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Presenting the Houston County School District 2021 Valedictorians & Salutatorians

HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Houston County high schools have announced their valedictorian and salutatorian for the Classes of 2021. The top graduates are:

- ★ **Houston County High** ~ Valedictorian Rumi Lee, Salutatorian Emma Ringe;
- ★ **Northside High** ~ Valedictorian Clara Perkins, Salutatorian Brianna Beard;
- ★ **Perry High** ~ Valedictorian Maximus Genio, Salutatorian Daniel Manuel;
- ★ **Veterans High** ~ Valedictorian Phoebe "Bella" Caldwell, Salutatorian Rebecca Kenny; and
- ★ **Warner Robins High** ~ Valedictorian Farinaz Zahiri, Salutatorian Zander Narum.

Commencement ceremonies will be on May 28 and May 29, 2021. All ceremonies will be held in Perry at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Reeves Arena. Approximately 1,871 students will graduate. The graduation schedule and estimated number of graduates follow.

- ★ Veterans High School, Friday, May 28, 4:00 p.m., about 385 graduates;
- ★ Perry High School, Friday, May 28, 8:00 p.m., about 301 graduates;
- ★ Houston County High School, Saturday, May 29, 8:30 a.m., about 452 graduates;
- ★ Northside High School, Saturday, May 29, 12:30 p.m., about 392 graduates.
- ★ Warner Robins High School, Friday, May 29, 4:30 p.m., about 341 graduates

Photographs and brief biographies for each valedictorian and salutatorian follow.

Houston County High Valedictorian, Rumi Lee



Rumi Lee's honors include National U.S. Chemistry Olympiad Finalist, Flint Energies Washington Youth Tour Delegate, Massachusetts Institute of Technology LaunchX Finalist and Georgia Governor's Honors Program Finalist. She has served on the State Superintendent's Student Advisory Board and represented Georgia Region 8 for the U.S. Senate Youth Program. Lee founded her school's Studio 605 and Girls Who Code chapter, and was recognized as a National Congressional App Challenge Winner. She is the Class of 2021 Vice President and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter president. Her awards include FBLA National Publication Design contest. She also volunteered at the FireStarter FABLab, teaching introductory digital design classes to community members. A classically trained violinist, she has been recognized at the Music Teachers National

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Association and Georgia Music Educators Association. Lee is interested in pursuing computer science and is a finalist for the Georgia Institute of Technology Stamps President's Scholars Program. Her parents are Dr. Jung Hoon and Chan Sook Lee; her sister is Vania Lee, the 2011 Houston County High Valedictorian.

Houston County High Salutatorian, Emma Ringe



Emma Ringe is her school's Student Council President and has served as State President and Crowd Compass App Consultant. She is also Brass Captain of the Black and Silver Brigade, Math Team captain, and a member of the National Honors Society and Beta Club. Ringe has won several state and national Beta Club awards in creative writing and math. At the Georgia Social Studies Fair, she won Best in Class III, Best in Division History and Best STEM Project. Accolades include National Merit Finalist, Governor's Honors Program and acceptance into the Georgia Institute of Technology's distance mathematics program. An AP Scholar with Distinction, she earned a score of five on six Advanced Placement (AP) exams. In addition, Ringe was named the District STAR Student for the county. She enjoys volunteering with local elementary schools, school clean-ups, community food drives and the humane society. She plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology to study computer science. Her parents are Rebecca and Gerry Ringe, and she has a younger sister, Amanda.

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Northside High Valedictorian, Clara Perkins



Clara Perkins has been a member of the National Beta Club for four years and a participant in the Blue Wind Band marching and concert seasons for three years. A recipient of the Top 5% Award for four consecutive years, she has earned an A in every class, to include AP Physics, AP Language and Composition, AP Calculus, AP Literature and Composition and AP Art History. Perkins is an avid competitor who was a member of the state finalist team for National History Day and currently participates in the Regional Literary Competition and Capitol Hill Stock Market challenge. She was a state finalist for the 2020 Governor's Honors Program in communicative arts and a 2021 Golden Eagle nominee for mathematics. In 2020, she was an Optimist Student of the Month. Outside of school, she has worked at Jeneane's at Pinebrook and Greek Village Restaurant. Perkins plans to attend the University of Georgia and major in English to pursue a career in teaching. Her parents are Brandy and Timothy Gluvna, and Chris and Heather Perkins; her siblings include Cy Marshall, Samantha Perkins and Avery Perkins.

Northside High Salutatorian, Brianna Beard



Brianna Beard has been a Top 5% Award recipient for three consecutive years and was nominated for Governor's Honor Program in both agriculture and social science. A member of FFA for four years, she has served as the Vice President, President and Student Advisor. Beard has won multiple FFA regional and state awards and currently tutors underclassmen for FFA plant-based competitions. She also placed first at state in the National History Day Competition. Beard has served all four years in her class's student council and is the secretary for the Esports team. IN addition, she is the SkillsUSA Vice President and Fundraising Chair. She gives back to her community as an active member of the Junior Optimist International Club. In the fall, she will attend Savannah College of Art and Design, majoring in animation. Her parents are Mary Cochran and Derrick Beard.

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Perry High Valedictorian, Maximus Genio



Maximus Genio is an AP Scholar with Distinction, who took rigorous courses to include AP Statistics, AP World History, AP American History, AP Biology, AP Language & Composition, AP Computer Science, AP Calculus AB, AP Literature & Composition and AP Macroeconomics. He earned the highest average in Honors Biology, Honors Chemistry, Honors Geometry, Honors Literature, Honors U.S. & World Affairs and AP World History. Genio received a Georgia Certificate of Merit from the University of Georgia and was selected for the 2020 Georgia State University Summer Leadership Academy. He has served as president of both the National Honor Society and Interact Club. Genio participated in international community service in Southern Leyte, Philippines. A member of the Perry High band, he has participated in elite wind ensemble, marching band, indoor percussion, steel drum band and percussion ensemble. He was the 2019 snare drum section leader and 2020 percussion captain. Genio was selected for the GMEA District 8 and South Georgia Region Honor Bands from 2018-2020 and the 2019 GMEA 9-10 All-State Band. He was the drummer for the 2021 AAAA state championship one-act play and member of the Esports team. He plans to attend Georgia Institute of Technology to pursue an industrial engineering degree and a minor in computer science. Genio is the son of Lt. Col. Alex Genio and Jocelyn Teofisto-Genio; he has a younger sister, Xavier "Abbey" Genio.

Perry High Salutatorian, Daniel Manuel



Daniel Manuel is an AP Scholar with Distinction, taking a rigorous course load to include AP Statistics, AP World History, AP Biology, AP US History, AP Language and Composition, AP Chemistry, AP Literature and Composition, AP Macroeconomics and AP Calculus. He received the Georgia Certificate of Merit. Manuel is the Student Council class secretary and is active in several service organizations such as National Honors Society and Interact Club. He was a member of the Panther Regiment Marching Band all four years of high school, where he was captain for the saxophone section. In addition, he was a member of the Perry High Elite Band as first chair alto saxophone in the wind ensemble. In the fall, Manuel plans to attend Georgia Institute of Technology to pursue a degree in Aerospace Engineering. His parents are Raphael and Melanie Manuel, and his younger siblings are Jacob and Rachel Manuel.

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Veterans High Valedictorian, Phoebe "Bella" Caldwell



Phoebe "Bella" Caldwell is a Golden Eagle Award nominee in math and a recipient of the Georgia Certificate of Merit from the National Merit Scholar competition. She is an AP Scholar with Distinction, earning a score of five on six AP exams including: AP Chemistry, AP Computer Science Principles, AP English Language and Composition, AP Statistics, AP U.S. History and AP World History. Other honors include 2021 STAR Student, a Georgia Certificate of Merit in the National Merit Scholar competition, Governor's Honors Program 2020 participant, and Optimist Student of the Month. Caldwell has served as the treasurer and president of the French Club and is a member of the French Honor Society. She is also an active member of the Beta Club, Coding Club, SkillsUSA. In addition, she is a member of the National Technical Honors Society and National English Honor Society. Caldwell plans to attend Mercer University to pursue a degree in chemistry; with the ultimate goal of earning a Ph.D. in the field. Her parents are Patrick Caldwell and Angela Caldwell.

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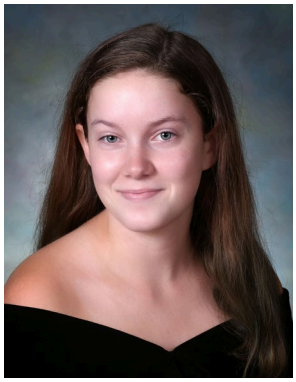
Veterans High Salutatorian, Rebecca Kenny



Rebecca Kenny is a member of the Veterans High girls' soccer team and currently serves as team captain. An active member of the National English Honor Society, she previously served as president. Kenny played first chair oboe in the band until her senior year of high school. Her many honors include Georgia Certificate of Merit, semi-finalist for the Governor's Honors Program in mathematics, and Optimist Student of the Month. Kenny is an AP Scholar who earned a score of five for both AP Computer Science Principles and AP Statistics exams. She is a member of multiple student organizations, to include Beta Club, STEM Club and Science Olympiad. Kenny plans to attend either Georgia Southern University or the University of North Georgia to pursue a career as a pediatric nurse practitioner. She hopes to one day work with groups such as Doctors without Borders. Kenny is the daughter of James and Laura Kenny; she has three siblings, Matthew, Sara and David.

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Warner Robins High Valedictorian, Farinaz Zahiri



Farinaz Zahiri has been captain of the cross-country team since her junior year. This past season alone, she won multiple medals and placed 5th in the region. Zahiri has received multiple academic honors to include: Governor's Honors Program alumna in social studies, Washington Youth Tour recipient, and Georgia U.S. Presidential Scholar finalist. Inspired by her father, she also led a research campaign about pituitary adenomas. Zahiri has maintained her class rank since her freshman year. An AP Scholar, she earned a score of five on the following AP exams: AP English Language and Composition, AP European History, AP U.S. Government and Politics and AP U.S. History. Zahiri has the highest GPA in classes such as AP Biology and AP U.S. Government. She served as president of Beta Club and vice president of French Club. Zahiri has completed internships with a pediatrician and a family practitioner. She serves her community by volunteering time at the Robins Air Force Base Marketing Office. She plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology to major in chemical and bimolecular engineering. Her parents are Venus and Feraidoon (Frank) Zahiri, and she has one brother, Farbod Zahiri.

Warner Robins High Salutatorian, Zander Narum



Zander Narum has been an active member of the Speech and Debate Team since freshman year and currently serves as Debate Captain. Qualifying for Nationals all four years, his achievements include co-champion and first place speaker in Lincoln Douglas Debate and first place in International Extemporaneous Speaking at Region Literary, along with many other placings. Currently he is the Beta Club President and has held the offices of historian and treasurer. He was awarded State Champion in Color Photography at the Georgia State Convention. He serves on the Student Advisory Council and is the Class of 2021 Secretary. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership Class and Chick-fil-A Leadership Class. In addition, Narum co-founded the Ethics Bowl Team, serves as the Spanish Club Vice President and is a member of the Quiz Bowl Team, Mu Alpha Theta and Social Studies Honors Society. While taking 14 AP classes and numerous honors classes, he earned the highest average in Honors World Affairs, Honors Civics, AP Statistics and AP European History. A finalist of the 2020 Governor's Honors Program for social studies, he was also honored as a recipient of the Georgia Certificate of Merit, Optimist Student of

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the Month, and AP National Scholar for earning six 5s on his exams. Narum plans to pursue a double major in international affairs and marketing and then continue to law school to study international law. He has been accepted into the Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia as a Classic Scholar and Mercer University with the Jesse Mercer Scholarship. However, he is awaiting decisions from George Washington University, College of William and Mary and Vanderbilt University before making his final decision. His parents are Col. (Ret.) Jerald and Linh Narum, and he has one older brother, Zachary Narum.

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