

The Commentator

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Douglas Southall Freeman High School



The Commentator Editors:

Top (L to R): Lowell Smith, Maggie Sheerin, Davis Buckbee, Annie Stephens, Sarah Echols, Emma Johnson, Maddie Sherman,
Middle (L to R): Addison Gorenflo, Gretchen Neary, Salaar Khan, Sadie Rogerson, Megan McDonald, Abby Taylor, Sabereh Saleh,
Bottom (L to R): Josh DuPuis, Will Dornik, Caroline Tyler, Abby Zorn, Balazs Kaszala, Marcus Rand, Piper Finkelson

Embarrassing My Way Through High School



Megan McDonald
Editor-in-Chief

I love Freeman. My high school experience was not the picturesque story seen in movies, nor was it filled with overwhelming hardships.

I enjoyed my time at Freeman for a number of reasons, and I think if you really looked back on your high school experience you would be able to see some good in

it as well. Ironically, the times at Freeman when I most embarrassed myself and wished I could forget became my most memorable.

As the only freshman in an AP Environmental class full of seniors, I was so pathetically intimidated and shy that I maintained almost perfect silence for the entire year. Seven months into the school year, Mr. Meador asked a senior to pass out a stack of papers, the first of which was mine. The senior said he must've been given the wrong class and asked "Who's Megan?" I silently raised my hand as the entire class laughed and looked at me.

At that instant, I wanted to cower behind my corner table more than ever. But, however embarrassing, that moment taught me that if you don't speak up, say something, and invite people to get to know you, you might as well not even be there.

During my junior year, my friend

and I were presenting a project in French, but we could not get a word out without breaking into fits of hysterical laughter even though nothing was particularly funny. We absolutely lost it either time one of us spoke, and our teacher was not impressed.

This taught me a number of things, the first of which was that I was not cut out for French and the second was that if we take ourselves too seriously and stress over the project, tests, or assignments that don't go our way we have a lot less opportunities for laughter. I am not advising you to screw up school presentations for a good laugh, but I think it's important to realize that perfect academic performance is not always worth sacrificing your enjoyment of the experience.

My most recent embarrassing moment happened just a few months ago, and it was one that humbled me greatly. Those that

know me best know that I prefer to drive without shoes on. I often find myself rushing out the door anyway and tend to put shoes on at stoplights or when I've reached my destination.

On a particularly rushed morning, I was heading out the door while also reading over notes for a test, and desperately trying to avoid getting yet another tardy pass. In all my spastic unpreparedness I arrived at the student lot and realized I was shoeless.

As luck would have it, it was also pouring down rain so not only would I catch judgemental glares on my way into school, but I was also sure to catch some sort of disgusting parking lot gutter water disease. I decided to ask anyone I could find if they had a spare pair of shoes in their car. And after a good bit of humiliation and no success I decided it was time to throw in the towel, give up, go home, miss my test, and get an unexcused

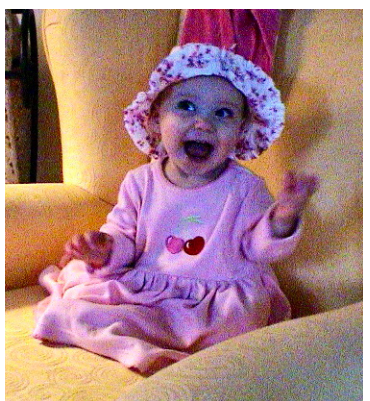
absence. Just as I was about to pull out of my parking space my hero arrived in a Toyota RAV4.

I have never been more excited to see a pair of shoes in life than when she pulled her extra pair of sneakers out of her trunk. (Thank you Addison!) Once you forget shoes, you'll never do it again, but more than that I learned sometimes you have to slow down, and come prepared.

I'm not sure why it is the embarrassing memories that really last with us. I promise I have many more happy memories at Freeman in addition to all of these humiliating ones.

In the past four years, I have met some of my closest friends, had many great laughs, and learned things too of course. I am thankful for this span of four awkward, sometimes embarrassing, but certainly iconic years.

The Stories We Share and the Ones We Should Be Sharing



Sadie Rogerson
Editor-in-Chief

It's difficult to write a senior reflection article when you don't feel like you've experienced any dramatic personal growth or rev-

elation in high school.

It seems pointless to take a random anecdote and painstakingly attempt to extract from it a universal truth or inspiring story to share with those that will graduate in years to come. I know this, because before writing this article, I wrote an entirely different one. It was about overcoming my fear of judgement. It started with a cute story about the night before my first day of kindergarten and continued on to describe how I learned to make decisions and take action without worrying about what others might think. And it was a fine article—some people might have even found it relatable or touching—but it wasn't very authentic.

The reason why my original article felt so ingenuitous is because I've been fortunate enough not to

have endured any serious hardship or life-altering event over the past four years. Like everyone else, I've had ups and downs, with some peaks higher and some valleys lower than others. As a whole, however, life has treated me fairly well since I started my freshman year in 2016. Within the context of a society experiencing the election of a deeply divisive president, countless shootings, a global pandemic, and shocking police brutality, I recognize the privilege I have in being able to say that. I know that I have peers who have had to deal with real life challenges and that sometimes those narratives don't have an uplifting ending. I also know that the people who carry those stories often don't have the opportunity to share them.

That's why when I tried to sit

down and write about overcoming some conflict, I felt like a fraud. I've chosen instead to write a different article; one that acknowledges that I am a part of the privileged segment of high school students in this county whose day to day lives have been relatively uneventful considering the state of our world. And with this recognition must come subsequent action. I cannot control the socioeconomic class into which I was born, the area in which I grew up, nor the circumstances in which I was raised. What I can control is how I use these advantages to uplift those who lack them.

I don't wish to come across as though I'm standing on my soapbox or to diminish the value of the stories of those in the same boat as me. By no means do I think my-

self qualified to lecture about one's privilege, or lack thereof. Everyone has their own unique perspective to add to the narrative of our community. I believe, however, that in this current day and age my voice and the voices of those who benefit from the same privileges as I do aren't the ones that need to be heard, unless they are being used to right a wrong.

So if you have been lucky enough to have a high school experience and life similar to mine, now is the time to use it for good. It's only through the collective use of our voices that those who have been quieted by injustice can tell their own story. "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." - Martin Luther King Jr.

A Farewell Message to the Class of 2020

John Marshall
Principal

Class of 2020, you are an accomplished group, but we know that you are just getting started. It has been our honor to help prepare you for this day. It is now up to you to take the lessons that you've learned to your next chapter.

The official term for this ceremony is a commencement, which means "a beginning." I think that term is specifically appropriate for the class of 2020.

We shared a beginning together back in 2016. Yours was the first class of freshmen I met when I arrived at Freeman almost 4 years ago. I remember how nervous you all were at Rebel Camp, such a contrast from the confident young adults that I saw in our hallways this spring.

This week also marks the end of my first year as principal, a fact that will etch your class fondly into my memories for the rest of my life. While on the topic of "beginnings," I'm reminded of how our year started together. The night before the first day of school

this year, when I was doing a final walk-through of the building, I got word that some seniors had chalked the parking lot and walkways as a prank. In typical class of 2020 fashion, there was nothing offensive or inappropriate as I feared there might have been, but I did notice some unlucky individuals still in their cars in the parking lot as I began to clean up (you know who you are). In typical class of 2020 fashion, rather than speed off or run away, they got out of their cars and offered to help. That is the class of 2020, always willing to help others, as our com-

munity service numbers show, and sacrifice for the good of the community, as they have done for the last few months.

Like the start of high school and the start of this year, we sit at another moment of commencement, a beginning, for you personally as you leave us to accomplish great things as learners, leaders and rebels, and for our country and world as we begin to recover from this tremendously disruptive and tragic spring.

Class of 2020 you have continually shown your selfless character in service to others and determi-

nation, remaining focused and positive despite challenges and setbacks. As you begin the next journey, don't lose those skills, they will serve you and this world well. Just as you used your talents and grit to shape our school and community starting with those new beginnings, I have confidence that you will do the same for the world in this moment of commencement.

Congratulations Class of 2020 and thank you for all that you have given to the Freeman Family.

The Irony of Walls



Maggie Sheerin
News Editor

The funny thing about walls is that they are never quite as strong as we think they are. From shopping centers to hotels to high rises, walls cave in and leave an unknown future in their wake. From my four years at Freeman, I learned that the same is true for people.

Walking through the halls on the first day of freshman year, I found

myself keeping my head down, eyes glued to my phone, determined to not draw any attention to myself. It seemed almost instinctual to me, wanting to keep myself hidden from all that surrounded me. After all, this was nothing new, I had always been guarded, choosing to blend in rather than stand out. In many ways, it seemed like a normal start to a normal school year, a continuation of a years-long habit. However, what I didn't know that day was that over the next four years I would be forced to put my guard down and to let my walls begin to fall.

It started gradually, with teachers calling on me more in classes, unknown faces becoming familiar ones, and small talk turning into meaningful conversations. Without realizing it, Freeman was beginning to chip away at the walls I had built around myself.

As freshman year blended into sophomore year and sophomore year became junior year, I found myself changing in small ways. I began to look up in the hallways,

smiling at a favorite teacher and talking aimlessly with someone who I hadn't known the year prior. I started to raise my hand in class without being called on and volunteering to lead group projects. I decided to run for officer positions in clubs and found myself speaking louder and more confidently. Most importantly, I realized that I was never alone. I had a family in Freeman unlike any other. A family that pushed me and supported me just as much as my biological one. A family that taught me that walls are overrated and that it's much better to be vulnerable and to be yourself.

So, as I watch my senior year come to a close, I find myself wanting to urge others to let their walls down, no matter how scary it may seem. In all honesty, they may already be coming down and you don't even realize it yet. But don't worry, the walls of Freeman are here to hold you up and protect you and I promise they are stronger than any walls you may have built for yourself.

COUNTED YOUR ABSENCES FOR EXAM EXEMPTION	RAN FROM THE PARKING LOT TO SCHOOL IN UNDER 2 MINUTES	FELL ASLEEP IN CLASS	BEEN TO CHICK-FIL-A MORE THAN 3 TIMES IN ONE WEEK	TRIPPED ON THE HILL™ OR THE STAIRS
HIDDEN IN THE HALLWAY DURING A TORNADO	HIT A CAR/BEEN HIT IN THE STUDENT LOT	GOT FOOD DROPPED OFF AT SCHOOL (BEFORE OR AFTER BAN)	ATTENDED A FREEMAN VS GODWIN BASKETBALL GAME	SEEN A COCKROACH
STUDIED AT THE NEW AND OLD PANERA LOCATIONS	BEEN EVACUATED DUE TO A BOMB THREAT	Free	EATEN AT EL CAP AND COOKOUT IN THE SAME WEEK	HAD EARLY BIRD OR EARLY RELEASE
BEEN CAUGHT IN A TARDY SWEEP	BEEN IN THE HOMECOMING PARADE	DRESSED UP FOR HALLOWEEN	RESPECTED THE BAND	HAD LUNCH IN THE SENIOR COURTYARD (BONUS POINTS IF IN THE RAIN)
PARKED IN A TEACHER'S SPACE	WENT TO EVERY FOOTBALL GAME	HAD AN ICE CREAM SANDWICH ON DR. FREEMAN'S BIRTHDAY	GOTTEN KNOCKED OVER IN THE CW OR SWEET CAROLINE	DRIVEN A LAP ON THE RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY

Freeman Class of 2020 Bingo

My Four Years in Art Form



Abby Taylor
A&E Editor

I decided to capture my Freeman experience through the way I express myself best: my art. The four years I spent at this school weren't easy, but I ultimately came out a better person. I wouldn't have it any other way. I will miss my Freeman Family!

We asked, you answered:

What Should You Pack for College?



- "My Xbox"
- "A George Foreman"
- "Hand sanitizer"
- "Bedazzled facemask"
- "My friends"
- "Sneakers"
- "My plants"
- "My cats"
- "Movies! + sweatpants as an essential classroom item"
- "My favorite stuffed animal"
- "Running shoes"
- "Serotonin"
- "My dogs"
- "Mangos"
- "My crocs"
- "My hamster"
- "Harry Styles"
- "Framed picture of Ron Swanson"
- "One Direction shrine"
- "My glow in the dark fidget spinner"
- "Water filter"
- "Mom, especially for her advice"
- "Liquid luck or Felix felicitis"
- "My backyard swimming pool"
- "Pedialyte"
- "My high school boyfriend"
- "Shower caddy and shoes"
- "Red Bull"
- "Ramen"
- "Mr. Marshall"

To Freeman's Future Leaders



Salaar Khan
Online Editor-in-Chief

In the past four years, Freeman has become a second home to me. It is where I have made some of my fondest memories and had some of my best opportunities. But all of these meaningful experiences would have meant very little without the incredible people who define Freeman. The faculty, parents, and students of our school truly embody a "Freeman Family".

There are so many ways in which they will support, teach, and challenge you both inside and outside the classroom. But my advice for you is not about the incredible four years Freeman will give you; it is about how you can give back. Nothing has been more fulfilling for me in high school than the opportunities I've had to lead. Here are some tips for the students who will keep leading in the years to come:

1. Everyone can be a leader. One of the biggest misconceptions is that all leaders, especially as students, need to be outgoing extroverts who love the spotlight. Those kinds of people can make great leaders, but so can everybody else! Some of the most effective leaders I've seen have not always been the loudest voices, but the most passionate, the most organized, or the most sensible. The best leaders are often those who might be more hesitant, so don't be afraid to get outside your comfort zone.

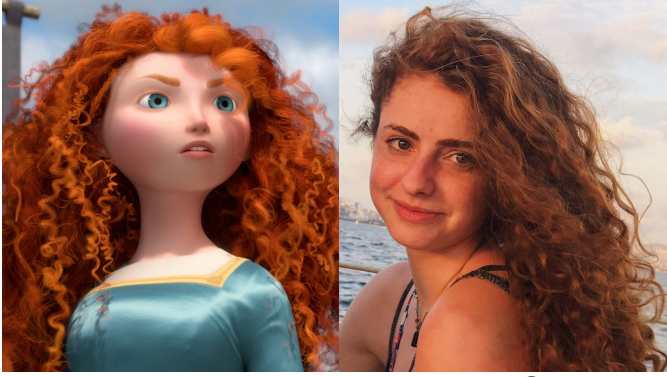
2. Take initiative! Not every leadership role is an elected class officer or a captain of a sportsteam. If you're interested in a club, get involved or see how you can help. If you care about something that there isn't an organization for, find other people who care and start one yourself. It takes a lot of leadership just to take action.

3. Freeman is bigger than just its campus. The extent of the Freeman Family isn't limited to the building (or to the Cook Out next door). There are businesses, neighborhoods, families, and alumni all of which are worth engaging. Find new ways to help bring the school closer with our community, and don't limit your potential impact to the classroom.

All of you have the potential to be leaders for whatever things you care about. You don't need to wait until you're a senior to take on responsibility (in fact, the earlier the better!) I'm proud of the Class of 2020 for everything we've been able to do, but as we pass the torch, I know that we've left the school we love in great hands. Freeman's future has never looked brighter!



Henry Donovan as Michael Cera (Superbad)



Grace Carter as Merida (Brave)



Bryan Angel as Miguel (Coco)



Ashwin Suresh as Baljeet (Phineas and Ferb)



Meredith Hearn as Angela (The Office)



Liam Martin as Seth Rogen

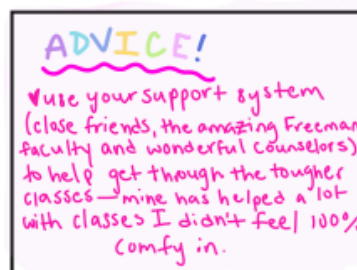
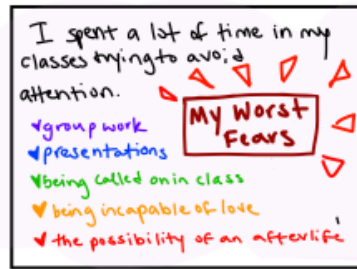
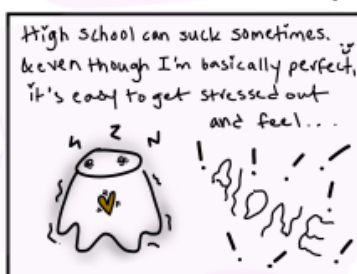
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Finding Support



Sabereh Saleh
A&E Editor



HE SAID

Davis Buckbee
Opinions Editor

She Said

Annie Stephens
Opinions Editor



Days are long, but the years are short

High School

Three and a half years done right!

If only I hadn't complained about not having snow days...

Friday, March 13, 2020

HAGS!

I have 10 stashed away for when they're worth a fortune

The \$2 Bill

Pointless. Come on TJ.

Gotta buy in bulk when your skin tone is Casper the Ghost

Aloe Vera

Love taking aloe vera baths after tanning.

Blackberry brickbreaker was better than any iPhone game

Blackberries (the phones)

Bring them back. Overthrow Apple.

Just like getting the top bunk at a sleepover>>>

Lofted Dorm Beds

Finna need a trampoline

More connections-- it's all about networking

Going to college with high school friends

4 more years!!! Yay!!!

My Four Years at Freeman in Playlists



Balazs Kaszala
Design Editor

FRESHMAN YEAR	SOPHOMORE YEAR	JUNIOR YEAR	SENIOR YEAR
"Dazed and Confused" Led Zeppelin	"The Moment" Tame Impala	"The Show Goes On" Lupe Fiasco	"Runnin' Down a Dream" Tom Petty
"Ain't No Mountain High Enough" Marvin Gaye	"I Can Talk" Two Door Cinema Club	"Time to Pretend" MGMT	"Viva La Vida" Coldplay
"Cool Kids" Echosmith	"Better Days" OneRepublic	"Free Fallin'" Tom Petty	"Wild Ones" Flo Rida
"September" Earth, Wind & Fire	"Life is a Highway" Rascal Flatts	"It's a Hard Life" Queen	"Busy Earnin'" Jungle
"Bad Blood" Bastille	"The Less I Know the Better" Tame Impala	"Speed the Collapse" Metric	"Dreaming" Smallpools
"Adventure of a Lifetime" Coldplay	"Smells Like Teen Spirit" Nirvana	"Holdin On" Flume	"Good Time" Owl City & Carly Rae Jepsen
"Loser" Beck	"Cruise" Florida Georgia Line	"Trouble in Paradise" Johnny Maestro	"Love Lockdown" Kanye West
"When You Were Young" The Killers	"Hold On, We're Going Home" Drake	"Spark" Fitz and the Tantrums	"Friends Will be Friends" Queen
"Feels Like We Only Go Backwards" Tame Impala	"Good Life" OneRepublic	"All Time Low" Jon Bellion	"On Our Way" The Royal Concept
"Battered, Black & Blue" AWOLNATION	"Moving on Up" M People	"Are You What You Want To Be?" Foster the People	"High and Low" Empire of the Sun

High school has been a journey for all of us, which is why I decided to document it in music. Here's four playlists for each of my years at Freeman:

CLASS OF 2020 WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?



University of Alabama
Logan Brown
Maddy Miller



American University
Charley Hart
Hannah Sjovold



Arizona State University
Cici Clark
Jay McKinley



Auburn University
Sophie Borges
Harrison Terpak



Averett University
Grace Carter
Shane Michel



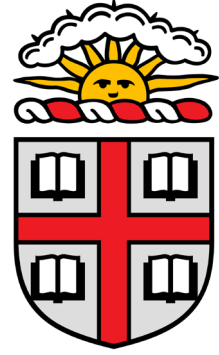
Bethany College
Antonio Sunkins



Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing
Hannah Wilkins



Bowdoin College
David Lim



Brown University
Chae Won Lee



Bucknell University
Sophia Goldin



Christopher Newport University
Sofia Alcaine
Colin Godwin
Clair Jenks
Rachel Thornton



Clemson University
Caroline Tyler



Coastal Carolina University
Jada Alston



Davidson College
Nicholas Cavallo



University of Denver
Piper Finkelson



East Carolina University
Jaydah Howell



East Tennessee State University
Faith Adams



Elon University
Matt Boyle
Lowell Smith



George Mason University
Graham Boyle
Nyla Grocholski
Clifford Johnson
Awot Kawaj
Ravan Khan



George Washington University
Eleanor Carey



University of Georgia
Hayden Martin
Quinn Phillips



Georgia State University
Christiana Dzansi



Georgia Tech
Balazs Kaszala



Gordon College
Colleen Berry



Hampden-Sydney College
Evan Bott
Myles Fallen
Hank Van Ness



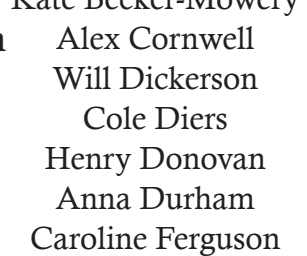
Hollins University
Mary Clare Abbott



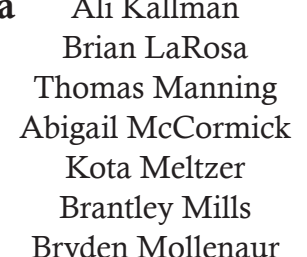
Iowa Wesleyan University
Diontrell Evans



James Madison University
David Andrews
Garrett Archibeque
Emmarie Armstrong
Jordan Barnes
Kate Becker-Mowery



Mary Baldwin University
Autumn Taylor



University of Mary Washington
Katherine Acree
Lindsey Arnold
Camila Perez-Random
Chris Sullivan
Preston Trevey
George Wanis



Old Dominion University
Shane Athey-Strayer
Jala Bennett
Kameron Green
Megan Mason
Nicholas Walker



University of Mississippi
Katherine Wilson



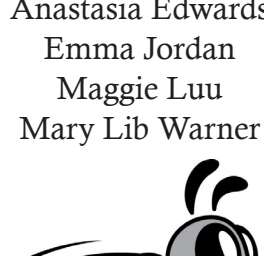
Johns Hopkins University
Tazrin Rahman



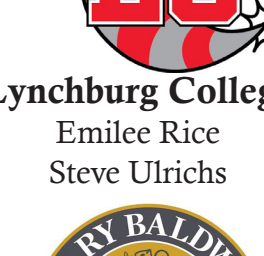
John Tyler Community College
Lawrence Mensah
Jonah Robertson
Cash Sayles



Longwood University
Marissa Castro
Campbell Collett
Anastasia Edwards
Emma Jordan
Maggie Luu
Mary Lib Warner



University of Notre Dame
Sarah Bender
Karson Girvin



Lynchburg College
Emilee Rice
Steve Ulrichs



The Ohio State University
David Snead



University of Maryland
Katherine Acree
Lindsey Arnold
Camila Perez-Random
Chris Sullivan
Preston Trevey
George Wanis



University of Pennsylvania
Daniel Bazianos



University of North Carolina
Mia Garland



North Carolina State University
Victoria Wright



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Grace Spradlin



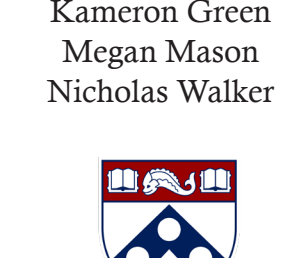
University of Notre Dame
Sarah Bender
Karson Girvin



The Ohio State University
David Snead



Old Dominion University
Shane Athey-Strayer
Jala Bennett
Kameron Green
Megan Mason
Nicholas Walker



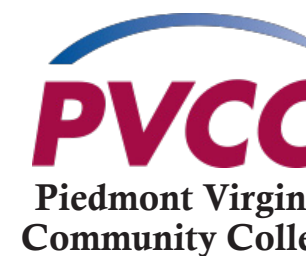
University of Pennsylvania
Daniel Bazianos



University of Pennsylvania
Daniel Bazianos



Penn State University
Lizzie Danforth



Piedmont Virginia Community College
Samuel Puckett



Radford University
Christian Andrews
Graydon Campbell
Niquian Moore
Allison Tignor



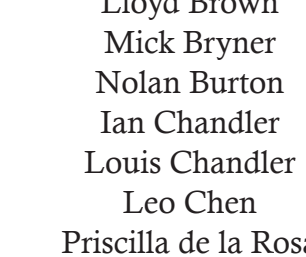
Randolph College
Emily Taylor



Randolph-Macon College
Grace Forrester
Caleb Jacoby



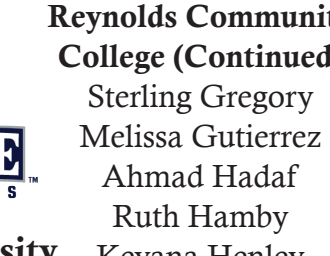
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Mick Bryner
Nolan Burton
Ian Chandler
Louis Chandler
Leo Chen
Priscilla de la Rosa
Ibrahim Donzo
Corey Dupree
Caleb Duprey
William Edwards
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Sandra Ghabriall
Samantha Gibson
Alexandra Gilstrap
Felicia Goode
Darius Gore
Daniel Granados
Robert Gravitt
Hardy Greene



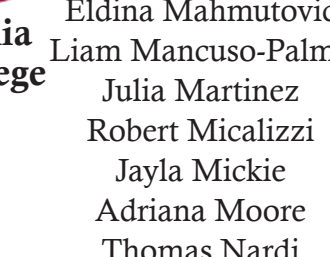
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Ian Chandler
Louis Chandler
Leo Chen
Priscilla de la Rosa
Ibrahim Donzo
Corey Dupree
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Samantha Gibson
Alexandra Gilstrap
Felicia Goode
Darius Gore
Daniel Granados
Robert Gravitt
Hardy Greene



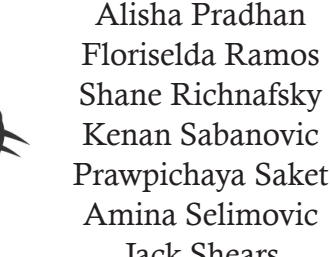
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Ibrahim Donzo
Corey Dupree
Caleb Duprey
William Edwards
Deja Everett
Sandra Ghabriall
Samantha Gibson
Alexandra Gilstrap
Felicia Goode
Darius Gore
Daniel Granados
Robert Gravitt
Hardy Greene



Reynolds Community College (Continued)
Sterling Gregory
Melissa Gutierrez
Ahmad Hadaf
Ruth Hamby
Keyana Henley
Kristyn Herman
Muhab Idris
Grace Jones
Susma Katwal
Markus Lewis
Eldina Mahmutovic
Liam Mancuso-Palma
Julia Martinez
Robert Micalizzi
Jayla Mickie
Adriana Moore
Thomas Nardi
Caitlyn Newbould
Shicem Nolan
Zachary Pak
Kyle Pappas
Zhaki Pinckney
Alika Pradhan
Alisha Pradhan
Florisdela Ramos
Shane Richnafsky
Kenan Sabanovic
Prawpichaya Saket
Amina Selimovic
Jack Shears
Kara Sigmon
Amaris Stewart
Conor Thomas
Unique Touch
Michael Tran
Ariel Ulloa-Mendoza
Roel Valle
Andrew Vu
Hannah Wilkins
Mina Yannic
Nataliya Zabrovska



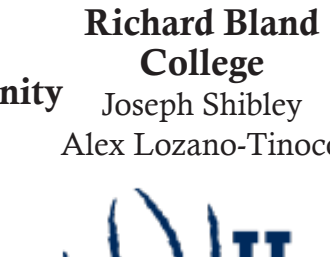
Roanoke College (Continued)
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Kaitlyn Nguyen
Anna Powell
Aidan Sangiray
Safet Sirucic



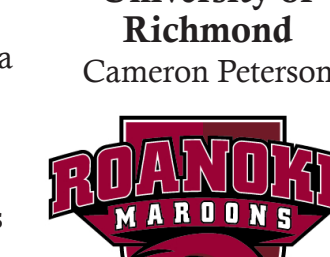
United States Navy
Paul Farley
Marshall Harless
Kamryn Smith



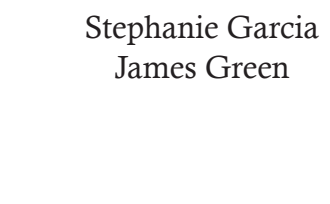
University of South Alabama
Leolia Zhe



United States Air Force
Adam Brown
Maximilian Wolz

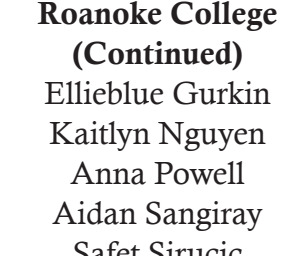


United States Marine Corps
Omidullah Bromand
Travis Saunders



United States National Guard
Kendall Dalton

United States Naval Academy
Connor Spiedell
Hunter Locher



United States Navy
Paul Farley
Marshall Harless
Kamryn Smith



University of South Carolina
Jordan Chucker
Isabel Crenshaw
Will Dornik
Josh DuPuis
Pace Fonville
Renee Jervey
Cate Moffatt



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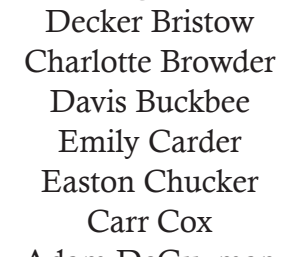
United States National Guard
Kendall Dalton



United States Naval Academy
Connor Spiedell
Hunter Locher



University of Virginia
Decker Bristow
Charlotte Browder
Davis Buckbee
Emily Carder
Easton Chucker
Carr Cox
Adam DeGuzman
Sarah Echols
Meredith Hearn
Teegan Howell
Christian Massengill
Colleen McBride
Megan McDonald
Sarah Ann Mottley
Gretchen Neary
Liza Neely
Hill Nystrom
Rylan Pearsall
Danny Pellei
Jacob Renner
Sadie Rogerson
Maddie Sherman
Annie Stephens
Abby Taylor
Abby Zorn



Virginia Tech
Bryan Angel
Will Coker
Bella Colangelo
Matthew Donelson
Clay Given
Ashley Griffith
Harrison Holmes
Peter Hughes
Bless Jah
Nicholas Lamb
Pierce Martin
Justin Ntumu
Samuel Phillips
Ethan Sanzone
Russell Swartz
Matthew Walls
Ellie Williams



Virginia Commonwealth University
Sandra Abdelmesseh
Mina Abouelkhel
Razaz Ali
Zara Ali
Kyla Berkshire
Regina Bonomonte
Angelina Brooks
Mary Coulbourn
Martha Delgado
Numo Dzamdzc
Alex Eddy
Nicholas Erickson
Miles Fagan
Anna Felton
Sarah Kate Gentry
Teejae Johnson
Mindy Luu
Iain Mayers
Aidan Milby
Adam Morkous
Sally Mumford
Sara Nicoletti
Sebastian Peebles
Sabereh Saleh
Joe Schlossberg
Cole Thomason
Isabelle Waldron
Alex Welk
Sadie Woodhouse
Michael Zedd



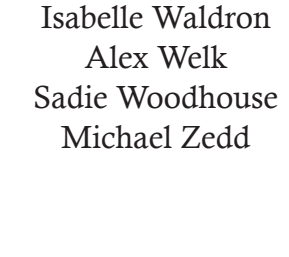
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Matthew Walls
Ellie Williams



Washington and Lee University
Elizabeth Sjovold
Ashwin Suresh



West Virginia University
Susannah Robertson



College of William and Mary
Mollie Bowman
Zach Edwards
Addison Gorenflo
Salaar Khan
Raquel Layton
Benjamin Lee



Virginia Military Institute
Alexander Ezzelle
Addison Hagan
Cole Holtz
Jake Liberatore
Will Reid
Gabriel Tufaro



Virginia State University
Sophia Cubahiro
Samantha Davis



Virginia Tech
Bryan Angel
Will Coker
Bella Colangelo
Matthew Donelson
Clay Given
Ashley Griffith
Harrison Holmes
Peter Hughes
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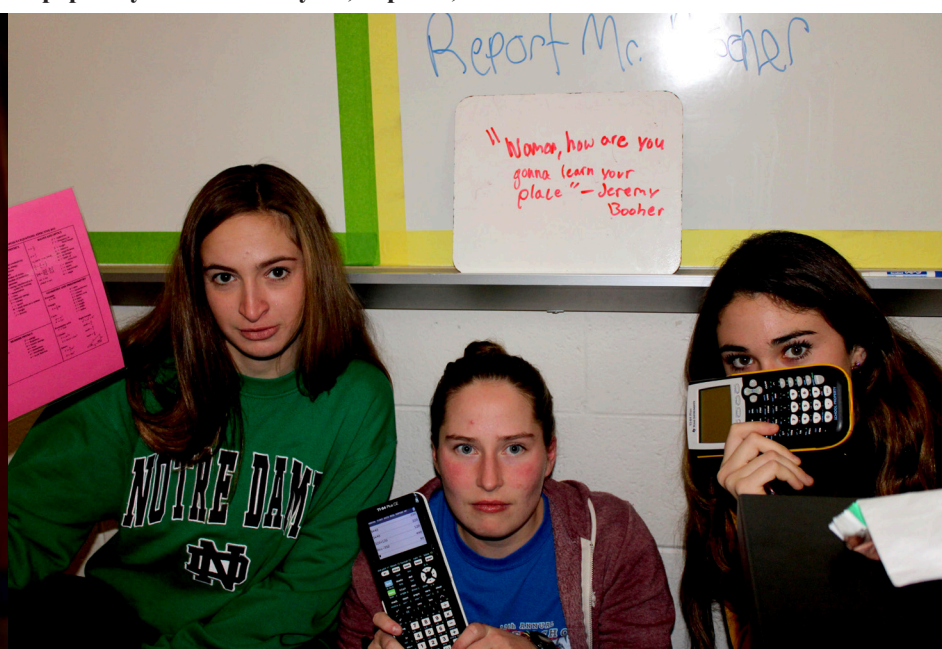
Left: The student section reads a Promposal poster at the January Freeman-Godwin basketball game. Right: Seniors dressed as a bobsledding team zoom through the hallways during Halloween.



Mr. Fabian introduces the class of 2020 at the first pep rally of the school year, Sept. 20, 2019.



Left: The Senior members of the Freeman Swim Team prepare to run through a tunnel during their senior night, Feb. 6, 2020.



Center: The three "Women in STEM" in Mr. Booher's AP Physics II class (Sarah Bender, Hannah Sjovold, and Sophia Goldin) hold up their formula sheets and calculators.



Right: Freeman students pose after participating in the Holi celebration as part of the first Freeman Family Culture Day, Mar. 12, 2020.

The Highlight Reel



Marcus Rand
Photography Editor

Out of my four years at Freeman, no role has had as large an impact on me as being the photography editor for The Commentator. It gave me a rare chance to see the student body in a way few really get to see it; beyond experiencing events just as a member of the

Freeman community, I could take a step back and become a passive observer. Capturing the energy of the student section at football and basketball games provided small opportunities to really appreciate the moment for what it is: a happy but fleeting experience. Watching athletes in their element and classmates playing parachute with elementary schoolers for the Little Feet Meet imprinted me with a particular gratitude for this time in our lives and for the fact that I was able to document it. Recently I found this quote, which I believe captures my experience well. "Sometimes we are blind to the value of a moment until it becomes a memory." I'm unbelievably grateful for the time I have spent learning to value these moments with the Class of 2020. I can think of no better commemoration of these years than a compilation of photos from moments where we were truly at our best as rebels.

The Importance of Breaking Out of Your Shell



Gretchen Neary
Online Editor-in-Chief

I entered freshman year as the epitome of awkward. I had braces on my teeth, but even worse, I had a hard, plastic back brace. The summer before ninth grade, I was

diagnosed with scoliosis. In fact, I discovered that my spine was curved in the Freeman small gym during a routine physical to try out for sports. To prevent my curve from worsening, I was forced to wear a thick, plastic back brace for 18 hours a day. It went from my chest down to my hips. For reasons that I still cannot explain, I chose a bright blue, tie-dye print. Obviously, the brace was hard to conceal.

I entered Freeman High School down in the dumps, trapped both in the torture of a hard plastic corset and in the shadow of my seemingly perfect brother, who was a senior. I felt like a turtle. My brace became both a literal and metaphorical shell for me.

As I reflect on my four years at Freeman, it becomes clear to me that at some point, everyone is

stuck inside their own shell during their high school years. Let's not sugarcoat it: high school is hard. We grew up watching fantasy versions of high school play out across our televisions, like High School Musical. In reality, high school consists of a lot more stress, tears, personal growth, and way less singing.

Especially as freshmen, it can be easy to retreat into our shells. Seniors seem abnormally big and quite scary, especially in crowded hallways - like is that a teacher or a 12th grader who can already grow a beard? Classes consist of all new faces, and it can be nerve-wracking to put yourself out there to meet new friends. This is coming from a girl whose claim to fame freshman year was that kids could knock on her brace and make a loud sound: I've been there. While it is easier

said than done, high school is a time to find yourself and break free from your shell.

My biggest piece of advice for underclassmen at Freeman is to stop worrying about what others think of you. I always felt self-conscious about my back brace. In reality, no one cared about the brace, and some of my classmates never even noticed that I was wearing it. As high schoolers, we can get so caught up in other's perceptions of us that we stop paying attention to the world around us. In addition, we forget that most people are so caught up in their own worries and issues and they don't necessarily notice the issues of others. The point is - get over yourself and just get involved.

Freeman has clubs that fit anybody's interests. Are you interested in climate change and sustain-

ability? Join Friends of the Earth! Are you politically active? Debate in Young Democrats or Young Republicans! Are you an animal lover? Join Paws for a Cause! The list goes on and on. If you're an athlete, Freeman has plenty of sports teams where you can branch out to meet new people.

I wish I made a bigger fool of myself in high school. I wish I went all out for every single spirit day, that I was louder in the stands, that I didn't skip basketball or football games, and that I volunteered during pep rallies. Freeman students: don't live your high school life with regrets. Break out of whatever shell you are stuck in, and live your high school experience to the full.

A Synopsis: Class of 2020 vs. Outer Banks



Annie Stephens
Opinions Editor

If you're anyone who's anyone during this pandemic, then you've no doubt seen the newest Netflix drama that has taken over the world. Set in the fictional Kildare County, Outer Banks follows a group of ragtag teens on their journey to find 400 million dollars in gold (pocket change for us, to be honest). The protagon-



Emma Johnson
Features Editor

nists of the show are called "The Pogues" (John B, Kiara, JJ, and Pope). They have quickly become the faces of quarantine and the only thing on our Tiktok For You pages. The show has us longing for a life at the beach and wishing more and more for the stay at home order to be lifted so we can party pogue style on the sand. At

first glance, the plot seems completely irrelevant to the class of 2020, if you read in between the lines, it represents our fight against Coronavirus.

The Virus-who-shall-not-be-named takes the shape of antagonist Ward Cameron, stealing what is ours and turning what was supposed to be the best year of our lives into misery. We, on the contrary, are all John B (Annie: "but also I am Sarah" /Emma: "you wish"). This is a good thing because (spoiler alert) we kinda win in the end. As we sit at home, reliving our senior moments through Snapchat memories and Instagram posts, we can relate what little of our senior year we got, to the crazy antics of the Pogues. Partying in the boneyard turns into lunch in the senior court yard (lunch is lit), boating in the marsh turns into us roaming the halls (which we don't condone), and stealing gold from an old woman's house becomes Freeman Focus (self-explanatory).

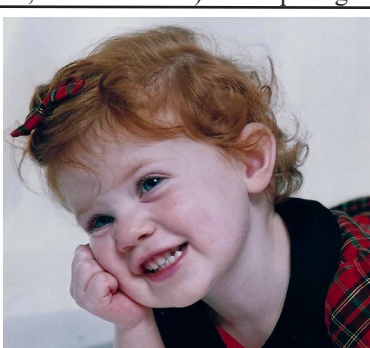
The show has a greater mean-

ing, beyond stealing gold and running from the police. Well, at least we think so. John B, Kiara, JJ, and Pope all represent a sense of family much like Freeman's class of 2020. Our fearless leader, Principal John P. Marshall is John B's dad, guiding us in the right direction. His Schoology messages and endearing videos serve as clues (like Big John's tape recorder), leading us to our "hidden treasure," aka graduation. At this point, you may be thinking that quarantine is definitely getting to our heads, but hear us out. We're not done, it gets better.

While senioritis is a real thing, our hard work from the beginning of the year has paid off, much like John B and Sarah's extensive research at the archives. Their countless hours of searching, and our hours of studying, have pushed us forward toward our respective versions of the gold (hint: ours is graduation, theirs is 400 million of legit gold). SPOILERS AHEAD!!!!!! USE DISCRETION!!!!

The show ends with John B and Sarah sailing into a HURRICANE, but don't worry Sarah would rather DIE than be without John B (she's way more dedicated than we are to our math homework). After getting absolutely demolished by one single wave, the duo is somehow picked up by a cargo ship and by chance the boat is heading to the Bahamas, towards the gold. This narrative, while it may seem completely unrelated to the Class of 2020, has become a metaphor for our fight to graduate in the end.

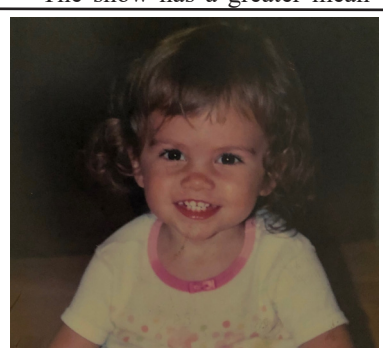
The Outer Banks is our lighthouse, guiding us to our ultimate goal and giving us hope in this storm. The senior class is strong, and we will not stand down in the face of this disaster. We will have our graduation and our final good-byes. John B waited nine months before he found the gold, we can push through like he did. Pogue style. "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." — Mahatma Gandhi



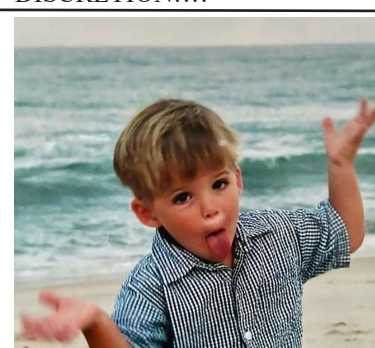
Sarah Echols
Features Editor



Piper Finkelson
Photography Editor



Addison Gorenflo
Centerspread Editor

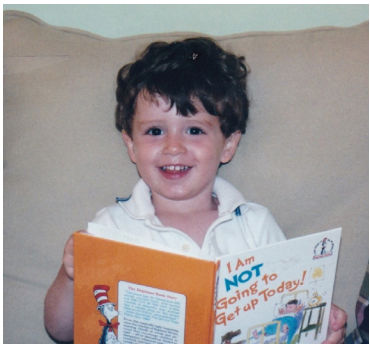


Lowell Smith
News Editor



Abby Zorn
Design Editor

The Lost Season



Davis Buckbee
Opinions Editor

Thursday, March 12, started out like any other school day in the spring. My alarm woke me up at 5:45 a.m. I quickly got dressed, grabbed a protein bar, and hopped in the car. Once I got to Freeman, I grabbed the balls and cones before heading to the field. All routine, all regular. Except, as I tied my cleats next to my teammates, the mood was somber. The night prior, the coronavirus had finally hit home. President Trump held a fireside chat with the American public where he declared a European travel ban, March Madness was closed to fans, and the NBA season was cancelled. Schools around the nation were closing. It seemed like we were standing on the beach as a tsunami hurled towards us. Before warm-ups started that morning, I leaned over to junior Leo Lombardi and whispered, "this could be the last one."

And it was. As we all know, that afternoon Henrico County announced schools would close for two weeks starting Monday. Two weeks would later turn into the rest of the year. In the face of uncertainty, Coach McEvoy cancelled Friday morning practice-

-making Thursday's practice the last in my high school soccer career. Or soccer career period. All spring sport seasons ended before they began.

All seniors have been stripped of spring traditions and events. For senior spring athletes, this means no senior night, rivalry games, or tournament runs. Senior athletes lost their season as captains, the year they had trained for all four years at Freeman. The reality of never again lacing up at William E. Long field, the track, the baseball field, or the tennis courts is difficult to comprehend. Just as with everything the coronavirus has cancelled, postponed, or impacted--this loss is abrupt and unfair.

But instead of dwelling on the lost spring season, let's celebrate the three seasons senior spring sport athletes were able to compete in. The wins over rival schools. The state tournament runs. The early mornings and the late nights. The bus rides. The team dinners. The camaraderie of competing with your fellow classmates.

And to the underclassmen who had their seasons stolen from them by an invisible thief too, I empathize. This virus leaves no one without loss or sacrifice. From the senior spring athletes to you: enjoy every night under the lights. Embrace those early morning or late night practices. Never take another moment with your teammates or coaches for granted. The daily grind of a high school athlete can be exhausting. Instead of going through the motions during practice, treat every time you compete in your sport as your last time. Because you never know when that might be.

The Senior Spring Athletes

Evan Bott
Easton Chucker
Myles Fallen
Pace Fonville
Thomas Laughlin

Pierce Martin
Blake Moore
Harrison Terpak
Steve Ulrichs
Hank Van Ness



Jordan Chucker
Addison Gorenflo
Madison Sherman

Garret Archibeque
Hardy Greene
Shane Michel
David Snead
Sebastian Suarez-Vasquez
Ashwin Suresh



Faith Adams
Caroline Tyler

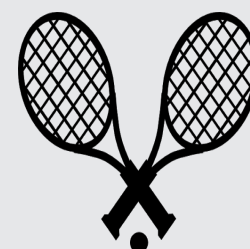
Davis Buckbee
Nicholas Cavallo
Ian Chandler
Numo Dzamdzic
Cooper Dyson
Will Edwards
Alfredo Mata

Endy Molina
Brian Munoz
Justin Ntummy
Jacob Renner
Chris Sullivan
Russell Swartz
George Wanis



Karson Girvin
Anastasia Edwards
Renée Jervey
Hayden Martin
Abbey McCormick

Daniel Bazianos
Carr Cox
Clay Given
Benjamin Lee



Will Coker
Campbell Collett
Cole Holtz
Danny Pellei
Will Reid
Ethan Sanzone
Lowell Smith



Emily Carder
Grace Carter
Stephanie Garcia
Karson Girvin
Julia Hall
Maddy Miller
Liza Neely

Kaitlyn Nguyen
Carter Payne
Rylan Pearsall
Camila Perez
Maddie Roever
Elizabeth Sjovold
Clair Willet

Defining the Freeman Family



Josh Dupuis
Sports Editor

I remember stepping off the bus on my first day of freshman year nearly four years ago, September 6, 2016, and being extremely nervous. I walked into the Leadership Center, not sure where else to go and stood silently for a few minutes. Two seniors sitting at a table nearby turned around and asked if I was a freshman. I said yes and

they offered me a seat at the table, using their morning social time to get to know me, a freshman they had just met for the first time. Their kindness and welcoming nature is exactly what defines the Freeman Family, something I've been blessed to be a part of over the last four years.

The Freeman Family is one like no other. It's one of kindness, spirit, and love. Kindness radiates from teachers and administrators through the hallways and within each classroom, as they are almost always willing to help and constantly offer uplifting words of encouragement. Spirit rests within every student as they cheer on their friends at sporting events and is felt deep down inside everyone within Freeman as we come together, uniting as a family. Love stems from an overwhelming sense of community cultivated at Douglas Freeman High School. The Freeman Family community is committed to prepare every student to be life-long learners.

At the beginning of my freshman year, I was very timid about div-

ing into the Freeman Family, but decided to try it anyway. I went to every single football game during my freshman year, making friends and building relationships in the process. As I met new people, I started to say, "hey" to them in the hallways, putting a smile on their face as well as mine, and started to wade deeper into the unique culture of Freeman.

Since then, the Freeman community has left its mark on me. I've been blessed to meet and know so many different students and teachers over the past four years who have helped me grow as a person and have encouraged me to reach for new heights in everything I do.

Because of the Freeman Family, I stand ready to face the world and whatever comes after graduation. I will forever cherish the memories I have made at Freeman High School and am proud to say that I will always be a part of the Freeman Family!



Caroline Tyler
Sports Editor



Will Dornik
Sports Editor



Maddie Sherman
Centerspread Editor

Committed Rebel Athletes

Congratulations to these and any other athletes we may have missed for committing to continue your athletic and academic careers! You have honored the Rebel name through dedication, grit, and strength. Your coaches, teammates, and the entire Freeman community are incredibly proud!

Baseball

Ashwin Suresh
Washington and Lee University

Shane Mitchell
Averett University

Golf

Sam Dornik
Roanoke College

Wrestling

Diontrell Evans
Iowa Wesleyan University

Softball

Faith Adams
East Tennessee State University

Lacrosse

Steve Ulrichs
University of Lynchburg

Hank Van Ness
Hampden-Sydney College

Swimming

Sarah Bender
University of Notre Dame

Graham Boyle
George Mason University

Lizzie Danforth
Pennsylvania State University

Hunter Locher
United States Naval Academy

Dain Ripol
University of Tennessee

Preston Trevey
University of Mary Washington

Football

Cole Holtz
Virginia Military Institute

Caleb Jacoby
Randolph-Macon College

Jake Liberatore
Virginia Military Institute

Will Reid
Virginia Military Institute

Soccer

Nicholas Cavallo
Davidson College

Chris Sullivan
University of Mary Washington

