

Decatur Central

2023 Academic Banquet

Recognition of Distinguished Scholars



Valedictorian-Ashlynn Leight



My name is Ashlynn Leight, and I plan on attending Indiana University Bloomington to receive a Bachelor's degree in Public Health. I then want to further my education by attending the School of Dentistry at IUPUI to receive my Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.), then a Master of Science (M.S.) in Dentistry in hopes of becoming an Orthodontist. Throughout my time at Decatur Central High School, I have participated in three of our five choral programs: Cadet Choir, Expressions, and Goldenaires. During my senior year in Goldenaires, I have been appointed as dance captain. I not only help with choreography, but also help set an example for future show choir students. I have also been involved in National Honor Society, Student Voice, managing the girls' cross country team, and two part-time jobs. Participating in a range of activities has taught me communication, problem-solving, and leadership skills that I will continue to use for the rest of my life. For the class of 2023, I am graduating as co-valedictorian with over a 4.6 GPA.

Honoring: Jeremy Griffith

Valedictorian-Keegan Cox



To start off simply, my name is Keegan Cox and I am 18 years old. I am currently a senior and valedictorian at DCHS where I have attended all 4 years of my high school education. For my post secondary education I have been accepted and plan to attend Purdue University for computer science in the fall. Throughout high school, I made sure to challenge myself with classes that pertain to my peak interests. As a result, I have taken a variety of science classes, including every computer science class offered and have made my way through the lengthy chain of math classes as well to where I am currently taking AP Calculus BC. In addition, I have also taken AP Physics 1 and am currently taking AP Physics C. As an expected requirement of attaining a valedictorian position, I have managed to also continuously achieve all As in all of my classes. I started playing football for Decatur my freshman year and progressively through hard work on the field and in the weight room, I achieved a varsity spot my junior and senior years alongside my rigorous academic schedule. I tend to not think too highly of myself even though my accomplishments would say otherwise. I know of many others who are far brighter than myself and sometimes I find myself in awe of them. I never really have an answer when asked about how I do so well in school. I try to give the more common advice: study, work hard, pay attention in class, etc. As I have gotten older, I find myself coming up with more solid answers to this question. I think it all comes down to having a good driving force behind you and being highly self aware of your weaknesses and strengths.

Honoring: Pete Berg

Salutatorian-Alexis Petty



My name is Alexis Petty, and I am the salutatorian of our class of 2023. In high school, one of my greatest accomplishments was competing in golf for all four years. I was able to improve my skills and gained many friends through the sport. After high school, I will be attending Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology for mechanical engineering. I am hoping to find a career in the space exploration industry.

Honoring: Rachel Morris

Vivian Akenwekomi



During my 4 years of high school, I managed to keep my grades as high as they could be, with my lowest grade being a B+. I've been able to overcome all the obstacles that came to me in school and kept myself focused. On top of that, I did it all while balancing my extracurriculars like show choir and theatre. I was awarded best performer a total of 4 times in total for choir. As for my plans, I'm not sure if I want to go to Bloomington or Ball State, but I'm 100% sure I want to study criminal justice to become a criminal defense attorney. I want to be able to make myself and those around me proud. I'll do whatever I can to be successful.

Honoring: Arleen Gonzalez

Alexis Hunter



My name is Alexis Hunter. Throughout my high school career, I have maintained presence on the all A Honor Roll, and currently, I am ranked 4th in the Class of 2023. I have been a part of National Honor Society for two years, and with high academic achievement, I was announced as a “Rising Stars of Indiana Class of 2023” nominee. I am also a competitive dancer of 12 years, currently training at Expressenz Dance Center. I train at the highest level offered in competitive dance, in all styles such as ballet, contemporary, hip-hop, ballroom, etc. In my dance career, I have been honored to land multiple professional dance gigs such as the 2021 Indianapolis Prize Gala, and 2 seasons with Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra’s “Yuletide Celebration.” With training 28 hours per week, I have also been awarded multiple standout scholarships, title wins, and the opportunity to take class from top dance choreographers in the world through my dance career. With my education, the college I plan to attend is undecided. However, I plan to double major in dance and pre-physical therapy. I have dreams of entering the professional dance industry and work with other athletes in the physical therapy/ sports medicine world.

Honoring: Chris Hiller

Arianna Nguyen



My name is Arianna Nguyen, and I am the senior leader for Innovation. After high school, I will be attending Indiana University-Bloomington and majoring in computer science. During high school, I have had a few major accomplishments, some personal, some academic. I have grown a lot as a person, stepping out of my shell and becoming more confident as the years have passed. Academically, I have risen to be part of the top of my class and scoring highly on important tests.

Honoring: Kristen Needy

Isabelle Cooksey



My name is Isabelle Cooksey. I have been on the girls golf team for 3 years and was one of the captains during senior year. I enjoyed doing it with my friends. I have also worked at Meijer for almost 2 years as a pick-up team member. Lastly, I joined the school's art club. My biggest accomplishment is that I have maintained all A's throughout high school. After high school, I plan to go to Indiana University-Bloomington to continue my education. While at IU, I will do the exploratory program in order to figure out what I want to do in my future career. In the exploratory program, I will look at majors that involve children.

Honoring: Rachel Morris

Michaela Ingram



After high school, I want to pursue zoology and business to obtain a bachelor's degree. I feel that obtaining a degree will open new doors and expand my opportunities for success. Throughout high school, I've maintained a 4.4 GPA and consistently volunteered for my school and community. I'm a part of Student Council and National Honor Society and many of my volunteer work is done through those clubs. Other volunteer work has been done in my Choice SLC, in which I've packaged and brought in food for our school food pantry. Some of my accomplishments include: completing over 40 hours of community service, 1st place for the Outstanding Senior Award for JAG, Student of the Year, Student of the Month, and the Environmental Impact Award. I've also taken a variety of college courses throughout my time in high school such as AP language and composition, AP US History, and Bio 101 and 105. I've always strived to keep my grades up and stay motivated to complete my work. I think it's important to stay focused on your goals, otherwise you can get in the way of accomplishing them. I've made many memories and learned life lessons throughout the past 4 years. While there were ups and downs I'm proud of how far I've come and anxious to take the next steps of my success journey.

Honoring: Aimee Hawley

Janna Guevarra



My name is Janna Guevarra. I was born in Van Nuys, California then moved to Indiana when I was about 5 years old. Since starting high school, I have had many achievements in all of the activities I have joined. With being in the swimming and diving team, I was able to make top 8 in the 100 meter breaststroke in sectionals. In my experience with show choir, I was able to audition straight into the varsity mixed show choir. On the tennis team, I was able to play varsity 1st singles in my second year of tennis. Throughout these experiences, I have learned how to become a leader and applied them to my senior leader and senior student voice representative roles. After high school, I plan on studying engineering at Purdue University.

Honoring: Zach Holzer

Olivia Giovanoni



I'm Olivia Giovanoni, a senior at Decatur Central. A few words to describe me would be hard-working, passionate, and ambitious; each of which can be seen throughout the last 12 years of my education. I'm going to continue building on these traits as I further my education at Purdue University-Fort Wayne, where I plan to study hospitality management in hopes of running my own restaurants. I also plan to continue my participation in community service at PFW. In recent years, I have been involved with the two food pantries at our school (which is shown by my Overall Service Learning Award), and I will continue that involvement within the pantries of PFW.

Honoring: Anthony Giovanoni

Kyleigh Brown



I'm Kyleigh Brown, and I've been really active throughout high school in terms of classes and extracurriculars. I've done show choir for four years, done several theatre performances, and I'm a part of NHS and Rainbow Hawks. After high school, I really hope to go to IU-Bloomington and major in Psychology, where I'll explore different career paths and narrow down what I want to do. During my time in college, I want to continue with choir and theatre as extracurriculars, as I love performing and the fine arts and they bring me a lot of joy. I also hope to continue trying to create a safe space for LGBTQ people in my community.

Honoring: Emily Blue-Trepton

Rachel Kinnaman



My name is Rachel Kinnaman. I am a 2023 senior. I work part time as a server and love the fast paced environment. Working 4 days a week after school, I have learned many life lessons. Most importantly, I have learned the value of a dollar and how to be financially responsible. Additionally, serving has allowed to me communicate better with people. Outside of school and work I am interested in cars. Last summer I saved up enough money to buy my own car. After graduation, I plan to go to IUPUI in the fall for Law in Liberal Arts to become a paralegal or continue on to Law School. I am interested in a career in law because I like challenges, arguing, and small details.

Honoring: Renee Knoop

Dyllon Wales



I, Dyllon Wales, am a proud student-athlete at Decatur Central High School with over a 4.3 GPA who's participated in NHS (National Honor Society), JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates), SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), SOAR Club, Volleyball, Tennis, and the Hawk Block. I achieved the roles of Treasurer of NHS, Hawk Block Leader, board member of SOAR Club, and Captain for both volleyball and tennis throughout my high school career. I've committed to going to Ball State University, and I will be majoring in exploratory studies.

Honoring: Nate Shafer

Julie Artega



My name is Julie Artega. In my four years of attending Decatur Central High School I have enjoyed participating in show choir and theatre. I am a four year member of Decatur Central Expressions and Decatur Central Goldenaires. I am the Expressions head dance captain and Goldenaires vocal captain. I am also the Vice President of ITS (International Thespian Society). I'm very proud of my accomplishments here at Decatur Central and am happy to say that I am planning to attend Ball State after graduation to study elementary education.

Honoring: Scott Archer

Elizabeth Bex



My name is Elizabeth Bex. I have over a 4.0 GPA. I have taken honors, AP, and dual credit classes all throughout high school while staying involved with show choir and theater. My plans are to go to Marian University where I'm going to major in nursing and earn my BSN to become a pediatric intensive care unit nurse, while earning a minor in pastoral leadership with Marian's catholic program called Sam Damiano Scholars. I chose to do nursing because ever since at a young age, I've had a passion for helping those around me and found medical shows or learning about the medical field interesting, so I felt that nursing would be the best fit for me.

Honoring: Terry Gegner



Judith Cruz



It is an undoubted fact that hard work is the key to success. You cannot achieve your goals, your plans, nor your dreams without hard work. If you want to do well in your studies, you must work. If you wish to become the world's greatest artist, you must apply all of your skills and talents. If you wish to become the best athlete, you must learn to run faster and fight harder. I've learned that all I have ever accomplished was done by doing just this. By working hard. Starting in the eighth grade, I received my first formal and proper awards. First, I received the national "President Award," which congratulates students for their achievements and hard work. Next, I received the "Notorious Award." This award recognizes students who show outstanding educational growth, improvement, commitment to or intellectual development in their academic subjects. Then, in the ninth grade, I led my first youth group. Suddenly, I became a service leader in my church programs and events. Little by little, and step by step, I became more involved in my community and expanded my work through service. At the same time, I got my first job. I was a hostess at a family-owned restaurant where I worked for three years up until my second semester of Junior year. Here, I learned many new skills such as responsibility, money management, organization, perseverance and work ethic. Later, in the semester, I earned the Technical Honors Diploma and CNA license through the Area 31 Career Center. Here, I met my greatest influential educator, Mrs. Douglas. While meeting all of these successes, I managed to maintain an above 4.0 GPA and scale up on my class rank. While it has been hard work, and difficult, and at times painful, I stand to prove today, that it is all worth it and that hard work truly does pay off. I have received a full-ride scholarship through my dream college: Marian University where I wish to pursue a Nursing and Education career.

Honoring: Lesia Douglas

Jesse Colbert



In my four years of high school, I have been in two organizations. The first being National Honor in which I spent time tutoring math and science. Additionally, I carried the officer/leadership position of Secretary. The second organization was our high school's marching band. I joined the band in 7th grade rather than the usual 9th grade; and with my competency I was one of five 7th-graders invited to join our winter percussion ensemble. Our winter percussion ensemble really hit the ground running and we were not only State Champions twice but also National Champions once. Freshman year, I became the youngest front ensemble (the pit) leader in several class cycles as well as the youngest "center" marimba, period. Once I graduate I will be attending Indiana University and studying informatics and business which I will use to eventually open my own computer software business in Indiana.

Honoring: Maia Swanson

Jayd Anderson



I, Jayd Anderson, am a 2023 graduating senior. I started out freshman year timid and very uptight as I was very unsure of myself. Now as I begin to start my adult life and stray away from home to begin my journey at Indiana University-Bloomington as a Pediatric Clinical Psychologist, I am leaving DCHS ready. I spent my high school years in many after school activities. I cheered as a varsity athlete, part of a team that not only did sideline cheer football and basketball season but was the 1st to begin competing again since 1985. I joined two National Honors Societies that helped me become a part of the community and world to do good for the environment and those in need. I joined SOAR, a group that showed me how I could bring awareness about drugs and alcohol while also helping others and having fun. I was a part of Best Buddies, an amazing group of people who brought family to those that needed one. I was a part of four theater productions that have given me a sense of community I have never experienced before while also bringing stories to life for all that could come. I did all of this while maintaining a 4.3 GPA and getting my academic and technical honors diploma. I, Jayd Anderson, am a member of an amazing school that made me who I am.

Honoring: Amanda Abney

Riley Leverington



I am Riley Leverington, and I am a senior at Decatur Central High School. After high school I plan to attend Manchester University to study either nursing or psychology while playing softball. Throughout high school, I was a part of the student council, NHS, the golf team, and the softball team. This year I am participating in Area 31 to earn my CNA certification, along with other certifications as well. I chose this program to not only have an upper edge on my resume but to also to get a step into the medical field. With my freetime from academics, sports, and my job, I like to volunteer within my community, helping younger baseball and softball players. I am honored to be a part of the Academic Recognition Banquet and excited to see what the future holds for me.

Honoring: Jenny Leverington

Zachary Bex



At Decatur I strived to do my best, in the hopes that I would be rewarded for all my hard efforts. During my time at Decatur I was part of the Band program, a successful program in its own right, and I was glad to be a part of it as it helped teach me both grit and how to grow as a person. At Decatur I also was a part of the National Honor Society, where I hoped to take my academic skills and help others with them. I also strove to challenge myself taking a multitude of college-level courses so that I could both learn the skills I need to take a college course and get credits before I ever even stepped foot on a college campus.

After high school I plan on attending Butler University. At Butler, I plan on taking their pharmacy program to study to become a pharmacist. I find pharmacy an interesting profession as the idea of pharmaceuticals both matched what career interest I had and always came up on career aptitude tests. Additionally, my Aunt is a pharmacist, so I have guidance in the field if I need it.

Honoring: Jeremy Griffith

Jameela Hydre Yusoff



My name is Jameela Hydre Yusoff. I am a continuous AB honor roll student that is currently on track to graduate with academic honors. I was nominated and chosen to be the senior representative for the high school; I sit amongst our township's super intendant and represent my community through participation in the Decatur Township Educational Foundation. I am a 4 year participating athlete in both soccer and track. I hold the 4x800m relay record in the high school, and the 4x100m relay, and 100m dash records in the middle school. I have been a part of the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana since kindergarten. I have completed my bronze and silver award, which consist of over 40 hours of community services. I am continuing my athletic career for both track & soccer at an undecided college, majoring in athletic sciences.

Honoring: Tony Tate

Ella Phillips



I will be attending Indiana Wesleyan University starting in the fall of 2023. While being there, I will also be a part of their softball team. I plan on majoring in nursing, with a minor in either business or communications. After receiving my Bachelors Degree in Nursing, I will further my education to become a Nurse Practitioner. I would love to either work with seniors, children, or all ages. I have been on the varsity softball team since my freshman year. I earned a team captain spot last year and hope to do so again this season. For the past two years, I have been a National Honors Society member. I have maintained a GPA over a 4.0 every year of high school, earning me a class rank in the top 40. My hard work and determination paid off as I received both academic and athletic scholarships from IWU.

Honoring: Lisa Maydwell

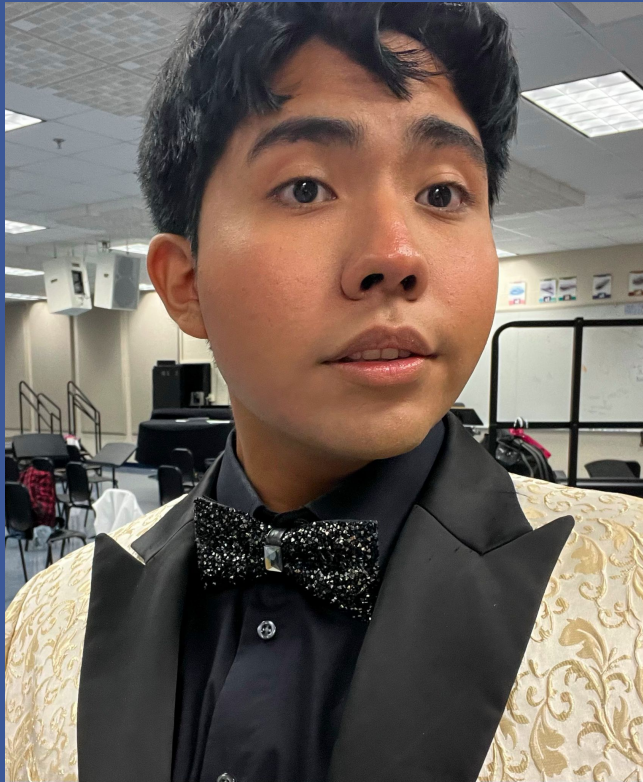
Ryan Black



My name is Ryan Scott Black. I'm 18 years old, and I am a proud student of Decatur Central High School, and I am in the Decatur Central National Honors Society. I love to work out and go on runs in my free time when I'm not hanging out with friends or at work. I work at Walmart and have been there since the age of 16 and have learned many life skills and even how to manage a team of people. I have a 4.25 GPA and plan on going into the army after high school and then attend a trade school to learn welding and seek that as my career.

Honoring: Charlotte Ortiz

Flavio Mayorga



I am Flavio Mayorga. Over my high school years, I have been able to involve myself in many extracurriculars to learn and make new friends like Show Choir, National Honors Society, and Tennis. I have enjoyed the hardships and challenges of high school and getting through them with my family and friends. I've been able to accomplish many milestones through these activities like playing on the varsity team in tennis, raising the most supplies within a group for National Honors Society, and performing at show choir competitions. But specifically, I have enjoyed my 4 years in tennis, where I was able to meet some of the greatest people and learn skills to grow as a player and as a person. As far as my plans for the future, they are to attend a four-year college to get a degree in Finance or Marketing. Hopefully, I will become a financial advisor or marketing agent or be in the general field of business. Finally, I want to hopefully grow my knowledge in finance to create a positive change in those less unfortunate and help in programs to make people more financially responsible.

Honoring: Melissa Sheetz

Faith Diaz



As I approach graduation, my accomplishments and goals have been to strive to be in the top 10% of the senior class of 2023 at DCHS. The road as a senior in high school has been challenging at times. However, perhaps my greatest accomplishment was the ability to adjust and stay focused through the challenges that came with the covid pandemic. I can say with pride that I was able to excel and stay the course during that difficult time. As my journey through high school is coming to an end, my path in education will continue in the next phase through college. I plan to attend the University of Indianapolis, where I will pursue a degree in chemistry, with my main focus in the field of pre-med. My ambition is to become an ear, nose and throat doctor.

Honoring: Julie Stoner

Antifath Sounkere



I am the current president of the Decatur National Honor Society, and I love to read in my free time. I plan to attend Indiana University-Bloomington in the fall to double major in psychology and neuroscience. After that, I would love to further my education and get my PhD. For a career, I want to be a neuropsychologist. And as for personal goals, I would love to do some humanitarian work. It's always been my dream to help out others. Coming from a third-world country, I understand that not everyone is as fortunate. I hope to one day make a difference. I've also always wanted to travel, so in the next ten years, I see myself getting a start on that.

Honoring: Linda Chandler

Zachary Adkins



Joining highschool has been an experience from being homeschooled previously. I have grown so much from being my antisocial, closed-off self to being the hardworking, friendly, and very social person I am today, and becoming that person has been my biggest accomplishment so far. Another accomplishment would be my work in One Acts 2023 and being in a position that I had near complete control over. I was able to express my creative self and vision when writing and directing the show. It has given me a newfound love and growth in maturity. With that, the cast of mainly new faces in theatre which I had control over has proven my strength of working with others, and I gained a strong relationship with most of the newcomers from it. I'm glad to have grown out of my shell and have the people I have connected with and can even call family. With my new being, I'm preparing to advance my knowledge of theatre and directing in college with the idea of either being a director or a theatre teacher in my future. I'm glad to have gotten a chance at highschool and an opportunity to grow with my knowledge and personality.

Honoring: Nate Adams

Josiah Glenn



I'm Josiah Glenn. I am the 2022-23 Edge Senior Leader. I am a current 6-year member of the band program, where I play trombone and baritone and was a 2-year baritone section leader for the marching band. I am also the only current 4-year member of Goldenaires, where I am a 2-year vocal captain, current head dance captain, and Co-President. I am a 2-year member of the theatre program and the current secretary of ITS Troupe 1049, as well as the Senior Captain for ComedySportz. I plan to attend Ivy Tech to eventually get a degree in graphic design. Along the way, I plan to continue my career as a freelance designer, which I was able to jump-start thanks to Mr. Scott Archer letting me design everything for the choir department the past two years.



Honoring: Dean Adler

Ciarra Lucas



My name is Ciarra Lucas. Throughout my high school career, I was an A-B student and maintained over a 4.0 gpa. I was a member of the varsity soccer team for all four years as well as a member of the National Honor society. I have completed a multitude of hours of community service. I was able to strive well in school while also playing sports and working a part time job. After high school I plan on attending Ball State University to get my bachelors in nursing to become a pediatric nurse.

Honoring: Ashley Duncan

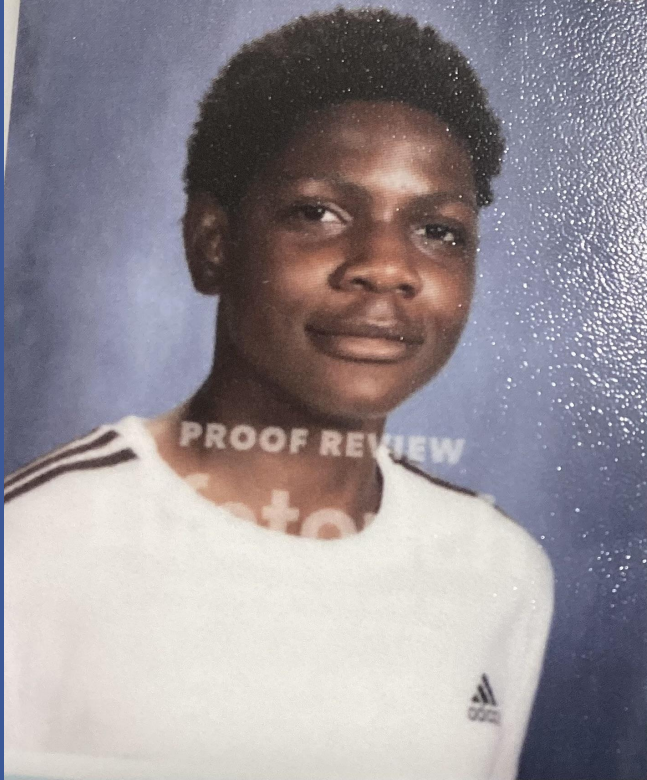
Emmanuel Lokombe



I would describe myself as many things, a brother, a son, a student, but I'd describe myself mostly as an enthusiastic and motivated person. I was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in November 2004, and my family moved to the states in 2010. When I was 5, I met my first love: SOCCER and me and that ball have been inseparable ever since. I played the sport for the past 13 years and have played both club and school soccer. I was the captain of our school soccer team for the 22-23 school year and had one of the funnest and successful seasons ever. Besides being a soccer player, I love hanging out with my friends, working out, I love being outdoors, and I love meeting new people. School wise, I've always strived to maintain a high GPA because the whole reason why my family moved here was so me and my siblings can succeed, and there is no success without hard work, so I try to be an example to my siblings and also to make my parents proud. Due to this motivation, I've received some awards like CCR Student of the Year for 2022, CCR Student of the Month throughout all of high school, DCHS 2022 Boys Soccer AAAAward, 2022 Indiana Soccer All-Academic team, and just recently I've received a full-tuition scholarship from Butler University, which is where I will be attending college after high school. I plan on majoring in Biology and going on a Pre-Dental track and want to one day become a full-time orthodontist with my own practice.

Honoring: Ben Wachnicki

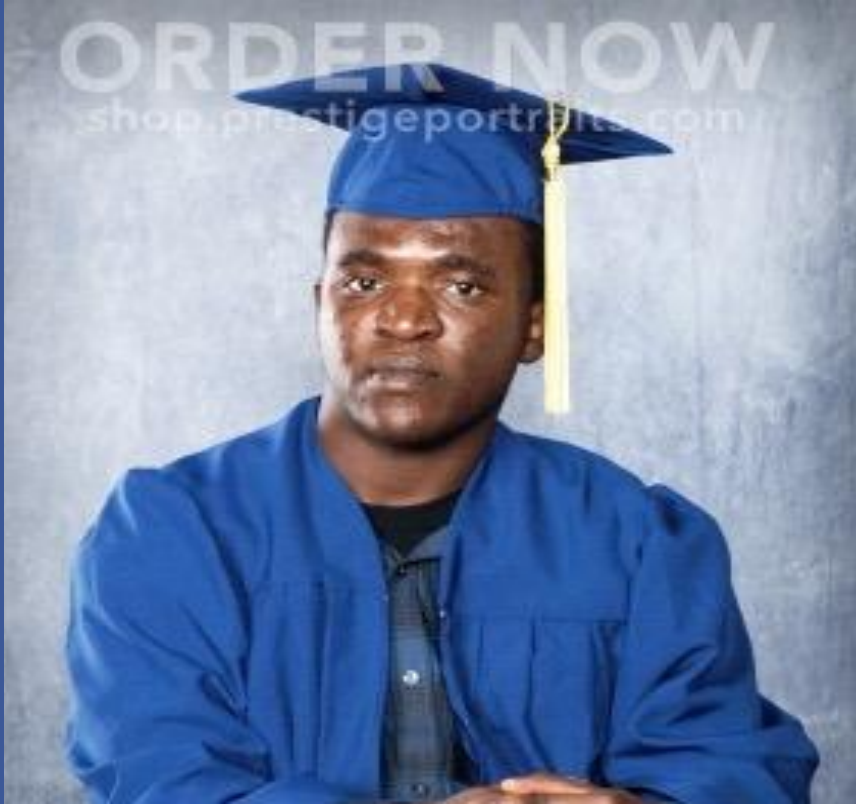
Fope Ajayi



Throughout my time at Decatur as a student athlete, I've tried to participate in the highest level of sports and academics. Doing all of these things have also helped me grow as a person, scholar and, an athlete. I plan to continue my education at IU-Bloomington and to strive for academic excellence.

Honoring: Breann Bauer

Naheem Oluyadi



My name is Naheem Oluyadi. I was born in Nigeria, and I'm currently a senior at Decatur Central High School with a 4.1 GPA and currently in the 38th position out of the top 40. I would mention some of my accomplishments, however, I'm not really someone who put himself out there, so I don't particularly have that many accomplishments throughout my high school career. I'm a member of the National Honor Society, and I'm a 21st-century scholar. After high school, I plan on going to Indiana State University to study architectural engineering. My plans after that are still a little uncertain, but that's a situation for my future self.

Honoring: Julie Stoner

Samara Russell



I've been a varsity cheerleader at Decatur Central High School since my freshman year but have cheered my whole life. My coaches announced I was captain of our varsity squad for this past football season. This was a proud moment for me. I joined Decatur Central's National Honors Society my junior year. Also, I have been given an opportunity to graduate at the end of my junior year. After graduation I plan to further my education to get my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. I have a head start in this by taking some Ivy Tech classes here at DCHS.

Honoring: Adam Lane

Hannah Vickers



My name is Hannah Vickers. I am ranked 38th in my class. My GPA is 4.1. I am currently a member of the National Honor Society. I received an academic award my junior year for Cross Country. I have been accepted and plan to attend IUPUI. I plan to get a dual degree is Mechanical and Motorsport engineering.

Honoring: Tom Gliva

Olivia Klesk



I will be attending the University of Tampa in the fall of 2023 to study criminology and criminal justice. I played varsity soccer all four years of high school while also consistently working a job since my sophomore year and keeping up with my school work. I've been a member of the National Honors Society throughout my junior and senior years. Through NHS I did many volunteer projects like Safe Halloween, organizing & participating in the reading to elementary students project, and tutoring. I'm happy to say I'll be moving on to study criminology outside of my own personal research. I always knew I would end up in the law enforcement field!

Honoring: Renee Knoop

Trinity Barks



My name is Trinity Barks. I am a part of the graduating class of 2023. Throughout my high school career I have looked into many different careers I found interesting. During my junior year, I went to Area 31 for health science education. While there, I received my CNA certification and my CPR certification for infants and adults. This was a big accomplishment but showed me that it wasn't quite what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. With that being said, I have now decided to go to IUPUI downtown to pursue a career in dentistry. I will be going to pursue a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene. I have worked very hard to get to where I am going and have as minimum student debts, and am expecting to go to IUPUI with all college tuition covered.

Honoring: Andy Hofer