

# Meet the 2002 *Observer* Academic All-Stars



Michael McDonald  
Salem High School

Representing the brightest among their high school peers, these 18 students have become models of excellence because of their high grades, grade point averages and standardized test scores.

But these students also show through their extracurricular involvement their commitment to excelling outside the classroom. These students strive for excellence in sports, academia, school activities and the work world, as many of them became employees for the first time.

As in past years, this year's All-Stars were chosen on the basis of their grade point averages in academic subjects - including math, English, social studies, science and foreign language - and on the basis of their SAT or ACT test scores.

Listed in order of point ranking are the 2002 Academic All-Stars:

Michael McDonald, Salem High School; Walter C. Lin, Churchill High School; Matthew R. Elsey, Harrison High School; Anne Lieberman, North Farmington High School; Tekla Bude, Canton High School; Adam Z. Kogut, Churchill High School; Bethany Nestor, North Farmington High School; Stacey Ann Schroeder, Ladywood High School; Daniel Christensen, Canton High School; Prashanth Pandian, Harrison High School; John W. Schultz, Detroit Catholic Central High School; Alex Duncan, Farmington High School; Drew Mokris, Farmington High School; Luman Tomby, Thurston High School; Suzanne Valade, Mercey High School; Rebecca Lobenherz, Salem High School; Jerin Philip, Detroit Catholic Central High School; and Laura Anne Meili, Clarenceville High School.

Michael McDonald  
Salem High School  
Plymouth

For Michael McDonald, a Salem senior, being a student is a full-time job.

McDonald rounds out his "job" as a student by logging 30-plus hours weekly in marching band, where he is section leader; jazz band; pit orchestra; Math Olympiad; National Honor Society; track and field; Dearborn Homecoming; the "Santa Snaps" picture program; Rouge River clean-up and by serving as a Field Elementary Latchkey volunteer.

McDonald plans to attend the University of Michigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology or California Institute of Technology to study applied physics or materials science and engineering.

Academic accolades include National Merit Finalist; U.S. Department of Education Presidential Scholars Program; Michigan Math Prize Competition Finalist and winning third place in *The Fountainhead* Essay Contest.

McDonald cited his most influential teacher as Ben McMurray, who teaches philosophy.

"His class turned me into a more skeptical thinker, qualities I think are very healthy in a world when so much information through the Internet and otherwise is easily available."

To improve public education, McDonald said he would move high school start times back to accommodate a teenager's sleep patterns.

"I have a hard time with morning lecture-oriented classes, because I am often drowsy," he said.

McDonald is the son of John and Sandra McDonald, and the brother of John, 31; Kathy, 29; and Mary, 27.

Walter C. Lin  
Churchill High School  
Livonia

For Churchill senior Walter C. Lin, the school day doesn't end when the dismissal bell rings.

Lin keeps busy after school by participating in student government, where he has held a variety of offices; earning varsity letters in track and field and cross country and serving as a member of the National Honor Society, Spirit Committee and Students Against Destructive Decisions.

Outside of school, Lin volunteers at Botsford Hospital and Marywood Nursing Home.

Lin said he plans to attend the University of Michigan, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale

University, Princeton University, Cornell University or the University of Pennsylvania to study bioengineering or mechanical engineering - to prepare himself for a career as a physician or engineer.

Lin's academic accomplishments include National Merit Finalist; AP Scholar with honors; Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition honorable mention and certificate of distinction; Summa Cum Laude graduate; honor roll; American High School Mathematics Examination Certificate of Distinction; certificates of merit in AP biology, AP calculus, AP computers, math/science/computers program curriculum, (including accelerated Algebra 2), chemistry, computer math, accelerated analysis, physics and biology; Sigma Mathematics League merit award and Western Lakes Activities Association scholar athlete.

Lin said Mary Buda, a math teacher, was most influential of all his teachers.

"As one of my teachers for each year in high school, (Buda) has instilled in me a sense of responsibility for everyone around me as well as for myself."

Lin said that to improve public education, he would try to encourage more interest in math, science and computers.

"Since the world has grown more dependent on math, science and technology, I would provide funding to schools to encourage interest in these areas and to introduce students to conducting research in these fields."

Lin is the son of Charlie and Katherine Lin, and younger brother of Peter, 20, and Nancy, 24.

Matthew R. Elsey  
Harrison High School  
Farmington Hills

Harrison High School senior Matthew Elsey's accomplishments in math and science may help him as he goes on to college to study math or physics at one of several prestigious universities across the country.

Elsey is a member of Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science (TEAMS), as well as class vice president and a varsity basketball captain; participates in track and field and has served as a delegate in the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference.

Elsey said he plans to put his knowledge to work at Northwestern University, the

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## On the cover

All Stars: Laura Anne Meili (bottom row left), Bethany Nestor (back row, left to right), Anne Lieberman, Matthew Elsey, and Luman Temby (bottom, right).



All Stars: Walter C. Lin (bottom), Rebecca Lobenherz (left to right), Drew Mokris, Adam Z. Kogut and Stacey Ann Schroeder.

All Stars: Jerin Philip (bottom left), Prashanth Pandian (back row, left to right), Daniel Christensen, Tekla Bude, John W. Schultz, Alex Duncan, and Suzanne Valade (bottom right)



Matthew R. Elsey  
Harrison High School



Anne Lieberman  
North Farmington High School