

McClure one of 90 to graduate Gatton Academy



Holly Grace McClure

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. -- On Saturday, May 6, The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science graduated 90 students from across Kentucky in its 16th graduating class. The ceremony took place at Western Kentucky University's Van Meter Hall and was broadcast online for extended friends and family to enjoy.

After welcoming everyone and acknowledging all the people instrumental in supporting the students, Dr. Lynette Breedlove, Director of The Gatton Academy, reflected on the history of Gatton and the current students' success, "The students of The Gatton Academy have built upon the initial foundation and have excelled in their endeavors both in and out of the classroom... They have continued to establish the path that countless classes will follow. They will leave today as ambassadors for The Gatton Academy while growing as innovators for this great Commonwealth."

The Class of 2023 represents 45 counties from across the Commonwealth of Kentucky and includes The Gatton Academy's thousandth graduate. Fifteen members of the class were National Merit semifinalists and 77% of graduates participated in faculty-sponsored research during their Gatton Academy experience. Additionally, 19 graduates completed the STEM + Critical Languages sequences in either Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, or Russian. Among the graduates are two students who advanced to the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) and a Regeneron Science Talent Search Top 300 Teen Scientist. Graduates won U.S. Department of State National Security Language Initiative for Youth scholarships, and one was named YMCA Greater Louisville's Youth Achiever of the Year. These seniors completed 3,759 hours of community service over two years, an average of 41.8 hours per graduate.

The graduating class selected two student speakers: Dane Le from Warren Central High School (Warren County), and Femi Obielodan from Frankfort Christian Academy (Franklin County).

Le shared of the changes she anticipates after graduation, the people she will miss, and advice for the future: "There are very few things we as individuals can control, but we can control our actions and what we do right now. As many regrets as we do or don't have, it's too late for us to change it now. We have to continue looking toward the future because we have the ability to make that future ours."

Obielodan highlighted core memories of Gatton and the importance people play in our lives: "To me, The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science is not a school; it is a group of people. It's you guys, my classmates.... What I want you to realize and appreciate is the community we are all a part of. For the past two years, we've really gone through it, but we've gone through it together. Many of us have celebrated you at your best and helped you at your worst. We've been each other's lab partners, significant others, peer tutors, room/suite mates, etc. And soon we'll be leaving it all behind to pursue greater things."

The commencement speaker was Senator David Givens, the President Pro Tempore of the Kentucky Senate and father of a 2020 Gatton Academy graduate. Since his election in 2009, Senator Givens has been a supporter of The Gatton Academy. In his speech titled "Three Charges and One Plea," he addressed the graduates: "Amid the chaos, the anxiety, the stress, the challenge, and the noise of our world today, we need you to share with the world what it means to care for yourself, to take life-giving risks, to marvel at the beauty all around us... take those things and share it with the world."

Educators

from around the Commonwealth were nominated by members of the Class of 2023 who have played an important role in their journey to Gatton. Thirty-two educators were invited to attend the ceremony, acknowledged during the ceremony, and will receive certificates of excellence for their dedication to the success of young people in Kentucky.

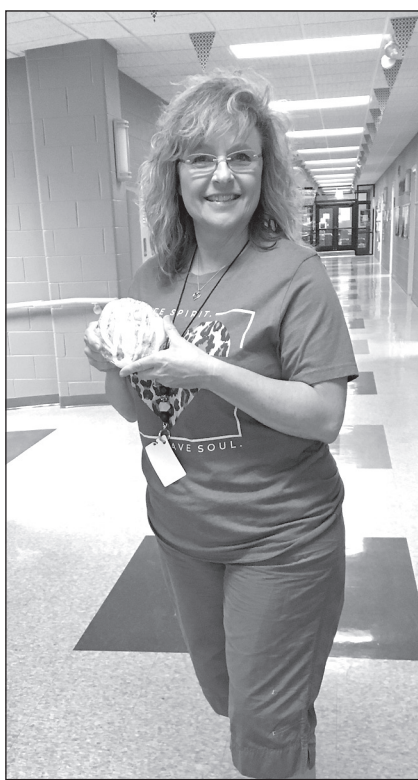
Holly Grace McClure from Russell County High School is one of the 90 students from across the Commonwealth to make up the graduating class of 2023.

Holly has accepted the offer of a full ride from Duke Kunshan University in China. Holly was one of the 150 out of the 3300 international applications submitted to be selected. She plans to study Biology or do their premed program. Duke Kunshan University is affiliated with Duke University in North Carolina. Upon graduation, she will receive a degree from DKU and Duke University in North Carolina.

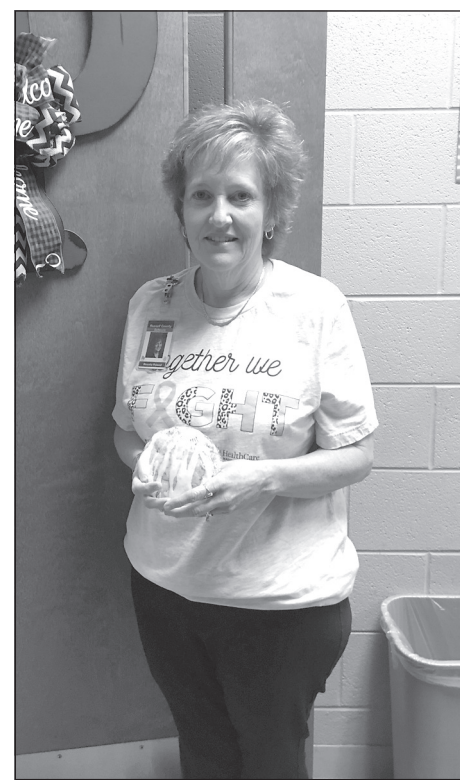
*Community Scholars footnote: These graduates are recognized for completing two semesters of research with a research outcome that is presented to a professional audience after being accepted through a vetted process OR four semesters of participation in STEM+, AND documenting 60 hours of service.

About The Gatton Academy: Established in 2007, The Gatton Academy is Kentucky's first residential two-year program for gifted and talented juniors and seniors. The Gatton Academy's students enroll as juniors and are full-time WKU students pursuing their interests in advanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The Gatton Academy is a recipient of the 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from Insight Into Diversity Magazine and the Innovation Partnership Award from the National Consortium for Secondary STEM Schools.

Russell County Education Association Officers enjoyed delivering cookies to their members this past week for Teacher Appreciation Week.



Rhonda Kimbler-RCEA President



Rosalie Poland-RCEA Secretary



Holly Piece-RCEA Treasurer



Lisa Willis and Emily Espinal

Reading the Newspaper Helps Your Brain Grow!



Congrats
CLASS OF
2023



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CONGRATULATIONS
RCHS Class of 2023



"The most rewarding things in life are often the ones that look like they cannot be done."
- Arnold Palmer

Congratulations 2023 Graduates

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