has donated her time for the FBLA canned food drive and handmade blanket project.

Valori has also participated in the Green Team Electronic Drive, EB Fall Festival, and EB elementary AR Store. Valori has won several awards with her artistic talents. These include Best of Show for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo her junior and senior year, 2016 East Bernard Chamber of Commerce Christmas Ornament Design Winner, and first place for the Wharton Journal Spectator Bully Awareness Illustration. She has also been given the Tennis Heart Award for two consecutive years.

In the fall, Valori plans to attend Texas A&M in College Station, majoring in Visualization within the College of Architecture. She one day hopes to reach her goals of creating marvelous animated films with unique storylines to capture the attention and hearts of her audience.



Jordan Paige Spacek
Boling valedictorian

Jordan Paige Spacek is the valedictorian of the Boling High School Class of 2017.

Jordan is the daughter of Anthony and Leslie Spacek, granddaughter of Marcus and Eleanor Spacek, and sibling to Hayden and Madison Spacek. Jordan has been attending school in the Boling Independent School District since kindergarten.

She has been active in many clubs, activities, and events at Boling High School. She has participated as a Student Council member, National Honor Society member, FFA Floriculture team member, FCCLA member, FFA Chapter Conducting member, Fellowship of Christian Athletes member, Spanish Club member, FFA Agriculture Quiz team member, FFA Agriculture Advocacy team member, Varsity Tennis team member and Green-scapes member.

Also, FFA Ag mechanics team member, UIL team member, WCYF Junior Fair Board member, Library Club member and FFA officer.

Jordan also enjoys being active in not only her school, but also the community as well.

Throughout high school, she has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, Boling Community Trash Pick-ups, local nursing home visitations, Newgulf Elementary Science Academy, food drives, WCYF Special Goat Show, Read Across America, Relay for Life, WCYF Pre-School Day, Wharton County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom Day, sports concession stands, Boling Little League, and much more.

Jordan will be continuing her education at Texas A&M University majoring in Petroleum Engineering.

Salutatorians



Sarah Ann Svatek
Wharton salutatorian

Sarah Ann Svatek is the daughter of Barbara and Kenneth Svatek. She is the 2017 Wharton High School salutatorian.

Sarah has been actively involved in many school and community activities throughout her high school years.

She has continued to achieve Distinguished Honor Roll and has attended the Awards of Excellence for all four years of high school and currently serves as Treasurer of the National Honor Society.

In addition to her many academic achievements, she has shown her dedication to her school and community by her involvement in numerous clubs and organizations which include Power Set, Book Club, Anchor Club and GSA. She has also been an active member of the choir and theatre arts program, serving as a cast member in several musical productions and one act plays.

She plans to attend the University of Texas in the fall majoring in Astronomy.



Marissa Macha
East Bernard salutatorian

Marissa Macha, daughter of Mark and Rachel Macha, is East Bernard High School's salutatorian.

Marissa has been a member of East Bernard FFA for four years, participating in Senior Quiz, Nursery/Landscape, Wildlife, and Farm Business Management. She has her Lone Star degree and has been a member of Convention Media Staff at Texas FFA State Convention.

She has shown her heifer at Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and at Wharton County Youth Fair. Her accomplishments are as follows: 10th- Senior Quiz (4th place team at district), 11th- Senior Quiz (3rd place team at district, 4th individually), Nursery/Landscape (12th at area, 29th individually), 12th- Senior Quiz (4th place team at district, 9th individually), Nursery/Landscape (8th place team at area, 13th individually), Wildlife (9th at area, 25th individually), and Farm Business Management (17th place team at state, 45th individually). At Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, her heifer was 3rd in her class and 4th in her class.

She has been a member of the school newspaper, "The Brahma Beat," for three years, being editor-in-chief for two of them. She has won various awards, including Tops in Texas for two years in captions. She is also a member of the National Honor Society and Future Business Leaders of America.

Marissa has participated in UIL for four years doing a variety of events including Literary Criticism, Feature Writing, News Writing, Headline Writing, and Editorial Writing. She has been a regional qualifier in Feature Writing for three years and the 3A State Feature Writing winner this year. 9th-Literary Criticism (1st place team).

Also, 10th- Feature Writing (3rd at district, 5th place regionals) and Headline Writing (4th at district), 11th- Feature Writing (1st at district, 4th at regionals), News Writing (5th at district) and Editorial Writing, 12th- Feature Writing (2nd at district, 3rd at regionals, 1st in 3A at state) and News Writing (1st at district, regional qualifier).

She has taken part in various community service opportunities, including trick or treating for canned goods, painting the fence at the city park, working booths at Holy Cross Bazaar, shelving books and helping with children's programs at East Bernard library, serving plates at various fundraising events including the East Bernard Fair Fund Cookoff and the Kolache-Kolbase Festival, and teaching children at vacation bible school.

Marissa plans to attend Texas A&M University- Kingsville in the fall to study Range and Wildlife Management.



Amber Marie Woytek
Boling salutatorian

Amber Marie Woytek is the class of 2017 Boling High School salutatorian.

She is the daughter of Keith and Brenda Woytek of Wharton. Amber is also the granddaughter of Steve and Dorothy Bosch of Wharton and Joseph and Marietta Woytek of Hallettsville. Amber also has a younger sister, Emily Woytek, who will be a sophomore at Boling High School in the next coming school year.

Amber participated and was an active member in Student Council, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Library Club, National Honor Society, and in the Boling FFA, in which she has served in the positions of Student Advisor and Treasurer.

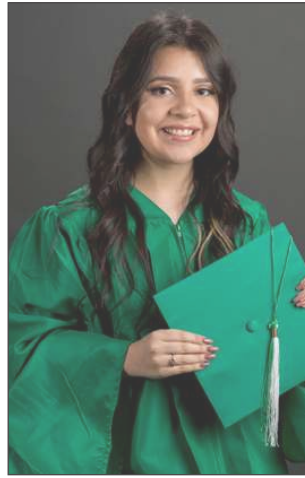
Amber will be attending Wharton County Junior College in the fall and has hopes to get accepted into the Dental Hygiene program and to later pursue a career as being a Pediatric Dental Hygienist.



JOSHUA ROBERT RANGEL



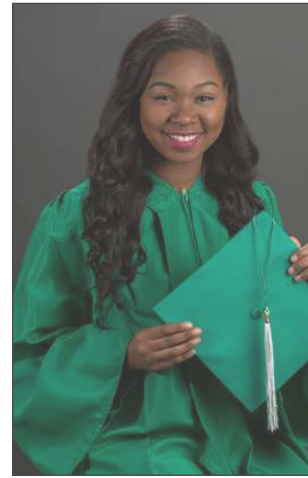
OSCAR EFRAIN
RESENDIZ RAMIREZ



ANDREA REYES



JOE REYES III



TIA MARIE RILEY



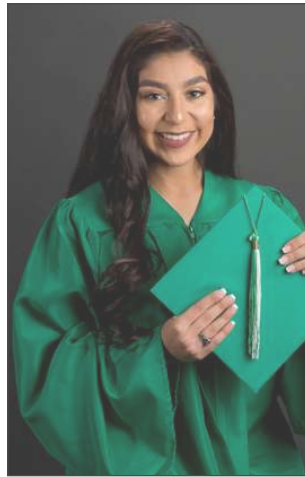
IRBY DEAN ROBINSON III



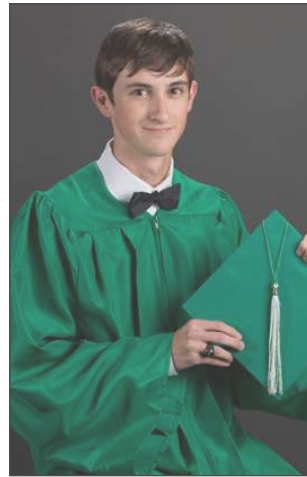
DOMINIQUE CORINNE
RODRIGUEZ



MARIAHA ALIZAY RODRIGUEZ



JULIE BRIANNA SALINAS



JARED AUSTIN SCHINDLER



SAWYER WILLIAM SCHOENFIELD



ELENA NICOLE SILVA



COLBY MAX SIMPSON



ESTEFAN JAY SOTELLO



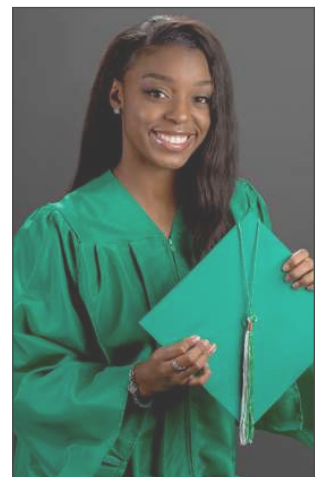
MADISON LEIGH STAVINOHA



STRATOS ARIES STRATIOU



KRYSTE RENAY VITERA



JALAYSIA MARIE WEAVER



DILLAN JACOB
BAYNARD WENDEL



JUSTIN L. WITTIG



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–Mario Andretti

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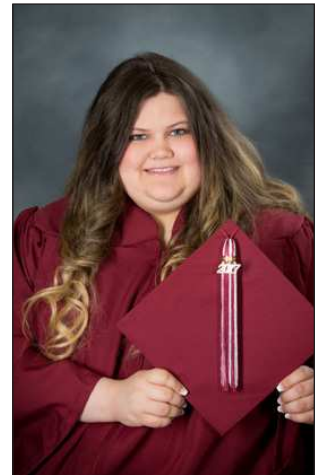
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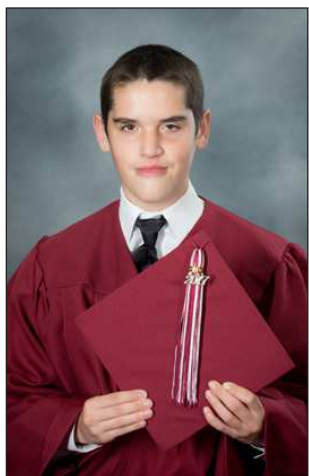
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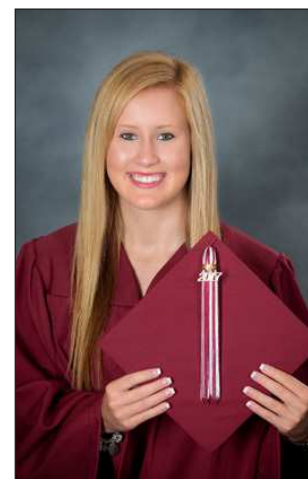
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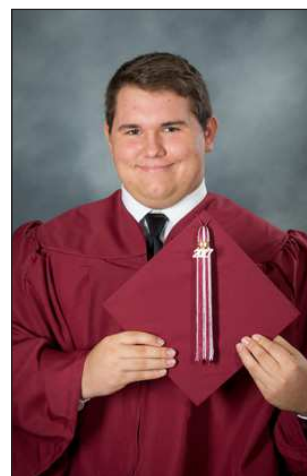
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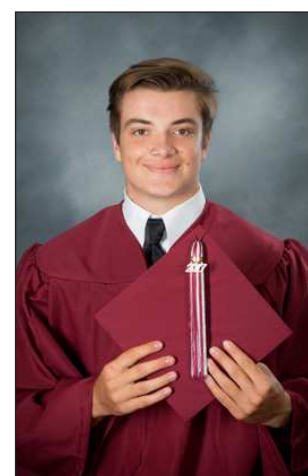
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Do and Dare

"The person who gets the farthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The 'sure-thing' boat never gets far from shore."

-Dale Carnegie



Danielle Marie Castillo

Always remember you are Braver than you believe, Stronger than you seem, Smarter than you think, and Loved more than you know.

God is within her, she will not fall - Psalms 46:5

We are so proud of you and we love you deeply,

Dad, Mom and Kimberly

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With Adulthood Comes Responsibility

Tips to help students choose the right major

As recent college graduates can no doubt attest, the job market for young people can be difficult to navigate. Many recent graduates are still struggling to find full-time employment, and some might be wondering if they chose the right major.

Though choosing a major is about more than just finding a job, the financial burden of earning a college degree can't be ignored. According to the Project on Student Debt, 71 percent of college seniors who graduated in 2012 had student loan debt, with an average of \$29,400 per borrower. In fact, between 2008 and 2012, the average student loan debt at graduation increased an average of 6 percent each year. So while the right major should incorporate a student's interests, skills and strengths, it's also important to find a major that can help students earn a living after they walk across the stage and receive their diplomas.

The following are a handful of tips college students can employ to ensure they choose the right major.

* Don't jump into it. Some students might want to pick a major before they ever step foot on campus. While that strategy might work for some, it should only be employed by those stu-



dents who are wholly certain a major is for them. Some students choose a major early on because they feel they may get a head start at navigating their way through a job market that recently endured exceptionally high levels of unemployment. But the pressure of finding a job should not be what drives students when choosing a major. Unless you're entirely certain that a particular course of study is for you, give yourself some leeway and wait to choose a major. The first year or two of

college is a great time to expand your academic horizons so use that time to your advantage.

* Don't procrastinate. While rushing into a major is a mistake, it's also foolish to procrastinate with regard to choosing a course of study. According to The College Board's annual survey of colleges, the average tuition and fees at private nonprofit four-year colleges for the 2013-14 school year was \$30,094, while public four-year in-state tuition and fees averaged slightly less than \$9,000 for the same year. So no matter which type of college or university a student enrolls in, he or she will be making a significant financial commitment. Waiting too long to choose a course of study may find you paying for courses you ultimately won't need, increasing your already expensive tuition along the way.

* Use the resources at your disposal. Students undecided about a college major should make use of their schools' career development departments to help them get on the right path. Many such departments provide assessment tools to help students find a major that synthesizes their interests and skills with a field of study. In addition, the personnel within career development depart-

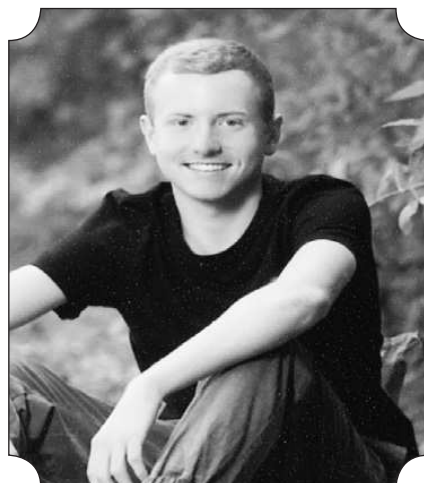
ments have dealt with hundreds, if not thousands, of previous students who found themselves in similar situations, and that experience can prove invaluable to students who might feel lost with regard to choosing majors.

* Know the requirements if you have a specific career in mind. While many majors are not difficult to navigate, some fields of study have strict guidelines that students should be aware of almost immediately. For example, students hoping to attend medical school after graduation need to determine which courses they absolutely must take in order to qualify for medical school. In addition, students with such specific plans in mind often must choose their majors as early as possible so they can plan their curriculum in accordance with the standards they will need to meet to be considered for post-graduate work.

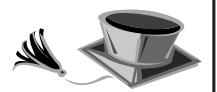
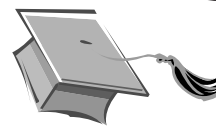
Choosing a major is a decision college students should not take lightly. But students who are unsure of what they want to study should approach the process of choosing a major with patience and an eye on finding a course of study that matches their interests with their skills.

Blaine Whitley Class of 2017

*Blaine,
We are so Proud!
Love you "Bunches!"
Grammy & Papaw*



GRADUATES OF 2017



If you can imagine it, you can achieve it;
if you can dream it, you can
become it.



William Arthur Ward



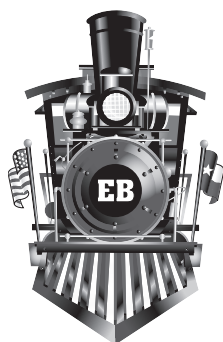
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College saving suggestions that won't break the bank

The cost of college tuition concerns parents from all walks of life. While college continues to get more expensive, it remains a worthy investment.

In its 2015-16 "College Planning Essentials" report, J.P. Morgan Asset Management dispelled the growing notion that a college education is not worth the student loan debt many young adults assume to earn their degrees. The report noted that college graduates earn 38 percent more than high school graduates, even after factoring in student loans. The report also noted that the return on investing in college is nearly \$1 million more in lifetime earnings. What's more, a 2013 report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce projected a shortage of five million college-educated workers by 2020, suggesting that college graduates will be in high demand by the start of the next decade.

While such figures highlight the importance of a college education, they may do little to ease parents' concerns about how to finance that education. While saving enough money for college may seem impossible, parents can take steps to decrease the likelihood that their kids will need to take on substantial loans to support their education.

- **Start early.** The earlier parents start saving for college, the more money their children will have to finance their education. Parents may not realize just how much college tuition is rising compared to other expenses. According

between 1983 and 2015 dwarfed the price changes of other expenses. For example, while the cumulative price change of housing rose 143 percent during that period, the cost of college tuition rose 722 percent over the same period.



to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index, the cumulative percent price change of college tuition

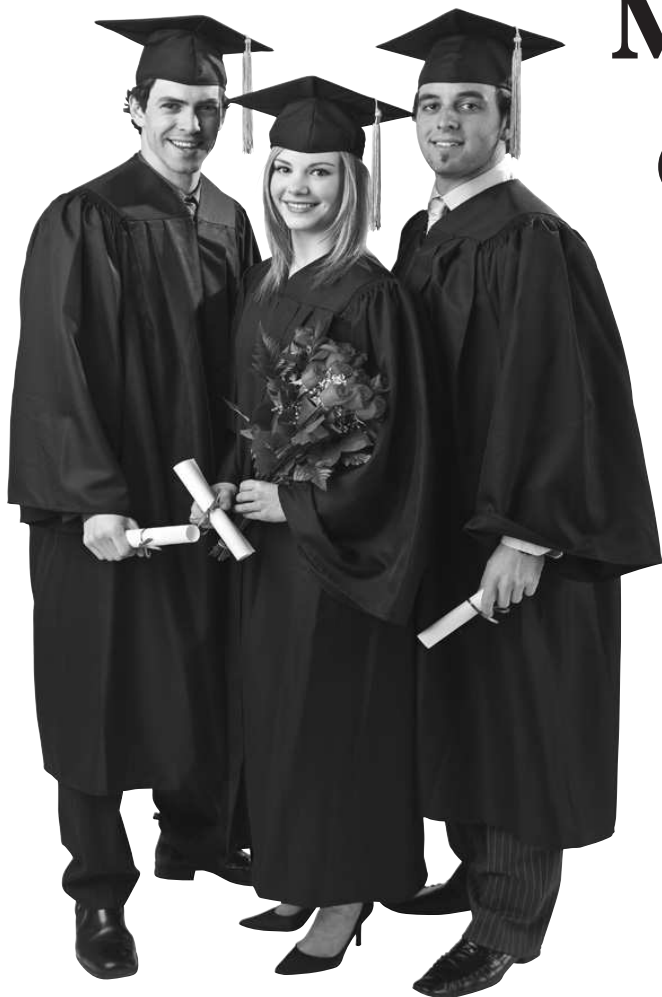
The earlier parents start saving for college, the more they can take advantage of compound interest that many college

savings plans offer.

- **Schedule automatic monthly contributions to college savings accounts.** Parents learn to expect the unexpected soon after their children are born. Unforeseen expenses may tempt parents to reduce or skip their monthly college savings account contributions. Reduced or missed contributions can add up over time, however, potentially reducing the totals in your child's account by a substantial amount. Set up automatic contributions with your bank or portfolio manager so you are not tempted to use the money you set aside each month for college to finance other expenses.

- **Increase contributions each year.** Increasing your annual college savings contributions each year can help the accounts keep pace with the inflation rate of college tuition costs. While you might not match that rate, increasing contributions each year by as little as 5 percent won't greatly affect your overall budget but can have a considerable impact on college savings.

Saving for college can seem like a daunting task. Yet parents of young children can quell their fears about college tuition costs by making a plan now and sticking to it until kids are ready to enroll in a college or university.



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15 helpful tips for the 2017 graduating class

Time-wise, the transition from high school to college may only span a few months. But the big bridge—the one in which the world starts expecting more adult, less kid—can be a shaky one. With more free time (and will), students are as likely to make mistakes as they are to take college for what it should be: opportunities available, challenges accepted.

To cross that bridge successfully, it's not always about memorizing facts, writing papers, and meeting deadlines. It's about the extras—the mindset and strategies that will help students explore, engage, and excel. Drawing from my more than 20 years in higher education, as well as collected wisdom from peers and students, here are the most effective tactics that incoming college freshmen can use to succeed.

1. Your brain is not your day planner. The life skill you'll need to master in college is prioritization. That skill develops when you can see what's coming next month, next week, tomorrow, in 10 minutes, #ohwaitthatpaperisduetoday. With so many moving parts in college, you simply can't afford to stay unorganized. Students get in academic trouble when they panic. They panic when they don't prepare. I don't care what method you use to keep your calendar (app or paper), as long as it's not a Sharpie mark on your palm.

2. To get plugged in, unplug. Maximize your connections through all of your social media platforms and digital tools. But for meaningful contacts that will help you develop, put down the phone. Look up. Raise your hand. Speak. Ask. Listen.

3. Your most valuable currency: ideas. We're in a world where lots of your peers have the same skills you do. The X factor: Who has the better idea? The front end of a project (time spent developing an original idea) is as crucial as the back end (time spent executing it).

4. Syllabus = law. Not all profs will handcuff you when you deviate, but it's best to assume that they will. Read the contract.

5. Handwritten thank you notes > emails > likes. The new-school communication methods are efficient and effective. Old-school ones show that you care enough to do a little extra. It's a tangible way to explain your intangibles.

6. Relationships > GPAs.* Unless you're planning on going to graduate school, grades should feel secondary to the process of working with your peers and professors. I would rather you came into my office and to ask me about the

artifact on my desk than to fight about .08 points that will mean zip to your career success. When you show you care

Your networking opportunities don't stop with professors, internship supervisors, and alums. As a freshman, you should

examples otherwise, the world wants you to do 15 things well rather than 50 things sloppily.

9. Learn a foreign language. In high school, you likely took a foreign language such as Spanish or Chinese or German. Now, expand what it means to speak and work in a new world. Word people could learn computer programming. Money majors could learn the art of effective writing. You stand out when you're fluent in an area where your peers aren't.

10. Create a digital hub. Put all of your best work and your social accounts in one place. Employers want to see your personal brand in a sort of digital elevator pitch.

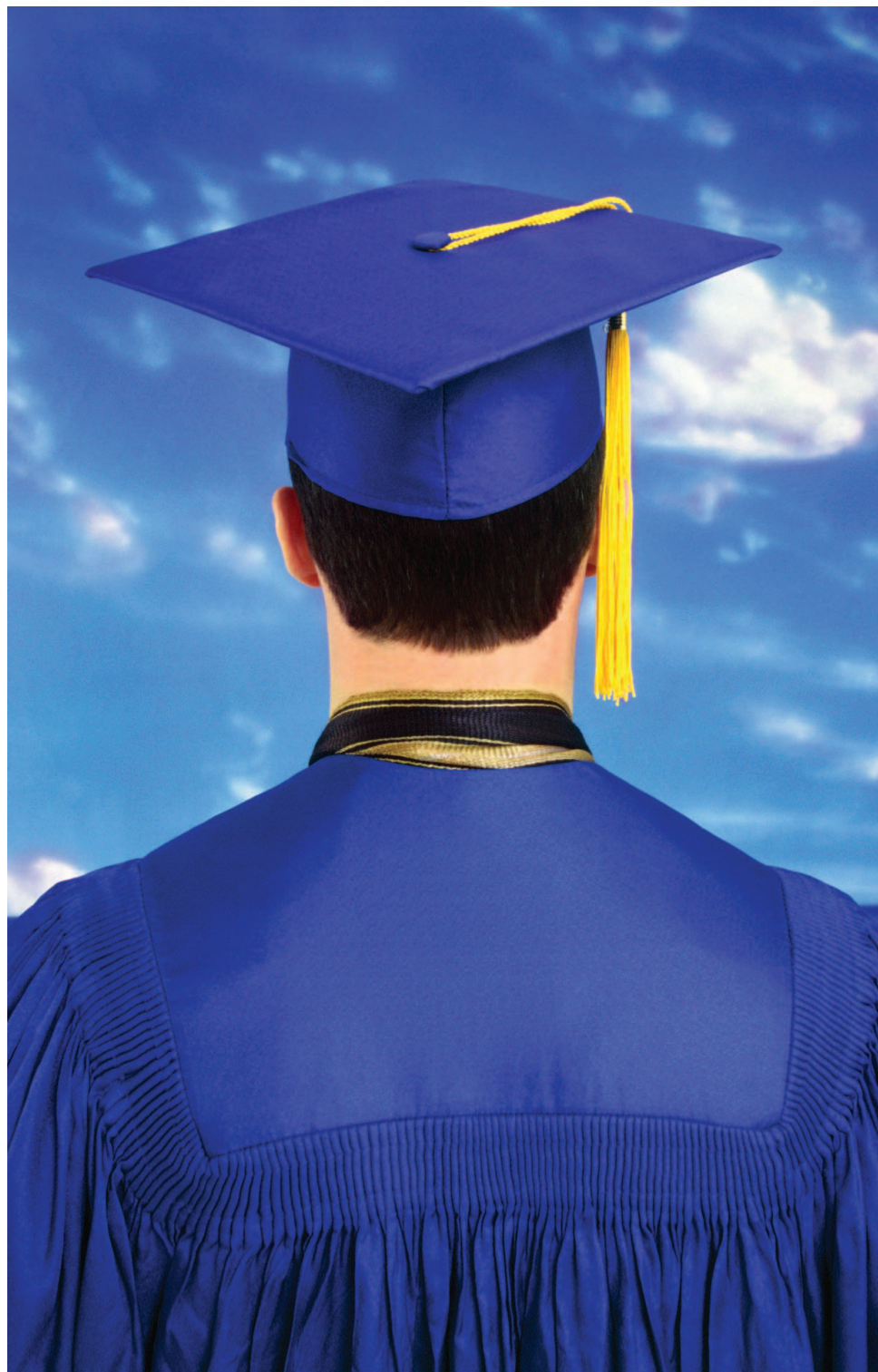
11. Find a workout pal. Part of stress management is time management. Part of it is having enough energy to do quality work. While it's inevitable that you will sometimes eat at the \$2.99 buffet and pull all-nighters, you need good food, regular exercise, and lots of sleep. This non-academic priority will improve your academic ones.

12. Success = style + substance. No matter your field, college is about developing your skills and talents. That's substance. Now, how unique is your voice, your personality, your creativity when it comes to your skill set? That's style. In a world when a lot of people have a lot of talent, it's the difference between being hired and having your resume tossed.

13. Your goal: one deep dive. If I'm talking to an intro course of hundreds of people, I'll ask them two questions. One, when you graduate, will you have the skills that everybody else in the room does? They'll need to be able to answer "yes." And two, will you be able to do something that nobody else in the room can do? If that answer is also "yes," you've just discovered the secret to excelling: Find an area of specialty where you can develop depth; that's what makes you uniquely positioned to help an employer. Be nimble enough to do a lot of things, but deep enough to do one thing better than anyone else.

14. Play. Do it when you're not working. Do it when you are working.

15. Make your secret sauce. The greatest compliment you can receive from a professor, pro, or peer isn't "great work!" or "that's perfect!" It's this: "How in the world did you do that?" Wow us with your creativity, wow us with your ideas, wow us with your execution in ways we can't imagine. We may not know what goes into your secret sauce, but we do know that we want more of it.



about performance more than points, it's the signal to me—and thus to the future employers I talk to about you—that you're the kind of person they want on their team.

*Do not use this to excuse your absence from class.

7. Think of college as seven years.

network with the people in your class and the three years ahead of you. As a senior, you should build relationships with the people three years behind you. That's seven years of people who could be potential bosses and connections.

8. It's OK to say "no." High-achievers want to do it all. Don't. Despite many

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