

Valedictorian

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and Kara for being my biggest supporter.

Lastly, I would also like to thank my parents for their constant and unwavering support no matter what I took on these past four years. Whether it was late night soccer games, early morning cross country meets, or calming the panic I would inflict on myself by procrastinating my class projects until the night before they were due. I love you so much, and I thank you both for being with me every step of the way.

While none of us made it here alone, today also marks the beginning of what comes next. After tonight, we truly start the next chapter of our lives.

That next chapter will look very different for each and every one of you that will walk across the field tonight. Some of you may be so glad to leave Greene County and some of you may be dreading that you have to move on. One thing that is undeniable is that we owe a lot to this high school.

It is within this stage of our lives that we've grown to be the people that we are today. That doesn't mean any of us are finished growing, but it does mean we all have gained uniquely valuable lessons here at this school. Whether they were taught to us through losses or victories, we all can be grateful for the tight-knit community and smaller school that we had.

We formed bonds here that will last a lifetime because we spent four years surviving together in class. We can be grateful for the sports we got to be a part of, whether you were a part of one, two, or three, you were provided with a family to be with throughout your high school journey.

Or maybe you spent your time down the road at the vo-tech where you were blessed with preparation for the future that is ahead of you. Most of all we can be grateful that God placed us all here "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

Even though we leave tonight, the memories we made here will stick with us. Whether that be Bubba yelling at you from down the hall, or seeing him summersaulting into the library, being a part of a fully packed out student section under Friday night lights, experiencing the first principle change in who knows how many years, going to get Mr. Alan because your food got stuck in the vending machine again even after you tried shaking it free, or running errands for people so that you could stay out of class as long as possible, and many more memories are sure proof that our time here has been unforgettable.

The thought that I want to leave with each of you tonight comes from 1 Timothy 4:12. It says, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in



Photo by LYDIA MORENO | Herald Contributor
GCHS Valedictorian Sarah Barfield is shown delivering her address during commencement at Wildcat Stadium last Friday.

speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

It's easy for people to underestimate us at this stage of our lives, but I hope all of you can at least remember that statement. Don't let anyone look down on you. You set the standards for what you can accomplish. Fight for who you want to be, not for what someone else wants you to be.

Each of you have the drive and capability to make a difference wherever it is that you may go after tonight. Which takes me to the next point, set an example. What kind of life do you want others to see you live? In your life, how will you speak? How will you act? What kindness will you show? What will motivate you? What will you believe?

Be mindful of the witness you hold for others to see.

A new chapter means new challenges. Some of you tonight have already faced major obstacles that have torn you down. Some of you have yet to face that. Leaving this community will make us vulnerable to things we never would have imagined- trials, hardships, and tests of our faith.

There will be times where it will feel like the world is just happening to you, but I urge you all to remember that you are also happening to the world. Take action in the moment. Don't wait. No one is promised tomorrow, so you have to make sure that you are living boldly today.

Tonight I pray as Ephesians 3:17-18 says, that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be filled with all the fullness of God."

I hope each and every one of you will look to God in this next chapter and let Him lead you in every new step that you take, because for God, nothing is impossible. There's no problem too big or too small, and He always has open arms to share His unconditional and unfailing love.

And remember: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

Thank you all and Congratulations to the class of 2026!



1 - Sarah Elizabeth Barfield

2 - Lillian Rose Rau

3 - Caroline Ana Holder

4 - Sophie Norah Whalen

5 - Jacie Evon Ethridge



6 - Brody Lane Turner

7 - Riley Kate Byrd

8 - Keri Amberly Graham

9 - Laken Allison Turner

10 - Shanna Maria Johnson

GCHS Class of '26 Top 10

Finishing in the Top 10 of one's high school graduating class is a huge accomplishment. Earning that honor for the Greene County High School Class of 2026 were Sarah Barfield, Lillian Rau, Caroline Holder, Sophie Whalen, Jacie Ethridge, Brody Turner, Riley Kate Byrd, Keri Graham, Laken Turner and Shanna Johnson.

Graduation is a reminder that time indeed marches on

I've heard a few GCHS seniors say that their four years of high school went by faster than they thought it would and that senior year flew by so quickly, something they didn't expect. I told them the next four years would go by even faster, whether they were moving on to college or joining the workforce. We've all heard that sentiment; it's just life. As we celebrate the GCHS Class of 2026, let's take a moment to encourage them to take chances, learn from change and spread their wings far and wide.

Around the Greene

By ANNETTE HARVISON

Herald Contributor
High School Career Coach & Sr. Parent



around this year, it will be different. For those going off to college, school starts later, you may not go every day, you may be getting up early in the morning for a job you

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I agree with these students; these past four years have flown by for them and for all those making sure they made it to their graduation. Sports, band, homework and class projects, extracurricular activities and just time with friends have been the routine for the past four years. Each August would begin the same, with the same holidays and summer break. There was something new each year, but there was certainty that came with the same routine. When August comes

MAISAN, *Congratulations on a job WELL DONE.*
Now onto your next chapter!

ALWAYS remember to STAND STRONG on your faith.

CLASS OF 2026

NEVER FORGET the road that leads you home.

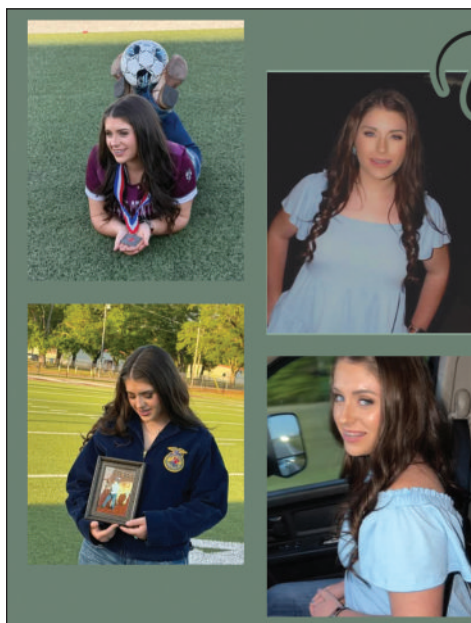
WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU!
Love, Mama, Daddy, and Dylan

Congratulations on your Graduation

I've been watching you over the years through pictures.

Lily

LOVE, Momma (Maygen)



Hip...Hip... WHOOOOO-ray!

TODAY is Your Day!

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
- Eleanor Roosevelt

Congratulations to our 4TH GRADE GRADUATE
BLAIR MILLER
and the Class of 2026 GRADUATES!



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