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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Presenting Houston County's 2018 Valedictorians & Salutatorians**

HOUSTON COUNTY, GA - Houston County high schools have announced their valedictorian and salutatorian for the Classes of 2018. The top graduates are:

- **Houston County High** - Valedictorian Alisha Patel, Salutatorian Adam Conway;
- **Northside High** - Valedictorian Harry Patel, Salutatorian Daisy Astudillo;
- **Perry High** - Valedictorian Melinda Grace Barron, Co-Salutatorian Ryan James Faulkner, Co-Salutatorian Lauren Elizabeth Resetar;
- **Veterans High** - Valedictorian Kyle Aaron Kicklighter, Salutatorian Andrew Scott Babbitt; and
- **Warner Robins High** - Valedictorian Samantha Scholz, Salutatorian Laurence Alexander León.

Commencement ceremonies will be May 25 and 26, 2018. All ceremonies will be held at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry in the Miller-Murphy-Howard Building. Approximately 1,900 students will graduate.

The graduation schedule and estimated number of graduates follows.

- Houston County High School, Friday, May 25, 4:30 p.m., about 425 graduates;
- Northside High School, Friday, May 25, 8:00 p.m., about 440 graduates;
- Warner Robins High School, Saturday, May 26, 8:30 a.m., about 360 graduates
- Veterans High School, Saturday, May 26, 12:00 p.m., about 385 graduates;
- Perry High School, Saturday, May 26, 3:30 p.m., about 302 graduates.

Brief biographies and photographs are provided for each valedictorian and salutatorian.

MORE



**Houston County High Valedictorian, Alisha Patel**

Alisha Patel currently serves as the Georgia Association of Student Council District 5 representative, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Special Events Committee Chair, Student Council President, Superintendent Richard Woods' Student Advisory Council member. In addition, she actively participates in National Honors Society, National Technical Honors Society, Beta Club, FCCLA, HOSA, History Club and Psychological Society. Her honors include Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction, Georgia Certificate of Merit, and Highest Average in Honors Chemistry, Advanced Placement (AP) US History, AP Chemistry and AP Pre-Calculus. Previously she won third place at the FCCLA State Chapter Service Visual and Campaign Skit for Beta. She will also be recognized at the upcoming FBLA Nationals for achieving the America Level in the Business Achievement Awards. She enjoys serving her community by volunteering at the Houston Medical Center, Centerville Library and Lake Joy Primary and Elementary Schools. She also played

an integral role in organizing and hosting the District 5 Rally and the first school club fair this year. While she is undecided on attending a specific college, she plans to pursue a degree in biochemistry. Alisha is the daughter of Nikhil and Sonal Patel and the older sister of Virali and Jay.

**Houston County High Salutatorian, Adam Conway**

Adam Conway has been an active musician in the Houston County High Choir and currently serves as Chorus President as well as Tri-M Music Honor Society President. Adam also serves as President of National Honor Society. He remains involved in Beta Club, French Club, French National Honor Society, Thespian Troupe 4974 and Student Council. Adam is an alumnus of the 2016 Georgia Governor's Honors Program where he studied classical voice. He is a five-year veteran of the Georgia Music Educator's Allstate Chorus and a three-time member of the National Association for Music Education's All-National Chorus, as well as the 2017 American Choral Directors Association's National Honor Chorus. Additionally, he represented Houston County internationally at a performance at Carnegie Hall in 2016. He is a recipient of the Georgia Certificate of Merit, Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction and Optimist Student of the Month. Adam serves his community by volunteering at Lake Joy Elementary and Primary Schools as well as various assisted living facilities in Warner Robins. He enjoys singing, traveling, playing classical piano and spending time with friends. This fall, Adam will attend Vanderbilt University to pursue a degree in Music Education. Adam is the son of Carolyn Conway and brother to George and Kevin.



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**Northside High Valedictorian, Harry Patel**

Harry Patel has been awarded the Microsoft Office Specialist Certification, Georgia Certificate of Merit and College Board's AP Scholar with Distinction. Also, he is STAR Student for his school in his graduating class of 2018 and four-time Top 5% recipient. Harry is involved in a few clubs that compete such as Math Club and Quiz Bowl. In addition to competitive clubs, he is involved in school spirit clubs, Eagle Ambassador and Senior Executive. Harry plans to major in neuroscience and minor in Mathematics. His parents are Ashish and Falguni Patel.

**Northside High Salutatorian, Daisy Astudillo**

Daisy Astudillo has received the AP Scholar with Honor and Georgia Certificate of Merit and was recognized as an Optimist Student of the Month. Daisy's involvement in the theatre program has been consistent since freshman year and she is part of the International Thespian Society. She has participated in 10 Northside High theatre productions and one community production. Over the summers she aids in the drama class at Summer Enhancement by painting sets, making costumes and doing makeup. Currently she is president of the theatre troupe, and has previously held roles as student representative. She was also the semi-finalist in the Governor's Honors Program for theatre. For the past three years, she has competed in the Literary Competition as part of the Girl's Trio. Daisy plans to attend either Oglethorpe University or Berry College, though her major is still undecided. She is the daughter of Rogelio and Irasema Astudillo and has three older siblings.



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**Perry High Valedictorian, Melinda Grace Barron**

Melinda Grace Barron is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction, a Georgia Certificate of Merit recipient and two-time Governor's Honors Nominee in math and science. In addition, Melinda is a 2018 Golden Eagle Nominee for mathematics. She was recognized for earning the highest average in AP Environmental Science, Accelerated Pre-Calculus, Honors Chemistry, Honors World History, Physics, Accelerated Analytical Geometry, Accelerated Coordinate Algebra, Honors Biology, French I and French II. She has maintained an A-average since freshman year while balancing a rigorous academic schedule, co-curricular activities and serving her community. Melinda is an active member of Beta Club and National Honors Society. She is a five-year member of the Panther Regiment Marching Band and served as the Snare Captain when they won Grand Championship. She is also a four-year member of the highest band class and is the current first chair percussionist. She is a participant in the band's Indoor Drumline and steel band. In the community, she tutors middle school students in math and science, volunteers with local elementary schools and assists her teachers at school. She plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology to pursue a degree in chemical and biomolecular engineering. She is the daughter of Maxwell and Kyong Suk Barron and younger sister of Kimberly Barron.

**Perry High Co-Salutatorian, Ryan James Faulkner**

Ryan James Faulkner is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction, an honor graduate and Perry High STAR Student. He has been a member of multiple school clubs to include Future Business Leaders of America, where he serves as an officer, the Literary Team, National Honors Society, Beta Club and National Technical Honors Society. He has competed in region and state competitions for coding and programming. Ryan is a Governor's Honors Nominee for Math, a Georgia Certificate of Merit recipient and Golden Eagle Nominee for Mathematics and Technology. He has maintained a 4.0 grade point average while taking nine AP classes and received recognition for the highest average in AP Computer Science and AP United States History. A member of the Perry High Varsity soccer team, he was recognized as the top offensive player. He is a member of the Panther Regiment and marched in the 2017 Grand Champion Show *Paradise Lost*. In the community, Ryan serves as a tutor, teaches adult computer classes and helps run Perry High's Youth Soccer Camp. He plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology to pursue a degree in computer science. His parents are James and Debbie Faulkner.



**Perry High Co-Salutatorian, Lauren Elizabeth Resetar**

Lauren Elizabeth Resetar is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction and a University of Georgia Certificate of Merit recipient. She also received the highest average award in AP Chemistry and was a Governor's Honors semi-finalist. She is active in the Beta Club, National Honors Society and the Panther Regiment, for which she marched the trumpet for four years. Lauren has also participated in the science fair, where she was a recipient of the ASU Sustainability solutions award, Flint Energies Award, Naval Science Award, and state science fair nominee. In the community, Lauren volunteers at local elementary schools. Lauren will attend either Auburn or the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she plans to pursue a degree in chemical engineering. She is the daughter of Douglas and Jennifer Resetar.



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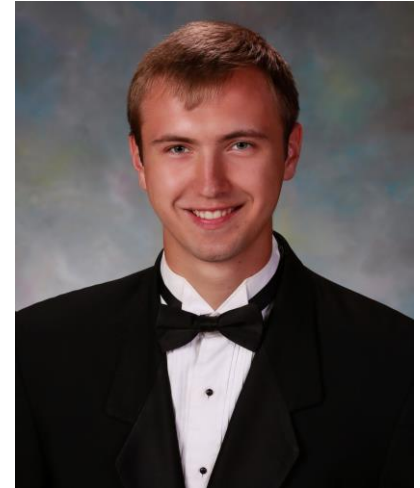
**Veterans High Valedictorian, Kyle Aaron Kicklighter**

Kyle Kicklighter is a National Merit semi-finalist who has earned highest average awards in Honors 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature, Honors Biology, Accelerated Algebra, Honors Chemistry, Accelerated Geometry/Advanced Algebra, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP English Language, AP Statistics, Accelerated Pre-Calculus, Spanish 2 and Spanish 3. Additionally, he is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction, University of Georgia Certificate of Merit recipient, and Governor's Honors Program semi-finalist in science. Kyle participated in the Perry Youth Leadership program and has been actively involved in Beta Club, Math Team, STEM Club, Academic Bowl, Spanish Honor Society, International Club, Rho Kappa and National English Honor Society. He also has volunteered in the Warhawk Workshop at Veterans High and Math Alive at the Museum of Aviation. The son of Dennis and Mary Kicklighter, Kyle plans to attend the Georgia Institute of Technology to study engineering.



**Veterans High Salutatorian, Andrew Scott Babbitt**

Andrew Babbitt is an Eagle Scout, National Merit semi-finalist, Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction and University of Georgia Certificate of Merit recipient. A letterman in Cross Country, Andrew also played soccer. He is active in Beta Club, National Spanish Honor Society, Rho Kappa, Math Team, Debate Team and Academic Bowl. He earned highest average awards in Algebra, Honors Civics & US World Affairs, Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Spanish 3, Honors Chemistry, AP World History, Accelerated Geometry-Advanced Algebra, Accelerated Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus, AP US History and AP Chemistry. Andrew is an accomplished musician on trumpet, having made District Honor Band for four years and Region Honor Band for two years. The 2018 Veterans High STAR Student, he has volunteered as a math tutor and soccer referee. He is considering Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, the Georgia Institute of Technology or the University of Georgia to continue his education by studying Economics or Politics. Andrew is the son of Scott and Heidi Babbitt.



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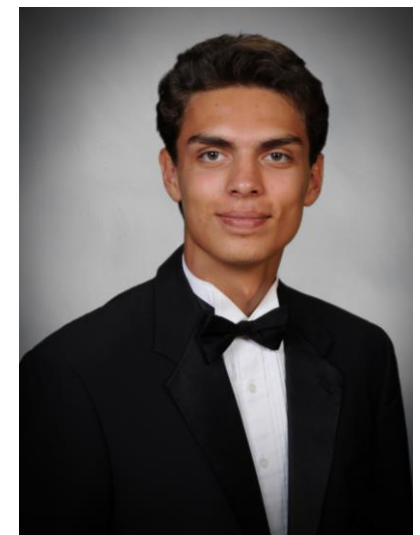


**Warner Robins High Valedictorian, Samantha Scholz**

Samantha Scholz is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction who has received the Georgia Certificate of Merit and numerous awards for having the highest GPA in many of her classes. She represented her school as a member of the Robins Regional Youth Leadership Program and on the Flint Energies Washington Youth Tour. Samantha served as treasurer of the Beta Club and was a member of Spanish Club, Math Club, Science Club and Varsity Soccer Team. She was the Optimist Student of the Month and has volunteered often at the Museum of Aviation where she helped teach students the importance of STEM. She hopes to attend Mercer University to pursue a career in engineering.

**Warner Robins High Salutatorian, Laurence Alexander León**

Laurence León is an Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction and an honor graduate who earned the Georgia Certificate of Merit along with awards for achieving the highest average grade in a variety of classes to include AP Physics 1, AP Chemistry and AP United States History. He has taken 12 AP courses and numerous honors classes during his four years at Warner Robins High. Laurence has been a member of the Varsity Cross Country Team and National Beta Club Honor Society for his entire high school career, along with membership in the Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society his junior and senior years. His efforts enabled the Varsity Cross Country team to achieve region runner-up distinction and to compete at the State Cross Country championship. He received awards for being the most dedicated and consistent on the team. Laurence also ran the one- and two-mile distance races as a member of the Varsity Track team while in ninth grade. In addition, he served an internship with a Department of Defense contractor. He has been involved in his church and its teen religious group. His volunteer efforts include helping as a mentor and tutor of students at Lindsey Elementary. Laurence plans to pursue a physics degree after graduation at the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is the son of Enrique León and the late Jean Finison León.



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