

# Top scholars win academic honors

Schools like Harvard, Stanford, Princeton and the University of Michigan beckon this year's team of Observer Academic All Stars.

They tackle it all — a tough academic schedule, part-time jobs, volunteer work — and do it all with flying colors.

The 16 members of the fifth annual Observer Newspaper Academic All-Star Team were selected based on high school grades combined with national test scores.

Our thanks to those 21 public and parochial schools who nominated students.

A note of thanks also goes to the committee of Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, who volunteered time to select students.

Principals serving on the committee were: Dale Coller, Stevenson High School; Clayton Graham, Harrison High School; Sister Joan Charnely, Bishop Borgess High School; Larry Boehm, Troy High School; and Tom Tatten, Plymouth-Canton High School.

A special thank you to Robert Schramke, principal of Redford Union High School, who headed the selection committee. It was Schramke who approached the Observer six years ago with the All-Star idea and who has helped develop the program over the years.

Here are this year's All Stars.



Lynn E. Biberdorf

LYNN E. BIBERDORF  
Plymouth Christian High School

Biberdorf hopes to mix linguistics and medical school for a career as a research scientist at a pharmaceutical corporation.

Despite a busy high school schedule and part-time job, she found time to score in the 99 percentile on the AATG National German Exam, win three National Science Olympiad medals, three Elks Student of the Month awards and participate in the University of Michigan's German Fest.

Biberdorf also kept active with volleyball, National Honor Society, Junior Achievement and volunteered time to be a peer counselor and tutor. In her free time she liked to participate in her church's youth group.

She's interested in attending a "research oriented university" like North Carolina's Duke, Michigan or Middlebury College in Vermont.

Biberdorf credits Dr. Linda Marlow, her German instructor, with having the most significant influence on her academic career.

"She pushes hard but is still very approachable and caring," Biberdorf said.

She is the daughter of Don and Jan Biberdorf of Plymouth.



Joshua I. Rintamaki

JOSHUA I. RINTAMAKI  
North Farmington High School,  
Farmington Hills

Versatile is the word that best describes Rintamaki.

Throughout his outstanding high school career he has been active in marching and jazz bands, symphony and orchestra. His musical and theatrical experience also encompasses choir, chorus and the role of Cowardly Lion in North Farmington's recent production of "The Wizard of Oz."

Other extracurricular activities include track, Eagle Scout, National Honor Society, Odyssey of the Mind and Quiz Bowl.

He's collected such honors as National Merit Finalist, academic letters and citations for excellence from Phi Beta Kappa and Tau Beta Sigma.

Rintamaki was also a member of the Governor's Honor Guard at Mackinaw Island for two years.

The versatility extends to his plans for the future.

He's interested in majoring in aerospace-aeronautical engineering, chemical or nuclear engineering at the University of Michigan. He would like to work for an aeronautical firm or teach chemistry one day.

Rintamaki also plans to try out for U-M's marching band.

This summer he'll participate with North Farmington's band in an International Music Festival to be held in Germany.

Carl Gippert, director of all North Farmington bands, and Beverly Schmitt, a chemistry teacher at North, have been the biggest influences on his academic career.

"Both of these teachers have taught

me that with enough hard work, practice, and patience, anything is possible and to always strive for perfection in whatever I do."



Michele A. O'Toole  
MICHELE A. O'TOOLE  
Churchill High School

A double major in mathematics and biology/bio-chemistry will keep Churchill all-star O'Toole busy in the honors programs at the University of Michigan.

A Class Scholar-Summa Cum Laude and member of the National Honor Society, she also excelled in the German National Honor Society and made the Principal's Honor Roll.

Her activities included flag corps, International Thespian Society Chapter, German Club, Students Against Driving Drunk and reporter for the school paper.

She praised two teachers, David Brown and Nancy Mack, for instilling in her a love for math and literature.

"They both encouraged me and helped me perform well," O'Toole said.

"I owe so much to these teachers and if I can accomplish a fraction of what these amazing people have with me, I will feel greatly rewarded."

O'Toole hopes to correct a popular misconception about teenagers once she fulfills her dream to become a high school or college math teacher.

She'd like to change the negatives to positives by supporting her future students and their dreams.



Mark Farris

MARK FARRIS

Plymouth-Canton High School

Farris combined strength and smarts as a student leader during his academic career at Plymouth-Canton.

A member of the National Honor Society and co-captain of the Computer Programming Team, he was also captain of the Quiz Bowl team. He collected such honors as National Merit Scholarship finalist and participated in the John R. Kirk Honors Institute at Northeast Missouri State University.

Farris demonstrated an avid interest in sports by being active in the ski club, cross-country, track, junior varsity basketball and community league basketball leagues.

He's undecided about his career objectives at this point but feels the variety of interests offered by college will help him to choose.

A teacher, Jerold Thompson, has had the biggest influence on Farris' academic career.

"I have had him for two different English courses in which he taught me to write better, think more critically and challenged me with many new ideas," said Farris, whose parents are Robert and Lorraine of Canton Township.



Matthew J. Thomas

MATTHEW J. THOMAS  
Churchill High School, Livonia

Thomas has his eye on a career in business and law.

Future plans include a stint at the University of Michigan for a degree in business administration and law and then to work for a major corporation.

He's kept busy in high school with extracurricular activities that include track, varsity debate, debate judge and Chemistry Club.

His honors include Designated Class Scholar for three years, principal's list for academic excellence for 18 card markings and a Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association certificate of merit for superior honors in discussion.

He credits his parents for instilling the confidence and drive to achieve.

"Throughout my career it has been my parents who have influenced and

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