

# Southwest FOUNDATION news

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## Staff Deliver Message of Love to the Class of 2020



With families, oftentimes struggles bring them closer together. In looking at the Southwest High School family, particularly the senior class, never has this been truer. When your own loved ones are mourning, you do what you can to cheer them up. And that is exactly what the amazing staff at Southwest did.

Soon after schools shuttered in mid-March, teachers Jodi Marker Perelman, Sammy Nelson, Katie Dzien and Maria Kimmes knew they wanted to do something special for the seniors as they had a tough four years with new administration each year, and now in-person classes, prom and graduation cancelled. Inspired by other schools, they got



Teacher Sean Keir picks up his pile of senior signs.

**“We, their teachers, wanted to shout out with love, pride and recognition to celebrate them!”**

to work on the famous “We Love Our Seniors” lawn signs, recruiting Graphics Arts teacher Brittany Spears to design. A few weeks later on a sunny Wednesday in April, staff arrived to Marker Perelman’s driveway for a socially distanced pick up. “Before we knew it we had 80 SW staff (teachers, counselors, special education assistants, principals, social workers, nurses and community Ed)” said Marker Perelman. This army of purple canvassed the city placing a sign at the home of every senior, all 419, in just a matter of hours.

**“I felt loved and special.”**

Senior softball captain Christa Opdahl was saddened to be losing her capstone season. Waking up to that

sign she said, “It meant the world to me that the staff showed how much they loved and cared for me.” Senior Darartu Elmo echoed that sentiment stating, “What they’re doing is cool. It made me feel happy to know that they care.” Senior Juliet Corona added, “I felt loved and special.”

“The sign campaign was organized by teachers to show these students that we see them—they are not cancelled!” We, their teachers, wanted to shout out with love, pride, and recognition to celebrate them!” said Nelson.

Other staff were also busy making videos for the seniors, which were assembled by Graphics Art teacher Joyce Strand and uploaded to YouTube. The video begins with student favorite Charles “Old school” Reed, singing falsetto, and includes messages of support from administration and faculty. Band teacher Reid Wixson conducts to a recorded school song and English teacher Casey Briskin dances to Gloria Gaynor’s “Never Can Say Goodbye.”



Principal Butler picks up her signs.

While seniors won’t be gathering for the traditional graduation at Mariucci Arena, you can count on this staff to be cheering loudly at their computers as the school hosts a live virtual graduation on June 1. After all, that is what you are supposed to do when your kids cross such a huge milestone in their lives.

# From Our Chair



Adam Barrett, '00

“Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own.” -Michelle Obama

Never in my lifetime, has an event like Covid-19 universally impacted the entire world at the same time. It's easy to become frustrated, scared and anxious from the uncertainty and accompanying health/wellness struggles. I will admit, nights alone with a stirring mind, business to maintain, organization to lead, funds to raise, and family to love can very quickly become overwhelming.

I accepted a long time ago that internal liberation may be achieved, with the release of any notion human-perfection is possible. There will always be someone wiser, wealthier, better looking, etc and rather than depress myself with that reality, I use it as a reason and catalyst to learn from those individuals. Turning to those with more life-experience always lends perspective and valuable guidance to the winding road of reality.

With that in mind, I turn this letter over to some of SWHS's Distinguished Alumni. While their messages were personally crafted for the Class of 2020, I know you will share in the tremendous value of their accomplished roots.

Similar to the words of Michelle Obama above, our current state of the world is all a part of our individual and collective stories. Use this time to learn, prepare and confront all future challenges with confidence and empathy so your legacy is owned with pride.

Congratulations Southwest Class of 2020, welcome to the crew!

**Dr. Betsee Parker; Class of 1969**  
7th Baroness of Locheil, Scotland, nominated UN Ambassador, a noted philanthropist, naturalist, conservationist, and an early woman ordained as an Episcopalian priest.

Congratulations Southwest High School Class of 2020! As a nominated

United Nations Ambassador in these Covid challenging times, I have the high privilege to be a part of some of what the United Nations is doing globally to unite the world. As privileged graduates of SWHS, I issue a challenge for you; to find your highest calling in this urgent moment, be all you can be, and in the words of my mentor, United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed, “Let us stand shoulder to shoulder in unity and solidarity as one human family.” God bless you all and congratulations!

## Burt Cohen; Class of 1948

Former Magazine Publisher (MSP Mag and other publications) and current columnist. Over 40 years of participation and leadership in the local philanthropic community.

I loved, and have remained forever grateful, for my years at SW. I loved the fact I could make choices and pursue the friendships, the goals, the lifestyle and activities within me, and still be part of a whole, diverse class. When I graduated in 1948, I was so proud to be part of what I considered to be the greatest high school in the city. I still am, and it still is. My advice: Be a person of integrity. Be considerate of and grateful to others. At whatever level you're able, find ways to give back to the world. Try always to keep a sense of balance and a sense of humor. Appreciate what you have. Call your mother! When the poet Robert Frost was in his 70s, a reporter asked him what he'd learned in life. He replied, “I can sum up everything I've learned about life in three words: It Goes On.” And that will apply to you and to all of us. Always do the best you can, remember the enormity of life, stay as positive as you can, and hope that you deal with life's challenges and opportunities in such a way that, in the end, you'll be missed.

## Libby Larsen; Class of 1968

Composer of over 500 works, Grammy Award Winner, MN Music Hall of Fame, Lifetime Achievement Award- Academy of Arts of Science.

In the late 1960's when I was a student at SWHS, it seemed that every day brought something new, some idea I'd never thought about before, some adventure I'd never imagined possible, some problem or situation I'd never encountered. The late 1960's were years when it

seemed like people were questioning everything - our country was in upheaval and we didn't know who we could turn to help us envision and believe in our future. At SW my friends and I learned to be curious about everything, to read about everything, to learn, to listen democratically, to make up our own minds, and most importantly to believe in our ideas and to put them into action. Many of the friends I made at SWHS are still close and trusted friends. Even though our future then is now our past, we have a special bond and a very special place in our hearts for those years at SW.

## Tom Neiman; Class of 1965

Educator and leader in the Southwest community, serving as the Southwest Community Education Coordinator for over 40 years.

Discover and recognize all the gifts and talents that you possess – the small ones as well as the large ones. Don't close the door on opportunities because you've “never done that before...” Neither did anyone else until they tried something for the first time. Appreciate the gift of time that you have – each day is a gift. Don't take it for granted.

## Tracy McMillan; Class of 1982

Author, television writer and relationship expert.

SW gave me such a strong foundation. Not only did I enter college fully prepared to succeed academically, I made friends for life. Let your journey be winding. A good life doesn't happen in a straight line. Your life will be one of a kind -- you hope! When life goes somewhere unexpected, go with it. Say yes to almost everything -- maybe especially the things other people don't understand. Let people, places, and experiences change your life! I can look back and see that all the very best things in my life were moments where the people around me looked at me and said, “Are you crazy?” And then I said, “Yes” -- and did something wonderful and life-changing. Life is filled with uncertainty. COVID-19 may be the first unimaginable thing that has happened in your life, but it won't be the last. If I could give you one piece of advice it's to embrace life just as it is. Find the best of wherever you are. No matter how awful something is, there will also be some good there. Look for it and you'll find it.

# Parker Grant & Women's Athletics

The SWF Foundation was honored to receive a \$125,000 contribution from alumna Dr. Betsee Parker ('69) to enhance the experience of SW female athletes. In late 2018, to explore and recommend guidelines for the use of these funds, the SWF commissioned a task force led by Women's Basketball Coach, (and SW alumni), Dan Froehlich. Other members included Andrea Gelle (Faculty, Head Cross Country Coach); Robbie Brink (Faculty, alumni, Head Volleyball Coach); Jamie Cheever (alumni, one of the most decorated athletes in



*The Varsity Tennis team poses last Fall.*

school history, U of M All-American three-sport athlete); and Lea B. Olsen (MPS grad, former U of M basketball player, former MSHSL board member, broadcaster for MN Lynx, Timberwolves, sports ambassador and parent of alumni).

The task force met for almost a year to discuss and conduct research, which included a survey sent to all female athletes and their coaches. "We wanted to hear directly from the players and coaches of specific needs which were not funded by the district, athletic fees or booster funds" said Froehlich. Based on the



*#21 Jhane Green, Freshman, is cheered on by her teammates.*

responses, the task force made the following recommendations.

\$50,000 to be allocated over a five-year period for annual retreat style events to support and inspire. Some of the objectives include: enhancing self-image; learning how to recognize, respond to and report sexual harassment or abuse; staying involved in athletics; illuminating the link between athletic and team involvement with future life and career success; and, simply, inspiration from accomplished women athletes, coaches and speakers.

The remaining \$75,000 will fund the needs of specific programs determined by coaches, which will be forwarded to the Athletic Director, and SWF Board for approval. Numerous specific factors will be considered, all of which are rooted in equity, to enhance the opportunities and experiences of all SW female athletes.



*SW Gymnasts pose with their letters.*

**Dr. Rose Marie Leslie** ('08) for being featured in the New York Times for using TikTok as a way of reaching teens to discuss topics like vaping and the coronavirus.

**Alex Rogers** ('04) & **Jeff Rogers** ('07) who had their restaurant recognized in the Star Tribune and profiled by City Pages as a lead business in the North Loop's newest food hall.

Chef **Remy Pettus** ('00) of Bardo for being included in the Star Tribune's feature of chef's sharing their favorite cookbooks.

# 2020 IB Diploma Candidate Extended Essay Topics

**Congratulations to our IB Diploma Programme Candidates!**

**Aisha Abdulahi** *Social media and the effects on Mental Health Issues*

**Haley Baird-Dibble** *Stories Told Through Movement: The Language of Dance*

**Maximilian Caruso** *To what extent does Emperor Nero's loss of empathy demonstrate a need for checks and balances in our leaders?*

**Willa Flink** *The Relationship between Dairy Consumption Globally and Human Health*

**Hannah Fox** *To what extent is childhood obesity in the United States determined by biological factors versus social factors?*

**Grace Goers** *An Exploration of Female Archetypes, Sisterhood, and Feminism in Little Women*

**Eames Heard** *A History of Highways and their Racial Effects on the City of Atlanta*

**Annabelle Hendrickson** *The Celtic Hypothesis: The influence of the Celtic Language on the development of the English Language from the 4th - 10th century A.D.*

**Lukas Johnson** *To what extent has the philosophical idea of Authenticity evolved since the mid-20th century?*

**Elijah Judovsky** *To what extent does respectfully managing employees help retain them?*

**Guinevere Keith** *The courtroom and the classroom: A comparison of the methods used to suppress Guatemalan indigenous language usage in two phases of the society's existence.*

**Kelsey Mangis** *The American Public-School System and its Psychological Effects on Students*

**William Marshall** *Properties of Biodiesel Made Through Transesterification Reactions*

**Alana Murphy** *A Guide to a Happier Life: Everyday Attitude is Affecting Your Future*

**Cole Pivec** *To what extent does the modern-day cult films of the Coen Brothers reflect on the realities of our own lives?*

**Sigrid Schwarzkopf** *Bach's "Little Fugue in G Minor" A Mathematical Perspective*

**Ayva Sloo** *Veganism and Environmental Sustainability: A study on animal industries and their impacts on the earth, in finding the best diet for humans for maximum sustainability*

**Laura Weil** *If one does good actions for selfish reasons, are they a good person?*

**Lillian Wilkins** *The Correlation Between Childhood Trauma and Anxiety/Mood Disorders*

**Jackalyn Wyrobek** *Exploring and linking the relationship between diet and environmental impacts of food to the need for change in the U.S.*

## Alumni Corner

Welcome to a new feature of our newsletter where we will feature recent accomplishments of alumni. To share an update, please email us at [info@southwestfoundation.org](mailto:info@southwestfoundation.org).

**Courtney Di Paola** ('07) who was part of the animation crew for SONY Pictures' "Hair Love" that won a Oscar for Best Animated Short.

Architect **Kari Nelson** ('00) for being profiled in a new kitchen showcase remodel in the Star Tribune.

## Southwest KUDOS

Seniors **Darartu Elemo, Helena Towne & Aisha Abdulahi** for receiving a four-year 2020 Wallin Education Partners Scholarship!

Junior violinist **Ana Lee** for being named a finalist in the MN Varsity Classical MPR performance competition!

**Model UN students** who traveled to New York for the world's largest Model UN conference with over 4,000 total delegates from over 60 countries.

The **Faculty winners** at the first ever "Staff Oscars Awards!"

## Athletic Update

Southwest had another banner Winter Season filled with great individual and team accomplishments!

*-Boys Alpine Skiing's* **Ryan Arnold** qualified for State Championships.

*-Girls Alpine Skiing's* **Elsa Peterson** returned from an ACL injury to claim 3rd at the State. The Team also placed 3rd overall at State led by Peterson and **Addie Streble**, who also finished 25th after winning Section Championships!

*-Boys Basketball* showed tremendous improvement with 12 wins after last season's 4 wins. B Squad also won the Conference Championship proving the future looks bright! **Christo Polydorou** and **Camden Holter** were named All-City.

*-Girls Basketball* finished 2nd (9-3) in the City Conference with two strong wins over Washburn & North. Both JV and B Squad won Conference Championships! **Becca Murphy, Josephine Igherighe, Jhanae Green** and **Virginia Johnson** were named All-City. The Team won the MN Academic Award.

## Robotics On A Roll

The Robotics team were awarded a \$500 grant through the SWF and recently shared their year's progress.

This year the team acquired both a CNC router and replacement PCs, allowing the team to focus on 3D printed parts and manual fabrication. "The router fabricates parts from sheet materials with the same

Seniors **Rachel Fine & Annabelle Hendrickson** on winning Gold Key awards in visual art, the highest state achievement level. Their works were forwarded to NYC for Nationals.

The **Unified Club** for participating in the Cool School Plunge, raising over \$5,600.00 for Special Olympics MN.

Sophomore **Martha Glirbas** & Freshman **Azaya Basford-Hammond** for placing second and third place respectively in the Haiku contest of Minneapolis's sister city, Ibaraki, Japan.

The many students who participated in the first round of the American Mathematics Competition exam's.

*-Gymnastics* won the Minneapolis Conference Championship with a score of 125.42!

*-Girls Hockey's* Senior **Clara Schmiesing** committed to play at Northland College in Ashland, WI. Junior **Julia Stevens** committed to play at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire.

*-Boys Nordic Skiing* placed 2nd in State, capping a dominant season after losing a 7.6 second tie breaker with Forest Lake. **Charlie Grabow, Victor Sparks, Jacob Rochelle-Share, Stas Bednarski & Cooper Camp** received All-State honors.

*-Girls Nordic Skiing* had three State Qualifiers! Congratulations to **Sudie Hall, Zoe Camp** and **Katy Scott!**

*-Boys Swimming's* **Luke Johnson** qualified for the State 100-Freestyle.

*-Boys Wrestling's* **Nick Flaskamp** won the Section Championship and qualified for the State Tournament. Sophomore **Wyatt Speck** won the JV City Championship.

*-Girls Wrestling's* Junior **Breanna Arnold** finished in 4th place at the 1st ever MWCA Girls State Wrestling

precision with which they were designed" says team coach Tim Dirr. "This means that both prototyping and final construction will move with speed and accuracy that have previously been out of reach" he adds.

SW Robotics has also taken a leadership role in managing and expanding the Minneapolis Urban Robotics Alliance Field. This is the third year of a collaboration with Henry, Washburn, and Edina to create a full size FIRST Robotics competition field!

All the SW students who attended their precinct caucuses and served as student election judges for the primary.

Seniors **Will Marshall, Ellie Smith, Morgan Stascavage, Kawsar Mohamed, Henri Nguyen** & Junior **Ashly Ortega** for fulfilling terms on this year's SWHS Leadership Council.

The **Math Team** who qualified for the State Tournament after winning their section and their division for the fourteenth consecutive year.

**Dr. Butler** for flawlessly leading the Williams Arena crowd from center court, with "Lift Every Voice and Sing" at a Gopher Women's basketball game.

Championship! **Noah Gramentz** was also a qualifier.

*-MSHSL Recognition: Female Athletes of Year AA Swimming Recipients - Elle Niebuhr & Peyton D'Emanuele.* Southwest Athena Award Winner - Peyton D'Emanuele.

Lastly, a collective shout-out to our spring athletes, particularly our seniors, who trained incredibly hard but had their seasons abruptly cancelled. GO LAKERS! *~Robert Hollway Jr. SW Athletic Director*



The Southwest Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to work with Southwest High School and its alumni to create an exceptional educational experience for all Southwest students. The Foundation raises money to support academic, athletic and artistic opportunities for students and to provide scholarships to graduating seniors.

**There are many opportunities to become involved with and support the Southwest Foundation. To learn more or to donate, visit [SouthwestFoundation.org](http://SouthwestFoundation.org).**

### 2019-20 Board Members

Adam Barrett '00, Chair  
Una Edwardson, current parent  
Dan Froehlich '75, Dir. of Alumni Engagement, staff and graduate parent  
Bradley Idelkope, '03  
Allison Krueger, current parent  
Dave Premack '04  
Paul Roach '88, Treasurer  
Gwen Spurgat, current parent

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