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The Eccentric Academic All-Stars

Meet the 1999 Eccentric Academic All-Stars. Sixteen students who are the brightest and the best in our area. Each has a wide range of interests in mathematics. He took first place in last year's Michigan Math Prize Competition. The following pages tell the stories of these students, who have earned top honors in their schools, in their communities, and on the national tests scores submitted by 160,32 public and private high schools in our part of Oakland County. The national tests are either the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT).

Their selection was made by a committee composed of nine high school educators: Larry Boehms of Troy High, Dale Cutler of Livonia Stevenson, Jim Dances of Troy High, George Fornero of West Bloomfield High, Tom Johnston of Northville High, Donald Lange of Southfield High, Don May of Birmingham High, Terry Piper of Birmingham Seaholm and David S. Symington of Bloomfield Hills Andover.

We thank them for their time and [illegible]

Several students rang up perfect 1600's on the SAT, and one had both a perfect SAT and ACT score. Most had all A grades, and all have been elected to their school's National Honor Society. Many members of these newspapers' 16th Academic All-Star Team are headed to the University of Michigan, with Harvard, Stanford and Massachusetts Institute of Technology next in line. Engineering, biology and math are their most popular fields of study.

"As you will read, many are eloquent in explaining how an individual teacher has influenced their lives.

— Judy Berne
Academic All-Stars coordinator

KIMBERLY KUETHER
Walled Lake Western

Kimberly Kuether is our top Academic All-Star with a perfect 4.0 grade point average and their ultimate 1600 score on the SAT. She'll attend the University of Michigan's engineering school, majoring in computer engineering, with the help of a $40,000 U-M Engineering Board of Honor.

Kuether is also the Winner of a $2,000 National Merit Scholarship, a nominee for the 1999 Presidential Scholars Program and winner of the John D. Warner Scholarship at U-M. She is one of 10 students selected for Class A Academic All-State, sponsored by the Michigan Association of Secondary Principals. She holds the Benjamin Lomb Science and Women in Engineering awards and is president of her school's chapter of National Honor Society.

Selected for participation in the Edumentor Program, she has done research at Wayne State University under Dr. Robert Arking, designing and implementing a study of oxidative stress on fruit flies.

A viola player and vocalist, she is section leader of A Cappella Choir and Chamber Singers and section leader in the Advanced Strings and Symphony Orchestra. Among her many musical activities and awards, she was All-State at Interlochen in both the intermediate and high school orchestras and in high school choir, where she was chosen for Chamber Singers. She can alike easily selected from the All-State High School Choir. Kuether also has appeared in school musicals.

Michael Fornanek is Kuether's choice as most influential teacher. "He instructs his students in what they will need for later success in mathematics. He teaches for a deeper understanding of the material, more than just memorizing formulas. He works with students who need help outside of class; always offering whatever is needed for a student's success...I think Mr. Fornanek far teaching us to aim high, pushing us to test our limits and encouraging us to expand our boundaries. He remains true to those values now as many around him let go of them. It was a privilege to be one of Mr. Formanek's students."

She is the daughter of Roger and Julie Kuether of Wixom.

JASON CHENG
Rochester Adams

As a 4.0 student, Jason Cheng scored 1600 on his SAT. He is a tennis player on Rochester Adams's Varsity Tennis Team. He will study engineering at the University of Michigan on a $9,000 scholarship, renewable for four years.

He is a $2,000 National Merit Scholarship Winner and published in the top 100 on the Michigan Math Prize Competition in both 1997 and 1999. He also took third place in the state on the 1998 National German Exam.

Playing piano and is treasurer of the Detroit Pawnamen Youth Orchestra. He also is treasurer of his school's Eco-Life Club, belongs to the Math Club and plays junior varsity tennis.

German teacher Janie Barner is his choice as most influential teacher. "She teaches precisely and her lessons are interesting."

His parents are Peter Leong and [illegible] Cheng of Rochester.

WEI (Vicky) ZHAO
Troy Athens

Vicky Zhao has a perfect 4.0 grade point average and a 1600 total on the SAT to finish in second place tie with Jason Cheng. Another would-be engineer, she is choosing between Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Zhao is the Winner of a PPG Industries National Merit Scholarship, which gives her $1,600 renewable for four years. She is also a Radio Shack Tandy Scholar, for which she was featured in April 12th issue of Time Magazine. She won the Brande & Lesh Honorary Science Award, the Society of Women Engineers Marie Curie Award, the American Chemical Association Schlitz Achievement Award and [illegible] Academic Excellence.

A top math scholar, she came in 20th in the state in the Michigan Math Prize Competition (1998), winning the Brems Award and a $450 scholarship and was a finalist three times. She also won the American High School Math Exam Award of Distinction and an Oakland University Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Achievement in multivariable calculus and differential equations.

Captain of the Athens Feminists Team, she was elected to the National Forensics League's Top Team in Michigan in 1998 and has reached the state finals in each of the past three years, finishing seventh last year.

At Athens, she is a finalist in Students Against Drunk Driving and Spanish Club, as well as secretary of Quiz Bowl Club. She claims community service projects for her school's National Honor Society chapter and volunteers at a local hospital.

A pianist, she was the San Antonio Association Senate Festival Winner in 1996, then also won top ratings in regional and state levels of the Michigan Schools Band and Orchestra Association Solo Ensemble.

Zhao selects her seventh grade English teacher, Karen Guitar, as influential because she "touched me with her enthusiasm and vitality. She also was the first one to encourage me to take giant steps forward and not be afraid."

Her parents are Beimu Yu and Mei Zhao of Troy.

MICHAEL KHOURY, JR.
Berkley

Third-place finisher Michael Khoury, Jr. has just a single B+ in his otherwise all-A high school record and a sizzling 1590 on the SAT. He plans to double major in math and Spanish at the University of Michigan.

Khoury has been both a volunteer and tutor as well as an active participant at St. Hugo's Church. He also found time to take Interlochen and multivariate calculus through Stanford University's Educational Program for Gifted Youth, receiving A's in both courses.

He honors Vernon Tenny, his Spanish teacher for two years, as the teacher who showed me that excellence is possible and showed me how to attain it. For my final exam, she spent an entire class period taking me through a Spanish story. I also study short stories we had read, which I was to answer in Spanish. That is the hardest thing I have ever done with language."

His parents are Michael, Sr. and Sue Khoury of Bloomfield Hills.

MEGAN GUY
Rochester Adams

Megan Guy sports a 4.0 grade point average and 1600 on the SAT. She hopes to major in film at Brown or Harvard University. She also composes herself pretty well.

She is a 2000 National Merit Scholarship Winner and a finalist for Presidential Scholars. She is also a member of the Society of Women Engineers National Award. She finished in the top 100 on the Michigan Math Prize Competition for the past two years and took first honors in the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics competition for two years. Her writing has been published in literary magazines and books.

As a junior, Guy was named Adam's Environmental School Student of the Year. She is president of Students Against Drunk Driving, has played both lead and supporting roles in various plays and musicals, and captains the softball team. This versatile young person also plays piano, guitar and sings in the school's select vocal ensemble which won top ratings in state competitions. And she coaches a third grade softball team.

Guy's most influential teacher, Science teacher David Glenn influenced Guy's present choice of career. "I first met Mr. Glenn on an ecology/biology trip to Yellowstone. That trip changed my perspective on science. Subsequent classes with Mr. Glenn have intrigued me further and I now want to pursue biology as a career." She calls English teacher Carol Mikofski "an amazing lady, in and out of the classroom. I really admire her."

Her parents are Rob and Maureen Guy of Rochester.

JULIAN GOODMAN
Bloomfield Hills Andover

Julian Goodman matches Megan Guy's scores with an all-A average and 1580 SAT. Goodman will attend Harvard University. He plans to study the sciences.

He is a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, the winner of the Carroll Book Award, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Medal and the 1998 Detroit Chemistry Olympiad. He finished in the top 100 in the Michigan Math Prize Competition.

Goodman explains the Andover Varsity Quiz Bowl team and is secretary-treasurer of the Symphony, Marching and U-M Youth bands. He also has directed theatrical productions.

"My band teacher, Robert Ambresen, has taught me not only how to make beautiful music but also many other invaluable life lessons."

His parents are Roy and Judith Goodman of Bloomfield Hills.

KALMAN NANES
Birmingham Groves

Not only did Kalman Nanes score a perfect 1600 on the SAT, but he also scored a perfect 36 on the ACT. For this Academic All-Star competition he combines the SAT mark with a 3.923 grade point average. The Groves senior will attend the University of Michigan to study mathematics.

He is a $2,000 National Merit Scholarship Winner and a two-time winner of a Bronze Award in Michigan Math Prize Competition. He also had the opportunity to sing in many highly regarded choirs. For three years, he's been part of the Regional Honors Choir and the State Honors Choir, set up by the Michigan State Vocal Music Association.

And for two years, he was in Chamber Singers, the elite group selected from the All-State High School Choir at Interlochen. He has also received top ratings at the state level for performances both with his sister and his school's jazz/madrigal ensemble.

Nanes co-captains the Groves Quiz Bowl Team. He also takes part in a Gifted and Talented Project in music composition and web page design. He takes his second English class at Oakland University. And he is a member of a trivia quiz group at regional and national tournaments.

He recognizes David Ingram as his most influential teacher from fifth grade on. "Mr. Ingram has been very influential to his development. "He worked with me on his bench hour to help me get further ahead in math."

His parents are Harry and Susan Nanes of Southfield.

KRISHNA PERNI
Detroit Country Day

A perfect 1600 SAT score and a 3.92 grade point average at the highly competitive private Detroit Country Day School makes Krishna Perni an Eccentric Academic All-Star.

He will attend Stanford University, planning to go into medicine.

Perni is a National Merit Finalist, an American High School Mathematics Finalist and a member of the Cum Laude Honor Society. He was part of the DCD Quiz Bowl team which won a state and national championship.

Extracurricular activities include the Math Club, Math competitive competitions and attendance at the Detroit Youth Scientific Forum on Medicine and National Youth Leadership Conference.

History teacher Dr. Carl Westhoff, has influenced him most. "Dr. Westhoff has helped me to see history as a complex, continuous, interconnected web of events increasingly relevant to the subject," Perni writes.

His parents are Drs. Jaya Ramaiah and Raja Kumari Perni of West Bloomfield.

CRYSTAL SHIH
Troy High

Crystal Shih scored up a 4.0 grade point average and 1520 on the SAT. She is headed to Massachusetts of Technology to major in biology.

Shih is the Winner of a $2,500 ITS National Merit Scholarship, renewable for four years. She is also an AP Scholar with Distinction, and appears among Who's Who Among American High School Students.

At Troy High, she is president of Quiz Bowl, and active in Students Against Drunk Driving, Project Lead, Science Olympiad, Young Writers Club and Future Problem Solvers. A violinist, she is a member of Troy County Fiddlers and the Troy Symphony Orchestra.

"For the most part, my teachers have all taken influential roles in my life," Shih writes. "The strongest influence comes from my tenth grade biology teacher Mr. Hesam Bazzi. His dedication to his students, and his love of his subject made biology very interesting and enjoyable to study."

Her parents are Peter and Winifred Shih of Troy.

JACK CHAO
Troy High

Jack Chao is another all-A student who scored 1540 on the SAT. He is choosing among the University of Michigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University, where he expects to major in electrical engineering.

He is a $2,000 National Merit Scholarship Winner, AP Scholar and was honored as a Phi Beta Kappa Certificate of Recognition. He was named a High School Scholar by the Detroit Chinese Engineers Association and received the Excellence in Academics, Leadership and Community Service from the Association of Chinese Americans. He was a Finalist in the Michigan Math Prize Competition and was lauded for outstanding academic Achievement in Oakland University's multivariable calculus course. He is listed in Who's Who Among American High School Students.

Chao is president of Troy High's regional academic quiz team and participates in the Science Olympiad.

He is treasurer of Project Lead and active in Students Against Drunk Driving. He plays violin in the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, the Troy High School Symphony Orchestra and received top ratings at the state level in solo and ensemble. He also plays piano and was honored as American Guild of Music North American Age Achievement Champion. He was named Student-Athlete for Cross Country and participates in Tennis.

His most influential teacher is Rose Graham. "He taught in such a way that his subject (chemistry) made perfect sense and everything fit

See ACADEMIC ALL-STARS, A6

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