

NANTUCKET GOLF CLUB SCHOLAR FINALISTS 2018

LIAM CONNOLE

Our first finalist moved to Nantucket from Florida right before high school. Dr. Williams, in his letter of recommendation, acknowledges the challenges of moving during a difficult time in adolescence but said “he adjusted well, is adored and respected by his teachers and peers and while often reserved, he is unsuspectingly funny.” The Committee came to learn this as he moved through the process. Perhaps his culminating presentation on trampolines brought this fully to light. This finalist cites his grandfather as his biggest role model. He shared an insight from his grandfather. Whenever this finalist would say it has been the worst day, his grandfather would gently remind him “you mean the worst day of your life...so far.” Sometimes seen or even self-identified as reserved, introverted or even shy, this finalist is a bold standout in terms of community service. He has been volunteering at the Nantucket Food Pantry for over three years. His supervisor said of him “Liam is a creative thinker with a humble heart and strong work ethic not often found in students today.” A shining beacon of hope representing our leaders of tomorrow.” This finalist noted in his personal essay that the work at the food pantry inspired him to reach out and explore other social activities. As a result, he began writing for Veritas, joined Quiz Bowl and became the treasurer of the new Politics and Government club in addition to taking a huge step this year in joining the diving team. A participant in the Nantucket Teen View program, he is also in NHS, instrumental ensemble and our new ping pong club. In his spare time, this finalist has undertaken numerous online courses including introduction to java script and HTML, how to change the world, the art of conversation, social entrepreneurship and America’s Poverty course through Stanford University. His favorite quote is from the Buddha “we think what we become.” He became freshman of the year his first year at NHS. We are confident he will become something as he leaves NHS.



NATALIE GAMMONS

The next finalist was born in Boston. She is family oriented, in no small part because she says she has been inspired by her family. Just ask her and her family about the significance of the double wave. In one of our first interviews she said “I owe a lot of who I am to my family.” She has an older sister and a younger brother. She touched the committee when she noted one of the things she will miss most next year is “wisdom time in the car with dad” on their rides to school. While she might self-describe as a procrastinator, the committee doesn’t know when she would have time. She is the epitome of a three sport athlete – varsity soccer, swimming and lax – this part of her life is important to her identity. She impressed the committee when she wrote in her personal essay that she hopes her swim team relay records are broken in the future because “records are meant to be broken.” This shows this finalist’s selflessness while simultaneously setting the bar high for students/scholars who come after her. She is student council co-president and the student representative to the school committee. Of those she admires, she cites Toni Morrison for her fight against racial inequality. She is a member of National Honor Society, breakfast buddies, freshman advisory mentors, Veritas as features editor and the Spanish Club. She has received numerous awards and accolades for her outstanding work athletically and academically including being an 8 time Principal’s List breakfast attendee and the winner of the Mt. Holyoke book award. She plans to attend Northeastern, hoping to become a nurse.



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CLAUDIA HOFFORD

The next finalist “Clow” as she is sometimes nicknamed was homeschooled on Nantucket. She is grateful to her mom for giving of her time to homeschool her and her sister. She says the best thing was learning time management for independent study. This finalist noted the best advice she ever got was from her younger sister Ella who said “the secret to making yourself happy is just believing you are happy!” This finalist credits her



grandmother for playing a big role in shaping the person she has become. Family and church are very important to her. She plays the violin and the piano and loves to sing. She may have amused the committee with stories of finding her harmony and car trip singalongs. She would love to take a road trip across the country. In her personal essay she wrote “I am passionate about helping others, especially those less fortunate.” Her role model is YvRose, a Haitian woman of faith and tenacity who houses 35 students in her home and runs a school for 300. I could see this finalist doing just that. She is a member of Veritas, politics and Spanish Club. She is a talented swimmer who recently broke swimming records at States at MIT, but who amused the committee when she shared that she first tried swimming at age 8 and quit. She now teaches swim lessons, assists with the Dolphins and participates in Swim Across America. She also would love to work as a nurse working with survivors of human trafficking. And just when you thought you’d heard it all, she loves to cook kale and loves avocado and self-describes as a peanut butter enthusiast.

KATHERINE PITTMAN

The next finalist, KP, as she is affectionately nicknamed, is standout among the finalists as a USLA certified beach lifeguard, the only finalist to my knowledge that completed the US Coast Guard Academy Introduction Mission Program and the youngest guard ever recruited to our Nantucket program. She is a three sport athlete – soccer, swimming and lax – and has been a captain of all three her senior year. Through sports she shared that although she has learned to be a leader, she had also learned to be a teammate. She admires Harbormaster Sheila Lucey who she says “turned the summer lifeguarding program from nothing into an elite squad of professionals who keep our beach goers safe.” That admiration is reciprocated as Harbormaster Lucey dubs this finalist a “hero” for her efforts as a guard last summer on a day where 27 rescues were made during Hurricane Gert and commends her for her “impeccable sense of integrity.” Egan Maritme, the Red Cross and the Coast Guard concurred in nominations for public service recognitions for her. This finalist’s life slogan is “look for the good pain in life. Know that you have worked hard enough to succeed.” And succeed she has with numerous athletic and academic recognitions including the Yale book prize. She commends her mother who always emphasized the importance of being herself.



A member of student council, National Honor Society, Spanish and tech clubs, and freshman advisory mentors, this finalist is also heavily involved in service with Holidays for Heroes and over 100 hours at the Congregational Church. In a pair introduction her peer remarked, “KP doesn’t wear bright colors but that doesn’t mean she isn’t bright.” Her myriad accomplishments make that clear. Given her experience and preparation she will rock the US Coast Guard Academy next year.

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CAROLINE RICHARDS

The next finalist has been described as an always positive person who has an encouraging effect on those around her. She impressed the committee with her life slogan, which is a Latin Proverb “if the wind will not serve, take the oars.” This demonstrates her philosophy to confront challenges and overcome obstacles. She demonstrated her tenacity and perseverance in a major way after suffering a serious injury during soccer season, breaking her ankle in three places. She credits her father for encouraging her to find balance. What she learned from her mother’s closet – “I can be a dreamer and a realist without being defined as either”. She admires Nobel Laureate John Nash for his advancements in economics and psychology. An editor of Veritas she was instrumental in organizing our student walkout participation and went to DC to take part in the March for Life. She impressed us with her approach to controversial topics when she said “start a conversation, don’t be afraid of controversy.” She is passionate about gun control and other issues such as student loans and immigration. This finalist applauds Colin Kaepernick and her peers for taking stand against racism and ignorance. An athlete herself, she was captain of the soccer team and is currently captain of the sailing team. This finalist has amassed numerous awards and recognitions from the Statewide Governors Council, New England Scholastic Press, Brown University Deans Scholarship, Advanced Placement Scholar and the Smith Book Award. Her club and activity list is even longer including NHS, class president, Debate Club and Mermaids & Mentors. She told the committee in our first interview she would like to change the world someday. We have no doubt she will.



CHRISTIANNA ROGGEVEEN



Our next finalist, Cheech, as we have come to also know her, was also born in Boston. She enjoys puzzles and is thinking about becoming an orthodontist because she thinks teeth are also like puzzles. She amused the committee when she said if she could be President for a day she would first play hide and seek in the White House. She said the most important advice her family has given her is to be herself, although she says after following two also very accomplished siblings that hasn’t always been easy. She impressed the committee when she asserted “I happily have never been the “third Roggeveen” child that most expect.” If she could create a slogan for her life she would pick “make it work” from Project Runway. She impressed her peers and the Committee with a presentation on media bias when reporting on terrorism. On committee member said of this finalist, she has an infectious laugh/giggle that brightens the room. She is a three sport athlete in addition to being class secretary, finance director of Veritas, president of Chemistry Club and a member of National Honor Society and Spanish Club. She is a Harvard Book Prize winner who has achieved Principal’s List 14/15 quarters of her high school career. A fun fact about

this finalist is she has a cat with no ears that is cleverly named Kitty. If she could advise her freshman self, she would say to join more clubs – how I don’t know. Michael Molinar her supervisor at Flowers on Chestnut, said in his recommendation “Christianna will continue to be successful in whatever path she takes.” The review committee couldn’t agree more.

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CARTER SNELL

The next finalist was born on the island and truly represents of oft-used phrase Whaler Pride. He impressed the Committee with how often he talked about his love of Nantucket, his appreciation for his public school education and his love for his own family as well as his Whaler Family. This finalist says of Nantucket “it isn’t boring it’s a wonder”. In a forum when asked about how to help students make healthy decisions, he noted how we should help students understand and appreciate Nantucket’s natural beauty and how much it has to offer. He is an avid fisherman and loves to be surrounded by nature. This finalist has three older siblings he says have inspired him. One committee member described this finalist as genuine and curious. He admires Bob Dylan as a voice of social protest and believes the youth of today need to register to vote because “we are the future.” He says the most important advice he has received came from his mother when she told him “it’s what you make of it and how much work you put into it.” A two sport athlete – hockey and soccer, captain in both – this finalist is also a member of NHS, business club, Spanish Club, and former class president. He is a talented artist, having recently received second place at the Artists Association Junior Artist Show. He said with all the focus on STEM, we need to foster and fund arts programs in schools in order to access the creative aspects of a child’s mind. Mr. Girvin, in his college recommendation, said “he is one of the most creative and capable woodworkers I have ever seen.” He impressed the committee and his peers with a passionate presentation on woodturning. He is a St. Michael’s book award winner, in addition to being an Inky Mirror Sportsmanship Award winner, a Cape & Islands League all-star and an Eastern MA All-Star. A fun fact for this finalist, he reminds himself to “do a little calculus every day”.

DEANA WEATHERLY

The next finalist credits her mom’s confidence as the inspiration for her to take pride in herself. She amused the committee when she said she isn’t in the Debate Club because she went and everyone was liberal so there wasn’t anything to debate. This finalist believes Nantucket needs to brand itself that we are NOT just the ultimate gated community of rich people that the media sometimes purports us to be. She believes that racism comes through ignorance and that peaceful protest is a core value of the Constitution. She admires Stephen Hawking because even though his body failed him, he used his mind and his intellect to persevere. Her heroes are Elon Musk because when people say no it only fuels him to prove them wrong and Rosalind Franklin, the unsung heroine who discovered the double helix. This finalist says the best advice she ever got was from her cousin who told the kids she babysat for to be leaders and not followers. A fun fact is she arrives to school at 7:45 every day after finishing her makeup in the car. She gave an impressive presentation, replete with two comparative shades of lipstick, on the power/importance of makeup setting the mood for the day. She placed first in the STEM fair, received an MIT STEM award, numerous academic achievement and excellence awards and has been on the Principal’s List 13 quarters of her high school career, where I have mispronounced her name at least 11 times. She is part of the Quiz Bowl “family,” cofounder of the NHS Political Club, NHS, Veritas, Spanish Club and Student Council. Her life slogan, translated from Japanese, which I won’t attempt to pronounce is “I’ll do my best.” She said in an interview “if I am certain of myself, I am able to do anything.” We know you are and are confident you will as you head to Wellesley next year.



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TESSA WELDON

The next finalist makes me want to sing her bio (relax I won't) as the mention of her name brings her many musical accomplishments to mind. In addition to singing she plays the piano, trumpet, violin and guitar. She has written music and plays, and taught us all how to write a song. She is currently working on a jingle for a company that makes musical instruments. When she was younger, her piano teacher, Carolyn Butler, told her parents "she's got the gift." And she was right, but she has many gifts. She has the impressive ability to name over 100 digits of Pi. Her life slogan is really the epitome of this finalist "do everything that makes you happy." Two fun facts about this finalist, she eats a cup of cookie dough ice cream every day and she once made a video of herself singing and riding a scooter. She said the best advice she has received is "follow your dreams even if they are not realistic." She was in Distinguished Young Woman earning runner up in talent, scholastics and self-expression. She was Liesel in Theater Workshop's Sound of Music. She's in the Accidentals and Naturals, NHS Band, plays tennis and field hockey, writes for Veritas and is a member of NHS, Chemistry, Spanish and Drama

Clubs. She earned the Wellesley book award and was a MA Association of School Superintendents Awardee. When speaking about being president for a day she said "no one should be limited from their dreams." We know you will not be.

CHRISTINA "NINA" WILSON

Our last, but certainly not least finalist, was born in Texas and has lived in Missouri, Georgia and Florida before coming to Nantucket in the 6th grade. In a pair introduction, one of her peers described her as "classic but adaptable." She shared with the committee that her dad used to give her pep talks before every game or event where he'd say "try hard, be yourself and do what you can do." She believes that participating in movements for social change is one step closer to creating a large voice. She admires Emma Watson because she dropped out of the Hollywood scene at her zenith in offer to pursue higher education and to become an activist for women's rights for equality and sustainability. One of her heroes is Al Gore for kick starting the environmental movement. She touched the committee when she shared her dream is to open a primary school in Ghana, where she has traveled to volunteer and teach, so that children could have books, materials and sanitary conditions in which to learn. She plays soccer as a team leader and is captain of the lax team. She is a member of NHS, vice president of her class, a Perfect Pal, a Breakfast Buddy, a member of Spanish Club and a Freshman Advisory Mentor. She was a Nantucket Project Junior Fellow Scholar and intern. This finalist hopes to one day be a Peace Corps volunteer and to become a dermatologist. Although this finalist says "I am stubborn" the committee prefers to think of her as tenacious – in the classroom, on the playing field and we are sure this trait will serve her well in life. In his letter of recommendation, Mr. Gregorich wrote of this finalist, "She has the will and the drive to make the world a better place." We have no doubt she will.



