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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 11, 2009

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Presenting Houston County's 2009 Valedictorians and Salutatorians

HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – The Houston County School System's Classes of 2009 have announced the valedictorian and salutatorian of each high school's graduating class. The top graduates are:

- **Houston County High** - Valedictorian: Brandon Munda; Salutatorian: Anna Schmitz
- **Northside High** - Valedictorian: Trace Deighan; Salutatorian: Johnny Fells, III
- **Perry High** - Valedictorian: Meredith Freeman; Salutatorian: Allison Williams
- **Warner Robins High** - Valedictorian: Courtney Walker; Salutatorian: Colby Wilkason

All graduation ceremonies will be held in the Miller-Murphy-Howard Building at the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter. Approximately 1,580 students will graduate.

The graduation ceremony schedule and the approximate number of graduates is shown below.

- **Perry High School**, Friday, May 29, 8:00 p.m., ~213 graduates;
- **Houston County Career & Technology Center**, Saturday, May 30, 9:00 a.m., ~67;
- **Houston County High School**, Saturday, May 30, 11:00 a.m., ~501 graduates;
- **Northside High School**, Saturday, May 30, 3:00 p.m., ~370;
- **Warner Robins High School**, Saturday, May 30, 7:00 p.m., ~430.

Brief biographies are provided for each of the top graduates.

Houston County High Valedictorian Brandon Munda



Brandon Munda has received countless academic awards throughout high school, including a Golden Eagle nominee and Governor's Honor nominee. He was named the system and district STAR student and is a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program. He earned a letter for his participation on the school swim team. Active in the school's drama department, he is also a member of the National Thespian Society. Brandon has participated in community service projects through his church. In the fall he plans to attend Emory University - where he has been awarded a Woodruff Scholarship – to major in the sciences. He is the son of Bobby and Brenda Munda.

MORE

Houston County High Salutatorian Anna Schmitz



Anna Schmitz, voted by her peers as "Most Likely to Succeed," understands that hard work and effort really do pay off in the end. She has received numerous awards and recognitions such as the Georgia Certificate of Merit, AP Scholar, and Optimist Student of the month for April. She was nominated for the Governor's Honors Program and the Golden Eagle Award, both in the subject of social studies. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Tri-M Music Honor Society. Music is her passion, and she has been playing the piano since the age of seven. She has received straight Superior ratings for the past nine years at the NFMC festival and placed 1st in the district in 2008. She has won numerous other competitions, scholarships and awards in the area of piano. Schmitz regularly plays at her church, Sacred Heart, and has been the guest pianist at Vineville Presbyterian Church and the Cherry Blossom Festival. In addition to piano, she also plays the trumpet and French horn in her school band and has been the principle keyboardist for the District Jazz Band. Anna has been accepted to Furman University, where she plans on double majoring in music performance and history. Anna's parents are Bill and Suk Schmitz.

Northside High Valedictorian Trace Deighan



Accomplishments, Academic: Top 5% Award (9-12), AP Chemistry Award (11), Honors American Literature Award (10), AP Scholar with Honor Award, Scored a 5 on AP Chemistry Exam, 4 on AP US History Exam, 4 on AP World History Exam, 3 on AP English Language and Composition Exam, 7 AP classes, 7 Honors Classes, Literary Region Champion, Boys Essay, Literary State Runner-Up: Boys Essay.

Athletic: Wrestling Varsity Letter Award (10), Scholar Athlete Award (9-11), helped lead team to region runner-up and to state dual tournament.

Drama: Member of Thespian Troupe 2892, 2008 Drama Rookie Award, cast member of Region 1-AAAAA and State One Act Champion show *Once on this Island*, lead character in spring musicals *Oklahoma!* and *The Broadway Follies*.

Activities: Wrestling, (9-11), Baseball (9), Beta Club (9-12), Drama (11-12), Youth Leadership Warner Robins (11), Ultimate Frisbee Club (11-12), Outstanding Senior (12), member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church Youth Group (10-11), Literary Team (12), Chick-fil-A employee (2007-present)

Trace's parents are Chris and Nancy Deighan. He plans to attend the University of Georgia to major in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and possibly attend medical school. He also hopes to remain active in theatre and athletics in Athens.

MORE

Northside High Salutatorian Johnny Fells, III



Accomplishments/Honors: Attended Governors Honors Program as a Sophomore in Chemistry, Golden Eagle Winner (Science), Houston County Association Gifted Children Outstanding Senior, GHSA AAAAAA Boys Extemporaneous Champion, Southeast Regional BioGENEius (2 years), Harvard Book Award, Finalist in Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (2 years), National Forensic League Degree of Distinction, and GA FFA Agriscience Fair Champion (Biochemistry).

Activities: Class President (3 years), Beta Club President, Science Club President and Charter Member, Area III FFA Reporter, Saxophone Section Leader of Bluewind Marching Band (10th grade), Former Math Club Vice-President, Warner Robins Youth Leadership Alumnus, Varsity Debate, Student Congress, Extemporaneous Speaking, over 100 hours of service as volunteer in emergency room of Houston Medical Center, and competed in over 30 science competitions in past 4 years.

Johnny's parents are Cora Fells-Gibson (mother) and Alfred Gibson (stepfather). He plans to attend Columbia University in New York City, and will continue to research with Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit, Michigan.

Perry High Valedictorian Meredith Freeman



Accomplishments: First Honors; National Honor Roll; Georgia Certificate of Merit; Perry Chamber of Commerce Student of the Month; Honorary Junior Board Member; 1st Place 2009 State FFA Senior Nursery Landscape; 3rd Place 2006 State FFA Junior Nursery Landscape; 1st Place 2005 Area FFA Land Measurement; 2nd Place 2006 State FFA Land Measurement; Section Champion 2005 and 2007 Georgia National Fair FFA Nursery Landscape; 2nd Place 2008 Georgia National Fair FFA Nursery Landscape; graduating with dual seal.

Activities: Varsity Soccer Team (07-09); Varsity Soccer Team Captain (08-09); Cross Country (06); Arrive Alive (05-09); Student Council (06-09); Homecoming Committee (06-08); Math League (05-09); National FFA Organization (05-09); National Honor Society (07-09); National Honor Society Vice President (08-09); National Technical Honor Society (08-09); Perry Youth Leadership Team (07-08); Prayer Club (05-09); Prayer Club Secretary (08-09); Church Youth Group (07-09); Church Youth Group Junior Executive Board (08-09); Captain of Relay for Life Team (08-09); Big Brother Big Sister (08-09).

Meredith's parents are Jay and Keri Freeman. She plans to attend Georgia Institute of Technology to obtain Master's Degree in Engineering.

MORE

Perry High Salutatorian Allison Williams



Awards/Activities: Macon Telegraph Golden Eagle Award Winner in Social Studies; Governor's Honors Program attendee in Social Studies; Kiwanis School Student of the Year; People to People Student Ambassadors Program; AP Scholar with Honor; District XI Honor Band; Perry Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership Team; Third Place in Extemporaneous Speaking at Region Literary Competition; Marching Band; Flute Section Leader; Student Council; Prayer Club; Arrive Alive.

Allison's parents are Sam and Kay Williams. She plans to attend Boston University.

Warner Robins High Valedictorian Courtney Walker



Courtney Walker is the Senior Class Vice-President, Miss WRHS 2009 and captain of the three-time Region Champion Varsity soccer team. She is also is an Honorable Mention Golden Eagle Award Winner in English Literature and a Governor's Honors Program Nominee in Communicative Arts. A recipient of the University of Georgia's Certificate of Merit, she was also the Warner Robins High nominee for the 2009 United States Senate Youth Program. She has won 1st place each of the past six years at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Courtney has also been nominated in *Who's Who Among American High School Students* and was named an Outstanding Senior by the Houston County Association for Gifted Children. Her school activities involve Student Council, Science and Math Clubs, and KAZ Service Sorority. She plans to attend

Georgia Southern University as a 1905 Scholar where she has earned a full scholarship. She plans to pursue a degree in Pharmacy. Her parents are Walter and Vicki Walker.

Warner Robins High Salutatorian Colby Wilkason



Colby Wilkason is the 2009 WRHS STAR student, a National Beta Club Scholar, AP Scholar with Distinction, Warner Robins Optimist Club Student of the Year, and she has been awarded the Georgia Certificate of Merit. She has received more than 30 international, national, state and regional science awards, including the 2008 Pinnacle Award at the Georgia State Science and Engineering Fair. She is a two-time medalist at the 2007 and 2008 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, a 2008 Governor's Honors Program Finalist in Chemistry, and winner of the 2009 Golden Eagle Honorable Mention in Science. She was a member of the 2006-2008 championship WRHS varsity tennis team, a member of the Macon/Mercer University Symphony Youth Orchestra as well as a member of District and

Regional Honor Bands. She is the Math Club president, Beta Club Vice President, founder of the Warner Robins High recycling program and a member of Kappa Alpha Zeta. Colby will attend Harvard University in the fall. She is the daughter of Tom and Laura Wilkason.

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