

# The Commentator

Vol. LXVI, No. VI

..... Douglas Southall Freeman High School .....

May 2019

*"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."  
-Winnie the Pooh*



**The Commentator Editors:**

*Top (L to R):* Emily Anstett, McBride Rawson, Zoe Costello, Laney Van Lenten, Kate Yarbrough, *Middle:* Braxton Berry, Emme Levenson, Maggie Flournoy, Juliana McKean, Grace Powers, Julia Cassidy, *Bottom:* Remy Schimick, Katie Cooper, Caitlin McSorley, Lauren Lombard (teacher), Mark Graff, Cameron McCarty, Greer Peacock, *Not Pictured:* Lauren Bruns and Cole Ryland

## 'Freeman Family' Have We Met?



Caitlin McSorley  
Editor-in-Chief

"We're all in this together?" High School Musical, I feel misled. When I hear sneering at the idea of the "Freeman Family," I know where they are coming

from. We don't usually feel like a family: the division between cafeterias, the seemingly endless masses of unfamiliar faces in the halls, the competitive nature of the education system.

Honestly, it is mostly in pain and grief that I felt united. It is in those days following the death of our classmates. It is Frank, Nick, and Carter's memorial articles opening with, "The Freeman Family mourns the loss and celebrates the life of..." It is in these despairing times that we seem to come together.

I spent 33 weeks of my sophomore year recovering from a concussion—you may remember me as that weirdo with sunglasses and noise cancelling earphones all winter. Too worried about falling behind in school or appearing lazy to my new teachers, I worked triple time to try

to keep up. There was a contradiction between my academic success and my recovery and in pushing myself to read through the nausea, I pushed aside my personal health.

However, it is in these painful memories that I feel great admiration for the rebels—the classmates who helped tutor and encourage me, teachers who helped me conquer my obstacles, and the many months of lunch in the quiet haven of the guidance office. I found this to hold true as a senior on crutches, as random students of all grades and genders offered their assistance, even when I was heading in the opposite direction.

So maybe I was wrong. The Freeman Family does exist; but rather than an idealistic vision of a cohesive unit, like the Full House Family and their astonish-

ing ability to hug out any issue, the Freeman Family is actually a giant support net that lies slightly below the playing field. It is often overlooked when the sun is out, and even on the cloudy days, the sun's glare manages to conceal it. But when the sky turns dark and it pours, the net is visible. It is hanging there, sturdy.

If you squint, you can see some of this same support during the school day. Is it in the teacher's cafeteria during SOL boot camp, as students tutor students, that all hands are on deck for the same cause. It is at the end of the main hallway, in the Success classrooms, where students are role models for other students and their influence changes lives. It is on Tuesday afternoons, in She is DSF, where female mentors and mentees grow from the stories and advice of each other.

It is in peer tutoring, sport teams, theatre, music classes, and events like the Special Olympics, All-Star Basketball games, and the Rebel Run. It is in the scary moments, like huddling in the hallways and cafeteria during the tornadoes, or the many hours on the baseball field during the bomb threat. It is in the several Freeman alumni on our staff. It is in the lifetime service of many teachers, coaches, volunteers, and community supporters.

If we are judging Disney films on their accuracy, Lilo and Stitch's definition of family seems to be the best fit: "Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten." The safety net it there to catch you. That is what the Freeman Family represents and it's okay if you have to squint to see it at first.

## A Farewell Address To Freeman



Mark Graff  
Editor-in-Chief

Teachers and fellow-students, At the end of his second term as president, George Washington addressed the nation in a 32-page report now known as his farewell address. In it, he talked about guiding principles he believed America should follow, as well as warned about potential problems in the future. The tradition was revived in the modern era, and since Truman, every President has left office with an

address, often talking about their successes in office and hopes for the future of the country. Keeping with my only-half-joking statements about my future ascension to the Oval Office, my superlative on the back page, but most importantly the end of my tenure as "chief" of the Commentator, I figure it is only appropriate to end with a farewell address myself.

Being part of this school for the past four years has truly been a pleasure. There's something unique about Freeman, something that's hard to pinpoint exactly. What makes Freeman special isn't glamorous. We don't have a swimming pool like St. Christopher's, or a Gold LEED Certified building like Glen Allen; in fact, the building itself is pretty shabby. What makes Freeman special is what goes on inside these roach-inhabited walls.

Teachers here don't just force-feed material and completely drop responsibility when the bell rings. The faculty here does so much behind the scenes to support the student body, in a way

that I don't think exists at many other schools. I went to Mr. Peck for college advice the day before my applications were due; he essentially made my choice for me. The day after Carter passed, Ms. Hunnicutt went out of her way to come to my class and tell me that I mattered. I'm sure I wasn't the only student she visited that day. The day after my uncle died, Ms. Jones gave me a huge hug. She had remembered all the conversations we had about my uncle and her dad, both of whom were Vietnam veterans. After a rough day, I know I can talk to Ms. Lombard about literally anything, and she'll be there for me. None of this is in the job description of being a teacher, yet at Freeman, it is the norm.

Just like the teachers, the students at Freeman don't just care about the gradebook. It is a place to grow and serve; Freeman is always there leading the charge for the rest of the county. Freeman is the school where the All-Star Prom started. The school where students and faculty worked together to walk-out and let our

voices be heard, no matter the disagreement. The school where students spend countless hours helping other students with peer tutoring and mentoring.

Freeman also hosts one of the most diverse student bodies in the county. We have people from all different backgrounds and experiences. The problem is, many students might not even know this. It is entirely possible to stay within your bubble for all four years. I came into Freeman four years ago a stubborn freshman: I had my views, and they were the right ones. I wasn't intolerant of other beliefs, but I had almost never ventured outside of my own. Yet, Freeman taught me to do just that. Here, I've met amazing friends like Braxton (our opinions editor), who's taught me to how to listen to others. I've had amazing conversations and lessons with teachers which have completely changed the way I look at the world. By junior year, I was having conversations with Ms. Jones every day about politics. Ms. Jones has said that people

are shocked when she mentions that she enjoyed having me in her class. I get the same reaction when I say that I loved having her as a teacher. This shouldn't be the case. There are amazing people at this school. Here, you don't have to go far to expose yourself to those people: you just have to want to do it. Although I wish I had done more, I'm proud to think that I've tried to befriend people of many different backgrounds in high school. With The Commentator, we've worked really hard to see that, as Mrs. Lombard says, "every student can flip open the paper and see somebody who they know." I hope in the future, more people will try to cross that cafeteria wall, and see how, as we say in journalism, every student has a story to tell.

As I say farewell, I know that I am leaving a changed person. So thank you, students and teachers of Freeman, for giving me a home for the last four years. For teaching me to listen, and always being there when needed.

## Senior Issue Dedication To Mrs. Lombard

Dear Mrs. Lombard, On behalf of the last 18 years of the Commentator staff, we want to thank you for being our creative and supportive teacher, our motivation, our best editor, the one to cheer us on and notice our strengths, our friend to tell our worries to, our mom to remind us to make good decisions

every Friday at the bell, and the smiling face in room 208 reminding everyone that they matter.

The work you put into the paper is unfathomable. You always have ideas for stories and think of every solution to our obstacles before we even know they exist. Your passion for journalism radiates in the classroom, whether

it's discussing our civic rights to free speech, studying the journalist who lost their lives to inform the public, and even taking us to the Newseum.

Besides being our teacher, you are the rock to so many of us. Whether it is college advice, relationship advice, or life advice, you are always there for us.

Thank you for the hours you spend past the bell on Fridays making final edits or coming in on a Saturday just to sit in the parking lot so that you can access the server. Thank you for putting up with senioritis year after year.

We know you may just be gone for a year, but you should know how much you have meant to

Freeman. We had to include this because it was long overdue (and our first editorial to not get censored!) We are (not very) sorry we had to lie to you to in order to publish this, but we wanted you to be surprised. We LOVE you!

We will miss you,  
Commentator Staff



## What Defines Each of Us?



Maggie Flournoy  
A&E Editor

ered.

I'm different now than I was then, and I'm not sure if that's such a good thing.

How would I describe myself now?

I like the color blue. My entire Instagram is dedicated to that fact. Each picture I post has more blue than other colors. My hair is blue. My room is blue. My friends describe me as "really liking the color blue." I wonder, is that all that I am? Defined by a single color? It can't be.

The first college that I got into was JMU. I didn't start out my college search with the intention of going there, but I am now. Even though I haven't really planned to go there, I was still excited to be admitted early and wanted to join a community. JMU has this social media type website called JMyou, and I thought well, why not make an account?

When I got to point while creating my account that I had to add a bio, I didn't know what to write. What about me distinguishes me from my peers? What makes me an interesting person?

I tried to think but I was drawing a blank. Whenever I'm asked something interesting about myself, I always say SCUBA diving. I've been diving since I was 10, and I mean, that's interesting and all, but I only do it twice a year. That's not really who I am.

My bio goes like this: "Hey I'm Maggie!! I really like writing but I'm honestly not that good. I surf, scuba dive, and hike but I spend most of my time inside

on Netflix and YouTube. Sometimes I read books and when I do it's like a million at a time. I really do like reading but I can never convince myself it's a good idea."

I would just like to point out that I've only hiked twice in my life.

I don't know who I am, and I'm terrified that I never will. I'm surrounded by hundreds of interesting people at Freeman, and I know that the number will just increase when I go to college.

I focus on schoolwork as much as I can, but I'm not even great at that. I like to say that I'm good at writing and love it, but I rarely convince myself to write out of school.

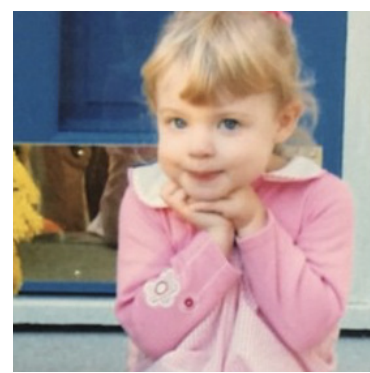
As the year has progressed, I feel pressures to know exactly who I am and what I want to do in life. The fact is, I really just don't. I know I want to do something with writing, and it would be my dream to write for film and television, but is that even realistic?

These thoughts pass through my head at an alarming rate each day, but what I've come to realize - after a lot of thinking - is that it's okay.

It is not abnormal to not know who you are, even as a young adult.

People, even in their late twenties and thirties, don't know who they are supposed to be or what they really want out of life. I am no different from the norm here. I'm young, and even with all of my fears, I am confident that I will eventually figure it out.

## Loquacious: A Defining Word



Laney Van Lenten  
News Editor

In my freshman year English class, we would review our vocab words by having a different person read each word and its definition aloud.

When it came to my turn to read, the word was "loquacious." My teacher looked up and exclaimed, "Oh, this is the perfect word for Laney!" I sat mortified as the entire class burst out into laughter.

Loquacious means "talking or tending to talk much or freely." I knew my teacher meant it in an endearing way--calling me outgoing and social--but it cut me to the bone.

Throughout my life, I have been called loud, or asked to "quiet down" for announcing my feelings or getting too excited. As I grew up, public speaking became a source of anxiety.

I was constantly worried about whether someone would comment on my voice level or how much I talked.

It made me angry that I couldn't express myself freely because my voice wasn't quiet and dainty; I am passionate and, frankly, loud when I speak, even if it's about something as miniscule as what happened on the last episode of Riverdale. (The show is bad, I will admit it.)

Journalism has given me an outlet for my loquacity. I have been able to write columns about my own experiences, talk to people I have never met, and share personal stories from students around the school. Journalism has taught me that words are important.

I tried constantly to lower my voice, speak less, and pick and choose my words with careful consideration for how they would sound to others, but eventually my passion for talking got in the way.

I knew I had things that I wanted to say, things that needed to be said forcefully or excitedly, that could not be accurately expressed in a reserved monotone.

I am not reserved or monotone. I am bright and bubbly and fun. I am easily excited and I like to laugh. I talk too much and I talk too freely.

My favorite word is loquacious, and that is what I am.

## My Life In Playlists: Freshman to Senior Year

These are four playlists, one for each school year, which I think most accurately represent my time at Freeman. A lot has happened in the past four years. I've learned new things, met new people, and hopefully grown a little bit. Instead of writing about it, I thought I could share it through music. Listen if you please and thank you for everything, Freeman.



Remy Schimick  
Online Editor-in-Chief

Wanna see the full playlists and listen for yourself? Follow the links below!

**Freshman Playlist**  
<https://tinyurl.com/freshmanplaylist>

**Sophomore Playlist**  
<https://tinyurl.com/sophomoreplaylist>

**Junior Playlist**  
<https://tinyurl.com/junioryearplaylist>

**Senior Playlist**  
<https://tinyurl.com/senioryearplaylist>

### Junior

**Sweet Disposition** - The Temper Trap  
**NO FUN** - Joji  
**New Shoes** - Paolo Nutini  
**Trouble** - Cage The Elephant  
**Dope on a Rope** - The Growlers  
**You Get What You Give** - New Radicals  
**Scar Tissue** - Red Hot Chili Peppers  
**Moving On and Getting Over** - John Mayer  
**Mind Over Matter** - Young the Giant  
**Dreams** - Fleetwood Mac

Junior year was tough. School work was hard, making it a bad time for me to choose to take a nap in APUSH every day.

### Freshman

**The Less I Know The Better** - Tame Impala  
**Learning To Fly** - Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers  
**Here Comes The Sun** - The Beatles  
**The Luck Has Gone** - Circa Waves  
**Good Grief** - Bastille  
**Ramblin' Man** - The Allman Brothers Band  
**Show Me What I'm Looking For** - Carolina Liar  
**Naive** - The Kooks  
**Something Good Can Work** - Two Door Cinema Club

Freshman year was decidedly not easy. Just being a freshman sucks and I had like three friends so shout out to Caroline Bisese and Jack Carlton for sticking with me.

### Sophomore

**Smooth Sailin'** - Leon Bridges  
**Home** - Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros  
**Coloring Outside The Lines** - MisterWives  
**These Days** - Wallows  
**All The Time** - Bahamas  
**In Between Days** - The Cure  
**Dog Days Are Over** - Florence + The Machine  
**Feeling Lonely** - boy pablo  
**Movin' Up** - Quality Control, Lil Yachty, Ty Dolla \$ign

Sophomore year is when things started to look up. You make more friends, maybe make a name for yourself, and you're NOT a freshman anymore.

### Senior

**The Moment** - Tame Impala  
**Mary Jane's Last Dance** - Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers  
**Linger** - The Cranberries  
**Just Like Heaven** - The Cure  
**Pineapple Skies** - Miguel  
**How Bizzare** - OMC  
**Sail into the Sun** - Gentlemen Hall  
**Feel So Close** - Calvin Harris  
**Bitter Sweet Symphony** - The Verve  
**Closing Time** - Semisonic

Senior year is a whole lot of feelings, fun, and a whirlwind of work. There's a lot to do to prepare, but also a lot to enjoy. Still trying to soak it all in...

## 5 Tips and Tricks From a Graduating Senior



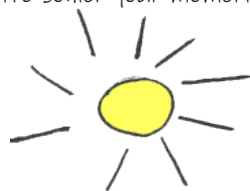
Grace Powers  
A&E Editor

### ONE:

Work hard your first semester. You want colleges to see that you are finishing off your high school career strong. Once second semester rolls around, just worry about getting that 80 average for exam exemption.

### TWO:

People say senior year is not the time to make new friends. They are wrong. At this point, everybody is pretty comfortable with each other, so branch out. You may not make new lifelong friends, but you will enjoy your year more. I have started hanging out with many people I never even talked to my first three years of high school, and now they are part of some of my favorite senior year memories.



### THREE:

There are always parking spots in the section of the student lot closest to the teacher spots and the tennis courts. I always assumed whoever got to school early would take the spots closest to the school, and I would have to trek from the middle of nowhere in the parking lot to get to school. I have learned that even if it is 8:50, you can usually find a close spot. It makes your walk so much easier and gets you out so much earlier at the end of the day. Plus, I think most juniors and sophomores assume that is where seniors park, so you might as well take advantage of it.

### FOUR:

Do whatever you can to get an early release. I did not have one, but I was so jealous of everyone who did. In first semester, it gives you time to relax or get work done early. In second semester, you'll be so antsy to leave school that you will rejoice at your early release.



### FIVE:

It is never too late to get involved in something. I joined SODA this year, and it has been one of the highlights of my year. Join a class or a club, go to a game, help with school events. Get involved because you will never be able to do these things again.





# SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

## ABE ELABBASI

Senior Abe ElAbbasi, moved to the United States from Egypt in third grade, and knows firsthand what it takes to pick up a new language.

"I took ESL the first two years, and then I learned the language pretty fast," said Abe. He attributes his quick turnaround to his age at the time. "I think it was easier because I was so young," he said.

Along with a young mind and will to learn, Abe points to his reading (like the Percy Jackson and Harry Potter series) as a big factor contributing to his success of adapting to the English language. "After those first two years it was pretty easy because I read a lot," said Abe.

Along with being a fast learner, Abe is a good athlete. He played varsity soccer for two years and plays rec basketball. Last year, Abe even volunteered to coach his little brother's U-6 soccer team at the YMCA.

In the future, Abe hopes to be an anaesthesiologist because he likes "helping people, seeing the smiles on their faces, and second of all because it makes money," he said. He wants to major in biology because it "makes sense to him."



## TORY WEAVER

As the youngest of six, in a single mother household, Tory learned to persevere. Struggle was nothing new to the Weaver household, but last year when Tory's brother died, their family would "never be the same." Tory was really connected to her brother and her best coping mechanism is staying close with her family.

Tory will not only be the first of her siblings to graduate high school, but also the first to attend college (at Virginia Commonwealth University). The moment she turned 16, Tory planned to not only get a job but get three: Chick fil a, Modelagic, and KD sports. "People don't understand what I mean when I say I actually have to work and that I don't just have a job because I want one," Tory said.

Tory's ambition strives much further than supporting the home. Working at Modelagic, she has a jump start and plans to continue in the modeling career. "I'm a model in Richmond at the moment, but I have bigger dreams of modeling in bigger cities like Las Angeles and New York City... I'm hoping to use my modeling career to get famous and become a famous musician or singer," Tory said.



## KRISTY MICHEL



Kristy Michel tries to cherish every day.

"I just look around and see all the people, and I try to cherish the moments with them, because you never know if you will see them again after high school," Kristy said.

Coming to Freeman was not easy for Kristy. "It was hard for me to make friends as a freshman because I'm really shy," she said. "That was one of my biggest struggles."

However, during her sophomore year, Kristy began to open up to people and become more involved by joining clubs such as Rebeletes, and Family, Career and community Leaders of America.

While at Freeman, Kristy also joined Teachers for Tomorrow, where she did an internship every morning at a local elementary school. "It was one of the best classes ever," Kristy said. "Just seeing what teachers do and being in their shoes for a day was really cool."

Though she isn't sure if she wants to become a teacher, Kristy knows that in the future she wants a job working with kids. "I might try to be a school psychologist or a counselor," she said.

## STUART THOMPSON



As a kid, Stuart Thompson gained interest for the Electrical field while helping his neighbor, an electrician. Realizing that he "hates desk work," Stuart asked his uncle about how he could get involved in the trade business, kick starting his career path at 16.

He got a summer job at Hill Electrical Inc., where he re-organized warehouses and helped on some smaller jobs. Two years later, he was promoted to be an apprentice to an Electrician, which means every day Stuart goes out to people's homes and businesses to run wires. At his apprenticeship, Stuart has to pay attention, hand the electrician tools, give opinions, and sometimes handle smaller task on his own.

While working with Hill Electrical, Stuart has the opportunity to go to a four-year school to get his journeyman license which will be paid for by the company. A journeyman is a skilled worker who has successfully completed the official apprenticeship qualification in a building trade or craft.

## PEMA DUKPA



Not many students can claim to letter four years in a single sport. As the only four-year varsity soccer player in the Class of 2019, Pema Dukpa is in a class of his own.

Pema's soccer career goes further than his involvement at Freeman, though, and his eight plus years of playing soccer competitively have been marked with a positive attitude throughout. The draw of the game is quite simple for Pema.

"I just love the feeling of playing the game," he said, "Playing soccer keeps me away from anxiety and stress." The beautiful game serves both as a medium for mental exercise and as an indication of the rewards of hard work.

"[My years on varsity] show that all the effort and time I have invested in soccer was for a reason," said Pema.

Just as soccer has made an impact on his life so far, the game will surely continue to provide for Pema Dukpa in the future.

## WAAD ELSAYED

Born in Egypt and former resident of the United Arab Emirates as well as Bahrain, Waad Mohdamed Mohdamed Gharib Elsayed is quite the worldly character. She is fluent in both English and Arabic, and has traveled to many different places, including the United Kingdom, Egypt, France, Singapore, Switzerland, and Italy.

When Waad immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 15, her transition from Bahrain to Freeman was hard. "People aren't as welcoming here. I felt like I had to push into a social circle, or literally be alone for two years." She describes America as "calm and beautiful" and loves the freedom of the country.

However, she believes that expressing her culture is at times a struggle. "I don't want the attention to be seen in a negative way. For example, the hijab [as] some people see that as a threat." Despite these struggles, Waad has found herself finishing her senior year on a great note.

Her favorite experience at Freeman has been the school spirit and the friends she met along the way: "I met people by singing and dancing around. Waad can't wait for college, as she's excited to be herself more, and hopes to study in the medical science field at Reynolds.



## HARRY PHELPS

Cultivating a passion into a future career, Harry Phelps will be joining the Navy next year. When Harry realized college was not for him, he looked to his lineage and saw what was right in front of him: his "natural desire to serve." Growing up, Harry spent time reading books about the military and looking up to his family members that fought in WWII.

"I want to be a part of something greater than myself, and be around other people with that same mindset." Harry is looking forward to the intensity of his upcoming training. Some of the requirements include 54 curl ups, 46 push-ups, run a mile and a half in 12:15, a 500-yard swim in under 12:15, and a 450-meter swim in 12:05.

Harry specifically chose the Navy because he likes being on the water and is looking forward to the different travel opportunities. "I'm happy with my decision to join this branch of the service, I think this is an occupation that I can see myself doing for many years because, honestly, I don't see myself doing anything else," said Harry.



# There are Always Two Sides to Every Story



Emme Levenson  
Sports Editor

I'm competitive, like super competitive. I was the kid who would come home in third grade with scrapes and bruises on my legs after playing five games of dodgeball with the boys at recess. I hate losing. To feel victory slip through my fingertips like grains of sand at the beach is the ultimate pain.

On the tennis court, I have

one goal in mind- winning. I will practice 2-3 times a day just to make sure every shot of my game is perfect, and every ball I hit goes exactly where I want it to land. I play with grit, never letting someone beat me without draining every last ounce of their energy. Intense, right?

Yet, I've grown up in a house where inclusion was the priority. My brother, Max, was diagnosed with Autism when he was little. I came to every doctor's appointment, therapy session, and was even there to say goodbye to him everyday before he got on the bus to preschool at age two. Yes, two. I did all of those things not because I was forced to, but because I wanted to spend time with Max.

I've always been the overprotective sister, shooting snarky comments back to the neighborhood bullies and even walking into the senior section at a football game to yell at some kids to back off. I was a freshman, by the way.

People often see one side of

me. They either know the uber-competitive and ferocious tennis Emme, or the sweet and caring Emme who's always promoting inclusion. When my friends come to watch my tennis matches they are surprised to hear me yell at myself out of anger, or scream "come on!" with a fist pump after I hit a winner. They don't expect to see me so competitive and merciless.

When my tennis coaches see me off the court, they are shocked to see I'm so involved in helping the exceptional education students at Freeman and the community. They would never think that such a hard-headed, fierce competitor would spend her study hall with the exceptional education class every day. I've been a helper in the adaptive P.E. class all four years of high school.

Not only have the students and staff become family, but they have inspired me to have a potential career in exceptional education in the future.

It bewilders me, really, that something so familiar to me seems so shocking to my friends, coaches, and teachers.

It has become a ritual for me. When I'm on the tennis court, a wall is up and I put my caring self aside. When I'm off the court, the wall is torn down and I put my competitive self away.

Freeman has taught me that that's okay. You don't have to fit into one box. We all have two sides, two personalities constantly fighting for our attention. You can be kind and mean, loud and quiet, or outgoing and reserved.

Whether it's my tennis friends joining me in participating at the Little Feet Meet, or the adaptive physical education teacher, Coach Henshaw, coming to watch my tennis match, I've learned that I can have two sides to me. I can be competitive and inclusive, and have each side make an appearance when I'd like them to.

In June 2018, I played in the state championship match. This

was the biggest match of my life. I was in the zone; I had been waiting for this moment since I set my goals freshman year. I was talking strategy with my coaches, and then I saw Coach Henshaw walking towards me with a group of his exceptional education students. I've never felt so much love and adrenaline all at once.

That's when my two worlds collided. My caring, soft side and my competitive side finally met, and I was content. I can't think of another moment in my life like that one.

My two sides said hello to each other, and have never met again. That's okay, I'll just continue to be me.

Thank you, Freeman, for showing me the importance of being yourself and not letting anyone fit you into one, tiny box.

Know your worth, know your value, and always remember we are all more than just a student, athlete, sibling, or friend. We've all got at least two sides.



# THE CLASS OF 2019



American University  
Ariela Press



Christopher Newport University  
Maitea Villegas-Carter



Auburn University  
Lauren Marcey  
Erin McCall



Clemson University  
Lauren Bruns  
Sarah Cloud  
Remy Schimick



Belmont University  
Jackson Albrecht



Colgate University  
Emme Levenson



Berkely College  
Nathan Vranas



College of Charleston  
Catherine Mancano  
Robert Steele



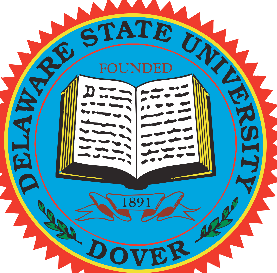
Bluefield College  
Nadia Johnson



College of William and Mary  
Maura Graff  
Andrew Kossan  
Peyton Proffitt  
Sarah Rowe



Bon Secours Memorial School of Nursing  
Taylor McCoy



Delaware State University  
Nakesha Glover



Bridgewater College  
Colin Cullopp  
Emory Kuester



Duke University  
Shane Bishop  
Nick Viers



Brigham Young University  
Brandon Arevalo



East Carolina University  
Bryn Atkins  
Peyton Butler  
Amari Lewis  
Bridget Patton  
Anna Prillaman  
Ethan Thomas  
Evan Wood



Brown University  
Walker Barkstrom  
Catherine Nelli



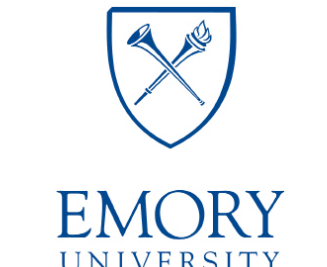
Chowan University  
Abok Kawaj



Elon University  
Victoria Getter



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Jacob Dawson  
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Jonathan Holmes  
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Tait Williams



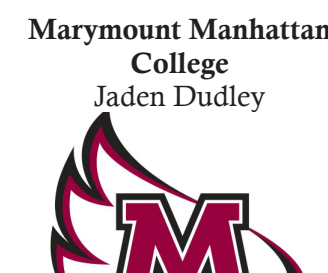
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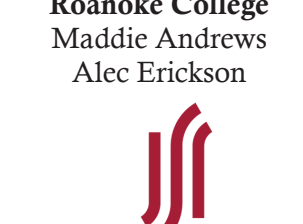
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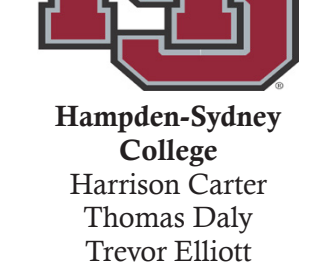
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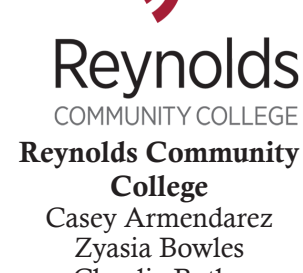
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Reily Childress  
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Emily Fatt  
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Jake Garret  
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Eric Guardino  
Rayann Habiballah  
Yaya Hassan  
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Kayla Mertz  
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Matthew Soreny  
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Shariyah Young



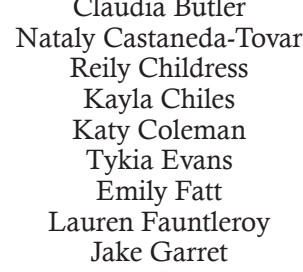
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Emma Loro



Oklahoma State University  
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United States Air Force Academy  
Juliana McKean



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Jamaya Freeman  
Arek Tong  
Alec Wren



United States Army  
Chris Soto-Martinez



Radford University  
Alhyson Ayala  
Nathaniel Johnson  
Jackie Love



United States Marine Corps  
Austin Bowen  
Hunter Williams



Chowan University  
Abok Kawaj



University of Virginia  
Anna Beamer  
Kevin Bruzon  
Jack Carlton  
Zach Carroll  
Abby Cornwell  
Zoe Costello  
Emmy Deignan  
Alex Kinter  
Maddy Martin  
Caitlyn McDevitt  
Caitlin McSorley  
Laine Mumford  
Adam Notley  
Connor Olio  
Zoe Orr  
Grace Powers  
McBride Rawson  
Clara Skeppstrom  
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Graham Twente  
William Westerfield



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Abdus-Shakur Flowers  
Kara Young



University of Michigan  
Grant Sasina



Vanderbilt University  
Mark Graff



University of Richmond  
Caroline Biese  
William Hunt  
Timothy Mayes  
Hannah Parker  
Jasmin Portillo  
Liam Simpson



Virginia Military Institute  
Ernie Campbell  
Sam Fee  
Joe Gilman  
Chi Mills  
Jaci Ziegler



University of British Columbia  
Zoe Kinnard



Villanova University  
Jackie Hemp  
Reid Hutcherson  
Sam Geissler



Virginia Tech  
Justin Ashy  
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Julie Charreun  
Ryan Christman  
Abbey Collier  
Katie Cooper  
Olivia Dixon  
Brooke Evans  
Andy Hansell  
Cameron McCarty  
Hayden Ponders  
Beth Sachdeva  
John Troutman  
Abigail Wilson



University of South Carolina  
Greer Peacock  
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Stephen Terpak  
Carson Gorenflo  
Catherine Crouch  
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Jack Oakley



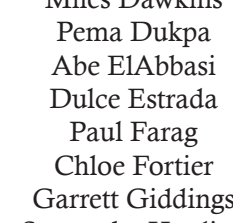
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Anisa Chowdhury  
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Pema Dukpa  
Abe ElAbbasi  
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Paul Farag  
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Samantha Harding  
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Elijah Moore  
Omar Murray  
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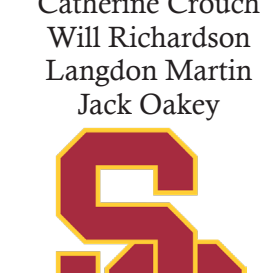
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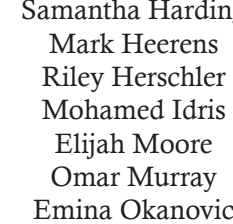
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Washington College  
Braxton Berry



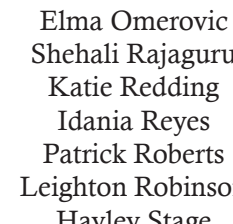
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Washington State University  
Jack Lugar  
Brice Williams



University of Georgia  
Emma Stefanik  
Gracie Wallace  
Kate Yarbrough  
Maggie Yarbrough



University of Kentucky  
James McMullin



West Virginia University  
Jack Lugar  
Brice Williams



University of Southern California  
Will Chambers  
Seth Forrest



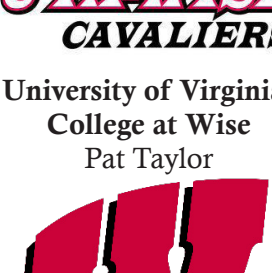
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Grace Lu



University of Tampa  
Ari Looney



University of Vermont  
Laurel Capuzzi



University of Virginia, College at Wise  
Pat Taylor



University of Wisconsin  
Courtney Teyssier

ONCE A REBEL...  
ALWAYS A REBEL  
Best of luck to the Class of 2019 as they move onto college, work, and all the other paths life may take them.



# Being a Twin in High School Not At Face Value



Kate Yarbrough  
Opinions Editor

My grandmother used to call us the sun and the moon. We were two baby girls, born in the same Charlotte hospital room a month earlier than our due date: one which, if we had played by the rules, would have been on the inception of the zodiac Gemini season, or the sign of the twins. When we were taken home as identical babies, my parents painted one tiny toe pink and another purple to differentiate us.

Today, when I am frustrated with the almost daily routine of being called by my sister's name rather than my own, it feels like that nail polish (or maybe just a nametag) is still needed. Though, when we drive our shared car downtown to get bubble tea with our shared group of friends and we groan simultaneously when we come downstairs accidentally wearing similar outfits, it falters my claims of, "I can't believe people can't tell us apart! It's not that hard!"

So, yes, you could say being a

twin is like having a built-in best friend, no matter how much I hate to admit it.

However, being a twin isn't just holding each other's tiny hands on the first day of kindergarten and accidentally saying the same thing at the same time. It makes us easily comparable, easily made into competition—we're dogs inside a chain link cage, forced into a vicious fight over test scores and personality traits. I am defined by my sameness—we are defined by our sameness—rather than what makes us different.

We preach individuality; we learn it from Dr. Seuss books and see it plastered on posters decorating classroom walls. We are told to be ourselves, because there's no one else in the world like you. But what if there is?

When the rest of the world sees you as a pair, as half of a person rather than a whole, how can you be unique? "Well, Maggie has bangs," I'm told, "that's the difference." Or, "It's so hard to tell! Stand next to each other; let me compare both of your faces."

So, I try and do the job for them, desperately trying to differentiate myself from her. I make my hair different from hers so I don't have to hear, "How am I supposed to tell you apart now?" Because when we like or do the same things, I feel like I am submitting to our genetics, but fighting it feels like trying to edit my own genetic code with a pair of scissors.

This struggle is amplified by the school environment, because every test, every marking period,

and every school year is a race against each other's shadows. Between the two of us, there is only one winner and one loser, and I don't want to be left behind. While many siblings live their lives in the shadow of another, Maggie and I are losing unless that shadow is obliterated altogether.

I am tired of intertwining my identity and my accomplishments with hers, of being overcome with jealousy and unworthiness when she does better than I do. I struggle to let go, even as I know I am actively turning myself into her by trying to match her.

As I leave high school, I'm trying to shift my mindset, to make peace with this aspect of who I am that is unchangeable. I remember that being a twin might not make me unique, but it does make me extraordinary. Like a double-yolked egg, like a set of plastic silverware with two spoons instead of one, we have a remarkable gift: a strange yet wonderful opportunity of life unlike most others. It is time that I treat it as such.

But, this space that I've been given allowed me to write columns that are all my ideas, my words—me. I'd like to thank the Commentator for teaching me how to translate my own brain into columns of sans-serif font, even if it sometimes feels like it's written in hieroglyphs. And thank you to Mrs. Lombard for always encouraging me to use my voice. It has been a pleasure to be one of your Opinions editors.



Emily Anstett  
Features Editor

Hello my name is Emily Anstett and I have a problem. My resting face is not the most pleasant, it often makes it appear as though I am angry or annoyed, when in fact I am usually neutral. Due to censorship, I am unable to explicitly name this condition, but maybe you can figure it out. Who knows, maybe you have it.

Until high school I was unaware that I was afflicted with this issue. While I knew I did not have a naturally smiley, resting face, I didn't think I looked mad. About halfway into freshman year, after getting to know Braxton Berry who sat next to me in first period, he enlightened me to my problem.

I came to Freeman not knowing anyone. I chose to come to a school and leave behind the friends that I had since kindergarten. Leaving the comfort of friends and finding myself in a situation where I needed to make new friends I found myself with this affliction.

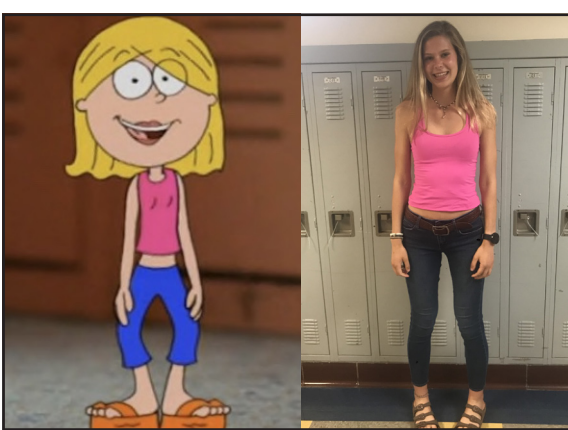
I would like to bring awareness to this three-letter syndrome.

While there are times when I am mad and my face shows it, other times I may be perfectly content and my face makes it look as though I am seething. During my freshman year at Freeman I found myself becoming more and more aware that I had it. I would be sitting in class wondering if I looked angry or just bored. Now, looking back I have come to realize that even though my resting face is not always cheery or happy looking that does not mean that I am not.

Having this with my more introverted nature was not always easy when I put myself in a situation full of unknowns and one in which I knew no one. However, as I look back on my four years at Freeman, I realized that while I struggled at times to speak up or feel as though I always had a voice, I learned to speak when I felt I needed something to say. I learned sometimes it's better to say something meaningful and thoughtful than it is to speak just to hear my own voice.

One of the biggest things that I became aware of as I went through high school was that there will be people and teachers who test you and make you feel that being less talkative or less outgoing is not necessarily a good thing. However, it doesn't mean that you do not have something important to say.

So, before judging someone with a sour expression, consider that maybe this person is not angry or callous. Instead, she may just share my chronic condition, but have oodles of joy to give that may not be apparent at first glance.



HILLARY NEELY AS LIZZIE MCGUIRE  
(LIZZIE MCGUIRE)



REMY SCHIMICK AS D.W.  
(ARTHUR)

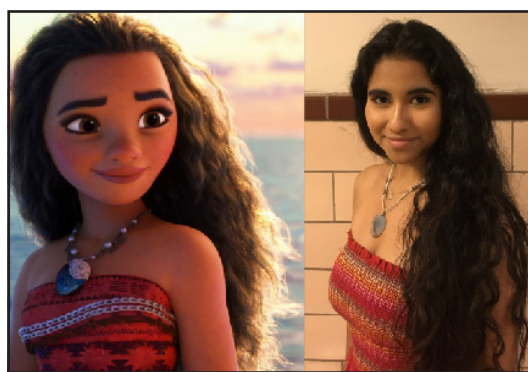
## FREEMAN'S CARTOON LOOK-ALIKES



GARRETT GIDDINGS AS JESUS  
(FAMILY GUY)



CHRIS ZHAO AS RUSSELL  
(UP)



ALHYSON AYALA AS MOANA  
(MOANA)



KEVIN BRUZON AS JAY BILZERIAN  
(BIG MOUTH)

# How to Have an A+ College Admissions Season



Julia Cassidy  
Features Editor

"So...where are you thinking of going to college?" This is the question that many students get asked all throughout their high school career. For me, this was always a difficult question. The road to college is not the same for everyone, and it is not so much a sprint as a marathon. Here are ten things that I've learned along the way.

**1. Freshman and Sophomore year-** My best advice is to focus on grades and to start to think about what your interests are inside and outside of the classroom. Focus on a few interests and have fun exploring your pas-

sions! Sign up for classes that interest and motivate you to learn. Take the PSAT and see where you can improve.

**2. Ask yourself what you want in a college-** The fact that there are around 5,300 colleges in the United States can be a little overwhelming. However, there are ways to start narrowing down the amount of options. Ask yourself important questions about what type of learning and social environments you thrive best in and what your priorities are, like whether you want a big school or small school. Don't be afraid of cover prices on private schools. Many private schools have bigger endowments and sometimes can offer you a better or equal financial package as public schools.

**3. Pick your schools-** Don't apply anywhere that you wouldn't actually be excited about going to! You should research some schools that you can actually see yourself at for your safety, target, and reach schools. For safety schools, your GPA and standardized test scores should be above that school's range. College admissions have a reputation for being cruelly random, so you want to make sure you have solid

back ups.

**4. Check your email-** Checking your email will alert you of prospective schools to apply to, updates on your application status, and deadline alerts. Apply with a non-hcps email account if you don't have one, because your hcps email will get deleted at the end of senior year, and you don't want to lose important college information.

**5. Teacher recommendations-** You should ask for at least two college recommendations to be safe. Some teachers are really popular, so it is a good idea to ask sometime in the second semester of junior year. Teachers like as much notice as possible. It is polite to ask in person and be prepared to follow up with an email that includes more details about yourself.

**6. The SAT/ACT-** Khan Academy is great resource to use because it's free and you can link your PSAT results to Khan Academy and practice the areas that you are struggling in. It also lets you set up a practice schedule to keep you on track. Beware of signing up for the SAT during the exam season of junior year! I did, and I was so busy studying for my exams, I didn't feel as

prepared as I could have. Many schools will super-score your SAT and take the highest combined scores of your reading and math so if you have the time and resources to, retaking it to get a higher score could be worth it.

**7. Use the summer-** yes I know. Homework over the summer :( But I promise that anything you can do over the summer can only help you. There are college application prep resources such as the College Edge that can help you get ready for senior year. The Common Application and the Coalition Application cover almost all school applications and open in the end of August. If you plan on applying to more than one school, it is a great idea to set up an account on both those sites.

**8. Personal statement-** The truth is that to a lot of these schools, many of the applicants have similar stats. So your personal statement is your time to shine! Use it to tell the colleges something that makes you seem unique and something that will illustrate your numbers. In your application, try to make a theme and almost paint a picture of yourself so that the college can see what makes you unique.

**9. Senior year-** The most stressful time I've ever had at Freeman was my first semester of Senior year because I was working on my essays and filling out my applications on top of trying to handle my school work. So, get those applications done ASAP. Know where you want to apply and have some essays done. Most early action deadlines fall around November 1 and most regular decision deadlines fall around January 1, so if you aren't quite ready to submit your application early, take advantage of the later deadline. After you have submitted your applications...Smile! Feel proud of all the work that you have done and enjoy life as a second semester senior.

**10. #Accepted-** Once you commit to a school, the fun begins. You get to find a roommate, buy the sweatshirt, and relax because you know where you are going. My best advice is to not stress and/or let all of the thoughts about the future make you stop focusing on the now. Stay in the moment and appreciate your time as a Rebel, because it will be over before you know it.



## A Special Letter to the Stadium Field



Juliana McKean  
Centerspread Editor

To the field,  
When I first saw you in 8th grade, when I came to visit Freeman, I was immediately in awe. Your luscious, sloping sides curving down were illuminated in the bright, blinding lights of the stadium, bringing to attention every blade and being on your surface. Five months after our initial encounter, I returned to you for

fall nights filled with friends and football. As the temperature steadily dropped and the calendar ran its course toward the end of the year, our time to finally meet encroached upon me.

In late February of 2016, we officially met as I stepped onto your surface and prepared for soccer tryouts, cleats in hand and anxiety roaring. The prospect of trying out for varsity as a mere freshman wrecked my nerves, but the feeling of your soft earth under my cleats and the smooth path of the ball as your short, well-groomed grass cradled it calmed me down.

Fast forward to the beginning of March, where the nerves I previously thought were significant at tryouts exponentially multiplied as I pulled off my warmup shirt and donned my jersey for the first time. I shivered in the evening air, partially from the slight breeze, partially from the chills running up my spine. Here I was: lights glaring, blades glimmering, short inhales and exhales matching the fast tempo of my heart. I felt your lush ground beneath my feet as the shrill whistle signified kick-

off.  
For two springs, I spent hours on you, playing and practicing. When I fell, your soft surface was always there to cushion my landing. I became accustomed to your fresh scent of cut grass, white goals standing like sentinels at either end.

You did something unspeakable, however, my junior year. Tryouts ensued as usual, but then you were ripped away from me to undergo your transition. I had to deal with a placeholder for you, but its sides didn't slope the way yours did, it was 20 minutes away from the familiar lights and environment I was used to, and instead of cushioning my falls, the hard surface shot pain into my joints when an unfortunate moment of imbalance occurred.

The fall of my senior year, as I entered the gates of the stadium to watch the first home football game of the year, something was missing. Instead of the freshly cut grass scent I was so used to, a synthetic smell wafted from the field. As I rounded the corner of the stands, I was horrified to see new markings covering your beautiful surface, lines for

all the sporting events that happen throughout the year instead of having seasonal lines only. I felt bombarded by the dark green that covered you as opposed to the peaceful kelly green that had previously grown.

This spring, as I stepped foot on your new, harder surface, populated with small pellets and uniform synthetic blades, it felt different. But, it also felt like somewhat of a homecoming, with the familiar lights around me and the dark blue paint showing school spirit. As the season goes on, I become more and more used to you--I'm definitely not as fond of the color and markings you now wear, and the way it feels to hit the ground after getting trucked, but you are the new platform for more games and practices and moments.

I'm not sure if things will ever be the same as they once were for us, but I do still recognize your commitment to me and mine to you, and perhaps I'll come back to see you sometime in the future. Until then, William E. Long stadium field.

Best,  
Juliana

## Lets Get this Bread



Cole Ryland  
Contributing Editor

Life has a way of confusing people. Sometimes it seems big and open, without boundaries. Other times it demands so much focus that it feels like walking through a tunnel. With school taking up 35 hours of our many weeks, it's easy to slip into those dark, snug walls that block out everything else. It makes sense, with the strain of the future chasing us through them, egging us on to run faster. The one thing to always remember, though, is that there is life outside of that pursuing strain, those walls, and your own mind.

High school is many things, but one thing it has in common with most everyone is that it's the last few moments of deciding what the future is going to hold. Some people can hack it, while others can only hack their hair out of their scalps trying to figure it all out. The pressure from this can be brought on by the expectations of others, or from the flow of life itself. As tired as this sounds, it's okay. Even if we don't show it, we all collectively understand the feelings and stress it brings out in us, and we are not alone. If that doesn't make anything any better, maybe this will.

When you have time, take a minute and forget all about outside expectations, fitting into molds, and gaining approval. Now that you're alone in your psyche, what makes you tick? What about the life you live ignites a charge in you? If nothing comes to mind, that's okay. But if something does, don't ask yourself, "can I do this?" Ask yourself if you want to. If the answer is yes, you now have the choice to go after it, and no one else can make that choice for you. Once you realize that you and you alone are in control of your actions, there is no such thing as a model example of a life, and that your experiences are worth more than any tuition, that's when the clouds begin to part. I'll say it again - no one else can determine your life's direction (except the cops). Only you. Are you living someone else's dream right now?

Sometimes it's best not to think too much about your every move. A feeling of being an imposter from over-analyzing life can overcome people when they're feeling secure and happy, but I can assure you, that feeling is merely a distraction. This goes for anyone who has found life outside of the expectations of attending college, getting a degree, and finding a job. It also applies for anyone going through the academic process with confidence and hope for the future. If you ever feel like you are not allowed to feel the happiness you are experiencing, rest easy - you are. Listen to your voice, don't look behind you, and take the plunge into what you want your life to be. Life is not at all what it seems, and it just can't be forced into boxes and put onto shelves. The momentums, the feelings, the sparks that you feel in your gut when life happens - these cannot be caged, no matter how hard you try. So why not live boundlessly, in the direction of your own?

## What will you do when the final bell rings?



Aries (March 21- April 19): Can't hear it because they're already out the door.



Taurus (April 20 - May 20): "Now what?"



Gemini (May 21 - June 20): Changed into beach clothes. People are confused.



Cancer (June 21 - July 22): Making the rounds...hugging favorite teachers, saying goodbye to BFF's, shedding some tears.



Leo (July 23 - Aug 22): Ready to pull a 12 week long all-nighter.



Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22): Already has the summer planned in a color-coded, nicely organized binder.



Libra (Sept 23 - October 22): Twenty party invitations already. Will attend every single one.



Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21): Discreetly dropping off angry notes at teacher's desks.



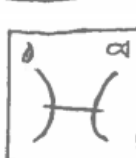
Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21): Jumping out of the window to get out of class faster. Next stop: paradise.



Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 20): Going to the gym to work on that summer bod.

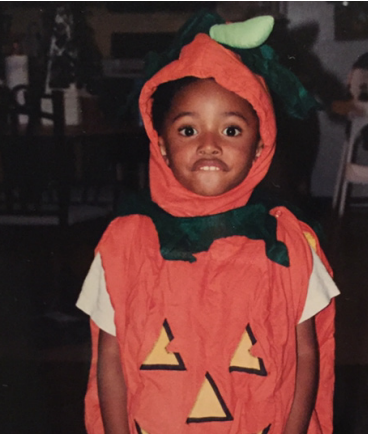


Aquarius (Jan 21 - Feb 19): Spends the night in the cafeteria just because. #thanksthememories



Pisces (Feb 20 - March 20): Either crying or celebrating - there's no in between.

## A Life Well-Lived in Spite of Strife



Braxton Berry  
Opinions Editor

Making light out of a dark situation is the story of my high school journey; that's the story of me. The struggle is what makes me who I am and through my struggles, I've learned to care for others just as I care for myself.

As I sit and prepare myself to write this final article, I find my mind scrambled, my heart heavy, and my eyes watery; because I know this is the ending to a chapter that has ultimately changed my life forever.

Whether it be my extremely loud voice, infectious laugh, risky fashion choices, or simply just reading my column through-

out the year. I believe you all have a sense of who I am; or at least my self-deprecating, extremely extroverted, and more confident side.

As many of you might know, I love to talk. Whether it be to someone I know, someone I don't know, about myself, heck, I could literally talk to a couch and by the end of the conversation we would be besties.

However, when it comes to talking about where I come from, my experiences, my goals, or simply who I really am - both the good and bad. I am at a loss for words.

So I intend to fix that through a reintroduction:

Hello, my name is Braxton Berry and I'm a bit wary about writing this column. Earlier in my junior year, I wrote an essay on what the "good life" is and in doing so, I came to the realization that it's achieved through the virtue of perseverance. Then, I was asked to define what it means to experience "a life well lived," and you might be frustrated with my answer.

I find it ironic how a person who has experienced so much suffering in such a short lifetime can decipher what it means to live a life well lived. However, I've recently realized that "a life well lived" doesn't mean a

hardship-free life, but a life so scorched by constant suffering that the only remedy is the quintessential memories I make. No matter how good or bad these memories are, they're what drive me to better myself each day and, as Aristotle would say, what galvanizes me to reach my definition of success.

A life well lived cannot be measured by the amount of money, power, or influence one has, but rather by the love, sacrifice, happiness, pleasure, pain, and memories made. As a young boy, I would reminisce about the future- my future: things as stupid as if I would grow taller than my older brother Thomas or become the first black president (Thanks Obama). But I would also wonder if my parents would get back together, if we would finally have to give our dog away because my mom simply couldn't afford him anymore, if I was asking too much from my mom who at the time was visibly struggling to keep it all together, or even if my mom would keep up the act that we were having a sleepover in her bed instead of telling us that she simply couldn't afford the repairs to the heating unit and we needed to sleep together so we wouldn't get sick from how cold it was in our house. I then grew older and realized how much my

mom sacrificed, so I could live well. How she would lie to protect my innocence rather than tell me the truth and corrupt my youth.

A life well lived is measured by the memories made in times of suffering. It's seen in the bird bath outside of my house, that my mom spent her last {check}; so that her children could see the birds bathe rather than face the reality of how hard life was; it's seen in my mom's bed where we would play puzzles and make up stories until we fell soundly asleep those cold nights, and it's seen in every other struggle in my life where it felt like things would never get better, but now I look back and cherish those memories forever because as Aristotle states, pain and pleasure creates happiness.

In the past, I tried to hide my suffering so those around me wouldn't pity me or deem me as lesser, but like politician Raymond Hull says, "He who trims himself to suit everyone will soon whittle himself away." So let me reintroduce myself. My name is Braxton Berry, and I have learned that success and a good life is something that wasn't acquired through pleasure alone, but immense pain too, and that's what living well means, and that's why I'm happy.

Zoe Costello  
News Editor



Katie Cooper  
Online Editor-in-Chief



Lauren Bruns  
Sports Editor



Greer Peacock  
Sports Editor



Cameron McCarty  
Sports Editor







Braxton Berry and Tori Booth

## Most Likely to Be a Social Media Influencer



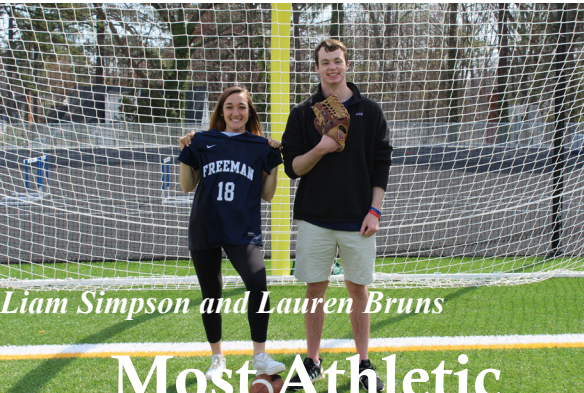
Mark Graff and Anna Beamer

## Most Likely to Be President



Walker Barkstrom and Sarah Rowe

## Most Likely to Break the Curve



Liam Simpson and Lauren Bruns

## Most Athletic



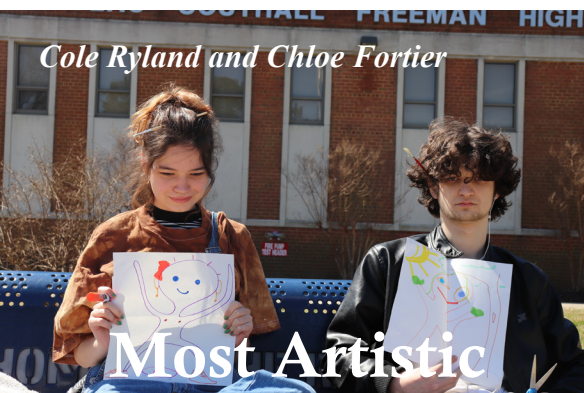
Xavier Johnson and Katy Coleman

## Most Likely to Get Caught in a Tardy Sweep



Shane Bishop and Clara Skeppstrom

## Most Likely to Be Successful



Cole Ryland and Chloe Fortier

## Most Artistic



Seth Forrest and Grace Lu

## Most Likely to Change the World



Jackson Albrecht and Rachel Wilson

## Most Musical



Chase Smith and Abok Kawaj

## Most Unforgettable



Brandon Cokes and Emme Levenson

## Mr. & Mrs. DSF



Nick Hargrove and Leanne Larkin

## Biggest Rebel



Conor Battle and Ariela Press

## Broadway Bound



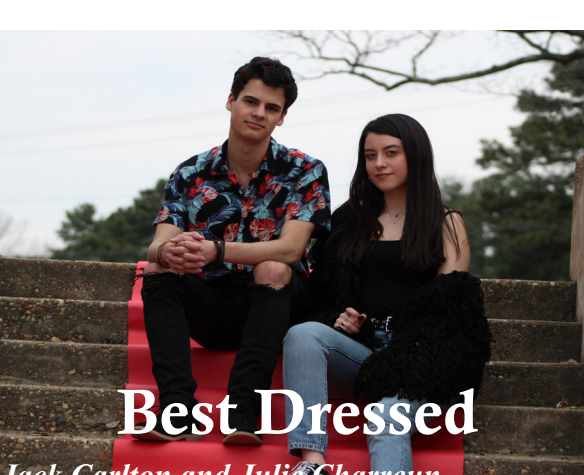
Jack Lugar and Gracie Wallace

## Class Clown



Shane Coriaty and Bridget Patton

## Everyone's Crush



Jack Carlton and Julie Charreun

## Best Dressed



Macaulay Hopson and Hannah Parker

## Everyone's Friend



Reid Hutcherson and Zael Carroll

## Two Peas in a Pod



Andy Harris and Gillian Saunders

## Teachers' Pet

# Most Likely to Never Take Midterms



## Class of 2019

William E. Long Stadium