

CONGRATS graduates!

CLASS OF 2019



Villa Grove High School

VGHS Valedictorian, Salutatorian Share Their Stories

By Tony Hooker, Staff Writer
Chelsea Harrison-Valedictorian

1. Who or what made you decide to put a strong emphasis on your academics?

My mom has always been my biggest role model. Especially when it came to my academics. She has always pushed me to be my best, even when it would get annoying. I always knew that she was just wanting the best for me. She never hesitated to help me when I had questions and always kept me on the right path when it came to my academics. She helped me sign up for classes, sign up for ACT prep, and would always listen to me cry and rant about school and how defeated I felt. I know that I definitely would not be valedictorian without my mom pushing me every step of the way. I owe everything that I have achieved to my mom.

2. What has been your favorite class or teacher? Why?

My favorite teacher throughout my life was probably Mrs. Faust. I know that she was just my 6th grade teacher, but she taught way more than just Math and English. She taught kids how to be good people because she is such a great person herself. I remember that I always really struggled with math and she would stay after school and try and help me and she would find every way possible to teach me that math skill until it finally clicked for me. I know that she is very proud of where I am today, but I honestly don't think I would have the confidence that I have in my classes now without her help at such a young age.

3. Have there been any "less than favorite" classes?

Math was definitely my "less than favorite" class. I like clear cut answers and with math that is sometimes hard to have, but I have gotten to the point where I can get over that and just deal with math being in my life. I just cannot wait until I get to the point where I can say I have no more math classes, forever.

4. What words of encouragement would you offer to the incoming freshman class?

The biggest thing that freshman need to know is that it does not matter what others think. Do not go to things just to take pictures, go to events and have a fun time with friends. That stage of your life goes by extremely fast, and you will wish you stayed at the homecoming dances longer and participated in all the school games. Go make a fool of yourself because those are the things that you will remember, not how many likes you got on an Instagram post. Also, don't change who you are just to fit in with the older kids. Find a group of friends that are like you, because those

are the people you need in your life. Trust me throughout high school you will need a good friend group by your side.

5. Where do you plan on continuing your education? What will you be studying?

I plan on continuing my education at Bradley University in Peoria. I will be studying nursing to attain my BSN and then eventually go on to be a Nurse Practitioner in Women's Health.

6. Why did you choose this course of study?

I have always had a very big interest in the health field, but I mainly started to have an interest in this field because my mom has been a nurse for so long. I always went to her work and would go to an office and pretend like I was being a nurse just like her. I also knew I wanted to be a Nurse Practitioner when I job shadowed one over the summer of my Junior year. I was in awe of everything they were doing, and I knew it would be the perfect fit for me.

7. What's been the best thing about growing up in a small town like Villa Grove?

The best thing about growing up in Villa Grove is that when you do accomplish something great in your life everyone in town knows about it and will congratulate you wherever you go. Living in a small town really is like having a large family all around you.

8. Do you have a job lined up for the summer? What will you be doing?

This summer I have an internship at Carle where I will be a phlebotomist. All I have to do is calm kids down and explain the shots before they get it done and then take the blood specimen back to the lab and test it before I have to send it off to the hospital for final results. It will really be a good insight into what the behind the scenes people do in a health care setting.

9. Outside of the classroom, what has been your best experience at Villa Grove high school?

It may sound cheesy, but my favorite experiences have been just hanging out with my classmates. My favorite things are just going to bonfires and driving around town just listening to music and laughing with my friends that I have had since pre-school. That is something I will miss the most next year. I have had such a great opportunity being able to be so close with a lot of my classmates that it will be hard to leave them next year.

10. What is your absolute dream job? Do you see yourself in that role in 10 years? Why or why not?

My absolute dream job would be a delivery doctor. In 10 years, however, I see myself being a Nurse Practitioner in Women's Health, because it is



Chelsea Harrison

right next to being a delivery doctor in a way. I just know that I wouldn't be able to be a delivery doctor because of the intense hours. I want to have a family of my own and I feel like that would be hard being on call 24/7. So, I am very proud, and excited about my choice of being a Nurse Practitioner.

Tommie Hooker-Salutatorian

1. Who or what made you decide to put a strong emphasis on your academics?

My parents have always been a very good influence for me. They encourage me to do the best I can in everything I do. I also have a very strong drive for success and I don't settle for anything less than excellence.

2. What has been your favorite class or teacher? Why?

My favorite class is English because I really enjoy writing and reading new stories.

3. Have there been any "less than favorite" classes?

The only class that I have never enjoyed is math class. Unfortunately for me, my brother was blessed with all of the math smarts.

4. What words of encouragement would you offer to the incoming freshman class?



Tommie Hooker

I know everyone says this, but time really does fly by. It seems like just yesterday I was a freshman, so excited to be in high school with my brother and his cute friends. High school won't be the best days of your life, but you should enjoy it as much as you can while it lasts. Get involved in school activities and take school seriously because it does matter!

5. Where do you plan on con-

tinuing your education? What will you be studying?

I am going to start out at Parkland for my first two years of college. Then I plan to go to Southern Illinois University in Carbondale where I will hopefully major in Paralegal Studies.

6. Why did you choose this course of study?

My mom has been a secretary for a few lawyers in my life time, so I have been around this career. The documentation piece is also very interesting to me.

7. What's been the best thing about growing up in a small town like Villa Grove?

Everyone gets very involved in the little activities our town does. I looked forward to Ag days all summer when I was a kid. Also, because of how small Villa Grove is, kids can be trusted to walk around with their friends and have fun without their parents.

8. Do you have a job lined up for the summer? What will you be doing?

Yes, I will be working part time at the Erwin, Martinkus, and Cole law firm. I will also be working at the Villa Grove library as I have for almost three years now.

9. Outside of the classroom, what has been your best experience at Villa Grove high school?

One of my best experiences in high school was cheering on the football players every Friday night. Cheer was a blast and I am really going to miss it.

10. What is your absolute dream job? Do you see yourself in that role in 10 years? Why or why not?

I have never had a crazy dream job, but I can see myself as a lawyer in the future. It is going to take a lot of hard work in school, but I am excited for the challenge!

Congrats, Class of 2019!

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You're on your way to further achievements. Best wishes, whatever you do.

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Congratulations Graduates!

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