

Class of Congratulations! 2025



Oconee County High top graduates walk across the stage

Top Oconee County High School graduates celebrate during commencement. From left, Valedictorian **Jenny Hu**, who will attend Georgia Tech; Salutatorian **Jackson Woitkovich**, who will attend Johns Hopkins University; and Honorary **Jun-yeong Choi**, who will attend the University of Georgia. [Photo courtesy Oconee County Schools]



ACAD seniors top of their class

Joshua Xie, left, and **John Maxwell McKillip**, right, were named valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the Athens Academy Class of 2025. Xie will be attending Georgia Tech, where he plans to study computer science. McKillip will also enroll at Georgia Tech, where he plans to study civil engineering. [Submitted photo]



Top Westminster grads headed to UGA

Westminster Christian Academy Valedictorian **Lillian Rebecca Atkinson (Lilly Atkinson)**, left, will be attending The University of Georgia in the fall. Salutatorian **Ansley Elizabeth Hovater (Ansley Hovater)**, right, will also attend UGA. [Submitted photo]



North Oconee High top grads receive their diplomas

Top North Oconee High School graduates look forward to their bright futures. From left, Valedictorian **Elizabeth Winter Thompson**, who will be attending Georgia Tech; Salutatorian **Ian Rogers**, who will also attend Georgia Tech; and Honorary **Shriya Sharma**, who will attend Williams College. [Photo courtesy Oconee County Schools]



PACS recognizes honor graduates

Prince Avenue Christian School has named the top award recipients of the Class of 2025. From left, Valedictorian **Meredith Hale**, Salutatorian **Dylan Capps** and Prince Epistle Award recipient **Kinsley Bowen**. Hale plans to attend the University of Georgia and major in history. Capps plans to attend Georgia Tech and major in mechanical engineering. Bowen will attend the University of Georgia and major in criminal justice. [Submitted photo]



The Oconee Board of Education recently honored MBMS student **Dheer Mehrotra**, who earned first place for a National Society DAR history essay contest. He will be recognized at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in June. [Photo by Nathalie Simoneau]

DAR Student

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

For the second consecutive year, Malcom Bridge Middle School seventh grader **Dheer Mehrotra** has been awarded the prestigious National American History Essay Award by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution for his essay entitled, “Enjoying a New Kind of Tea Party,” an account of North Carolina women’s protest against British taxation and laws.

This award is a testament to Dheer’s exceptional writing skills, creativity and dedication to academic excellence.

“Dheer’s essay stood out for its insightful analysis, compelling arguments and eloquent expression,” said

Gerri Wolfe, American history chair for the Apalachee Chapter, NSDAR. “Dheer will be honored at a special ceremony at DAR’s Continental Congress this June in Washington, D.C.”

Mehrotra plays soccer at MBMS and plays the trombone and baritone in the school band. He was notably in the District Honor Band.

MBMS student wins national contest

Impressively, he was the MathCounts state qualifier, a three-time regional winner for the Georgia student technology competition and a two-time school spelling bee winner. He is a four-time FBLA regional winner and placed first in Georgia in the FFA State Junior Prepared Public Speaking Leadership Development Event. Mehrotra dreams to be a lawyer or a judge.

Other winners include Bentley Stephens of Rocky Branch Elementary School, Jeonghyean “Eileen” Kim of RBES, Sophie Fields of Malcom Bridge Elementary School, Taryn Pitts of MBMS, Elisabetta Scalia of MBMS, Owen Gertsch of MBMS, Matthew Pirkel of MBMS and McKinley Campbell of Dove Creek Middle School.

Over the years, the Apalachee Chapter, NSDAR has worked with many deserving teachers, so this year, the chapter decided to recognize a teacher of American History.

MBMS eighth grade social studies teacher **Eric Schirmer** exemplifies was named Sate Finalist 2025 Outstanding Teacher of American

History.

“He designs creative and competent lesson plans to engage his students and consistently works to foster a spirit of patriotism and support of our country and Constitutional government,” according to the DAR.

In other news, the Apalachee Chapter, NSDAR placed flags in downtown Bogart last week in memory of local veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

“I am so proud that my city took up this honor,” said citizen Maggie Collins. “I, along with two friends, started this tradition many years ago.” The DAR is a women’s service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America’s future through better education for children. The Apalachee chapter each year assists with Wreaths Across America, in which its members aim to place a wreath on the grave of every veteran headstone in Oconee and Clarke counties each December. For more information, visit wreathscrossamerica.org.