

February 18, 2020

Contact: Joshua McClure
Email: jmcclure@rcs.rome.ga.us
Phone: 706-506-8868

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rome High STAR Student Event and Valedictorian and Salutatorian Announcement

ROME, GA— Rome High School administrators, RCS Board members, educators, parents and students celebrated two Wolves who have excelled in the classroom during their STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Recognition) Student, and Valedictorian and Salutatorian Event. On February 18, 2020 the school held a special ceremony in the RHS Performing Arts Center and a reception in the school library to honor these outstanding seniors.

After a welcome from Rome High School Principal Dr. Eric Holland, Taylor Richie from the Rome Floyd Chamber explained the qualifications required to be named the RHS STAR student for 2020. Richie serves as the program's coordinator for the local Chamber of Commerce, an organization that sponsors the STAR Student and Teacher Award.

"We work closely with the City of Rome and Floyd County to ensure that our community continues to thrive, and one of our major keys to success is a quality education like what is offered here at Rome High School," Richie said. "That is why I am here today to announce the STAR Student and Teacher for Rome High School. Started by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the STAR awards were designed to honor Georgia's outstanding high school seniors and award the teachers who made the highest impact on that student's academic development. PAGE (Professional Association of Georgia Educators) was founded by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce in 1994 in order to partner with the Georgia Department of Education in coordinating the STAR recognition."

Richie then went on to list the qualifications a student needs to be considered for the award. To obtain a STAR Student nomination, they must be senior and have the highest score on a single test day on the three-part SAT taken before November. They must also be in the top 10 percent or be in the top 10 of their graduating class, based on their grade point average.

Rome City Schools

Quality Academics . . . Athletics . . . and Arts

Additional STAR Student requirements can be found on the PAGE website at:

<https://www.pageinc.org/star/star-student-and-teacher-guidelines/>

The STAR student then names the teacher who has been most instrumental in their educational efforts.

The 2020 RHS STAR Student is Aaron Bartleson and his STAR teacher is Kelly Goldin, a chemistry teacher at RHS.

Aaron was joined by his parents, Jonathan and Tina Bartleson, and he was able to address the crowd gathered in his honor. He used "Harry Potter" references to describe why he chose Goldin before he thanked her and others for their continue support over the years. The 2020 STAR Student said that while in class, he has learned that Goldin is also a huge fan of the popular novels.

"Mrs. Goldin has taught me as much about myself, as she has taught me about chemistry," Aaron said when addressing the audience. Some of Goldin's attributes he pointed out were her intelligence, her ability to incorporate potions into her lessons, and her enthusiasm when educating the children, she serves.

"I am so honored that Aaron has picked me," Goldin said, "If you know him, you also know that he is one of the top-five smartest people you have ever met, if not *the* smartest person you have ever met. What is so special about Aaron is that not only does he have really high level of intellect, but he also has a really strong passion for learning. And what is even more special is that his level of compassion and his respect for others matches his intellect."

Amber Garlin, Assistant Principal for Rome High School who works closely with students taking the SAT and PSAT tests, announced to the crowd that in addition to being named STAR Student for Rome High School, Aaron is also a finalist in the Nation Merit Scholarship Program.

"Every fall we offer the PSAT to our tenth-grade class," Garlin said, "and we offer it to a select group of our junior class, as well. Those students are taking the PSAT for a second time for the chance to become a part of the Nation Merit Scholarship Program. When that test occurred, and Aaron took it last year, 1.6 million students went into the National Merit Program for the opportunity to become a National Merit Scholar. We found out in the last week or so that Aaron has become a finalist in this program. Only the top 15,000 students nationwide are selected to become finalists, and we will be notified starting in March about scholarships Aaron qualifies for."

The event was twofold, as RHS educators took this opportunity to also announce this year's Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

April Eidson, a counselor at RHS who works with the senior class, then took the stage to tell the audience which two students would serve as their class Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Carson Garrett will serve as Salutatorian for Rome High's 2020 graduating class. Carson is the student government president, and he is a member of the National Honor Society, the RHS Math Team, Interact Club, RHS Tennis and FBLA, just to name a few of his extracurricular activities. He was also a Governor's Honors

Rome City Schools

Quality Academics . . . Athletics . . . and Arts

nominee. His parents, Casey and Susie Garrett, were there to support him. After his name was called, he was allowed to speak to the audience.

"I would like to say I'm incredibly honored and humbled by receiving the title of Salutatorian for Rome High School. I would like to thank my amazing teachers, my parents and my family and, of course, the students. I think Rome High School is a wonderful place to grow and this school has really taught me how to be a better person. So, I am extremely proud to call Rome High School my home," Carson said.

And finally, Rome High School's Valedictorian for 2020 is Aaron Bartleson. Aaron was also allowed to speak. His remarks echoed those of his classmate's, giving thanks to all who had been a part of supporting his education.

"I did an interview with both of these guys this year, and one of them has a numerical grade point average of 102," Dr. Holland said when asked about how proud he was of these two young men. "The other student is right on his heels with a 101. It is amazing what both of them said about competition and how they view their classmates. They don't see them as competition; they see them as brothers and sisters. For them, it is not about who is named Val and Sal. It is about loving one another and enjoying their four-year experience here at Rome High School. I've always told all of our students that hard work gets them the results they wish for. Their hard work has given them the right to be named the 27th Val and Sal of Rome High School. How impressive is that? Their names will go on our wall, and if they can join the others on that wall, then that means they have done something special. I am so proud of what they have accomplished. They have both had a Hall of Fame career here at Rome High School and we are so happy to honor them today."

Louis Byars, Superintendent of Rome City Schools, also expressed how proud he was of these two students. "I am very proud of them both. This is such a large school, and to become Valedictorian and Salutatorian says a lot about these two students. It is very competitive, and they had to have worked very hard. To have the opportunity to honor them is important to me and to our system, and we look forward to the great things they will do in the future."

###