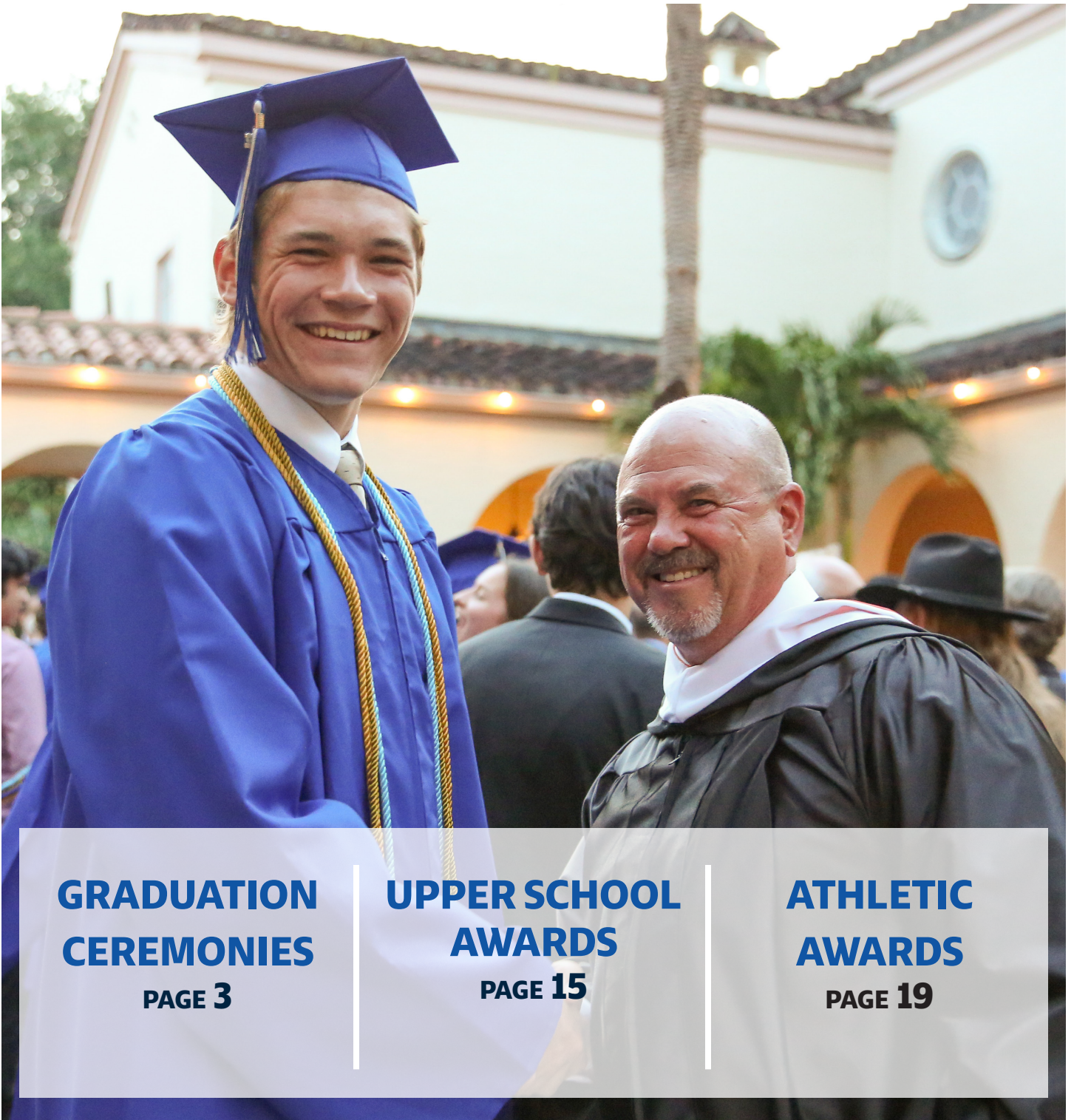


# THE **COURIER** THE GENEVA SCHOOL **MAGAZINE**

SUMMER EDITION 2022



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CEREMONIES**  
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Inspiring students to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.



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## MISSION

The Geneva School seeks to provide students in grades K4–12 an extraordinary education, by means of an integrated curriculum, pedagogy, and culture, both distinctly classical and distinctively Christian, that pursues goodness, truth, and beauty in all spheres of life, while viewing these spheres as elements of a divinely ordered whole. Further, Geneva seeks to instill in students a desire to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.

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Photographs in this issue taken by Anna Classe, AnnMarie Hamilton, Kellie Harding, Teresa Medina, and PSP Images.

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STAY CONNECTED @GENEVA



Dear Geneva School Community:

Ditches exist on either side of many issues in education. For example, most independent schools desire to prepare students for the academic rigors of the university while also valuing time for relationships and personal formation. The ditch to one side is a laser-focused, academic grinder that produces burned-out students, and the ditch on the other side is an ill-defined, coddling mush with little consideration for a student's future.

In a similar way, most schools' athletic programs report wanting student-athletes who work hard, compete to the best of their ability, and model sportsmanship, regardless of the outcome. The ditch to one side is filled with institutions that are "school" in name only, more interested in filling the trophy case than their students' heads with knowledge. On the other side are programs that view their students' bodies as primarily necessary for moving their brains from one classroom to the next.

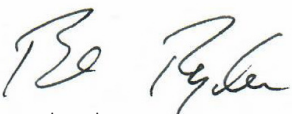
How we view awards can also drift to the extremes. When everyone is a winner, then no one is and the honor is trivialized and rendered meaningless. On the other side is the impulse to make every victory the greatest in the history of victories. I saw this impulse at play a few years ago when my *middle school football team* won their league championship and took home a trophy that stands almost four feet high. I believe it is still the tallest trophy that school has ever won.

This is the award edition of *The Courier*. As you will see in the following pages, a lot of awards were given out at the end of the school year. It is a joy and privilege for the school to "give honor where honor was due" by recognizing students who performed at the highest level in an academic discipline, gave the best thesis presentation, graduated with the highest grade point average, or exemplified great service and care for their school and classmates.

Not every student earned an award. In fact, most did not. Even so, every student, award recipient or not, benefits from the recognition that an award provides. When viewed properly, they serve to inspire students to perform better than they otherwise would do so.

In the midst of the recognitions and accolades, we seek to temper the drift to the ditches by reminding ourselves where the honor and glory ultimately belong—to God. We do this through the singing of our school song, *Non Nobis*. It is a Latin hymn based on Psalm 115 and when translated, says:

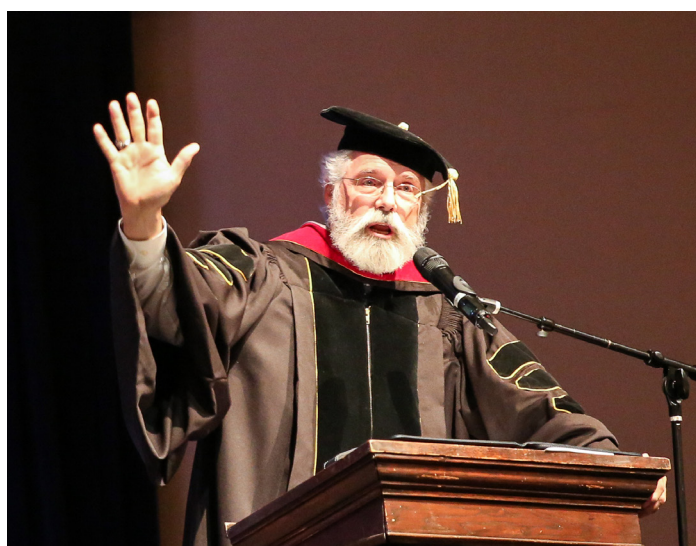
"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory."



Brad Ryden  
Head of School



**The Geneva School will  
always seek to be a  
place where  
scholarship and  
Christian character  
thrive: a community  
that brings glory to  
God and good to  
neighbor.**



**DR. BURK PARSONS, Baccalaureate Speaker**

**DR. MIKE BEATES, Commencement Speaker**

# GRADUATION

**G**raduation ceremonies for the class of 2022 took place over two days at the end of May. The graduates and school community members in attendance were blessed to hear Dr. Burk Parsons, senior pastor at Saint Andrew's Chapel, deliver the baccalaureate homily and Dr. Mike Beates, chaplain and Bible teacher at TGS, deliver the commencement address.

## Dr. Burk Parsons

Dr. Burk Parsons serves as senior pastor of Saint Andrew's Chapel, where he has served since 2001 after completing his internship under Rev. Robert F. Ingram at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. Dr. Parsons is editor of *Tabletalk*, the monthly magazine of Ligonier Ministries, which is read by more than 250,000 people in eighty countries. He has served at Ligonier for nearly twenty-three years. He is a Ligonier Ministries Teaching Fellow, and he is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. Dr. Parsons holds his MDiv and DMin degrees from Reformed Theological Seminary. His dissertation project is titled "The Missio Dei and the Church: Towards Fulfilling the Great Commission through Ordinary Means of Grace Ministry." He is the author of *Why Do We Have Creeds?*; editor of *Assured by God: Living in the Fullness of God's Grace* and *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*; and cotranslator and coeditor of

*A Little Book on the Christian Life* by John Calvin. He speaks regularly at churches, seminaries, conferences, and institu-

tions throughout the United States and abroad and has contributed to various books, magazines, and other publications. His primary daily work is that of a local church pastor, and he is involved weekly in preaching, evangelizing, counseling, hospital visitation, shepherding, mentoring, and discipling. He spends most of his free time with his family, as well as hunting, fishing, and gathering together with his friends. He and his wife, Amber, have been married for twenty-two years and live in the country near Mount Dora with their three children, Claire ('22), Elizabeth, and Everett ('31).

## Dr. Mike Beates

Before teaching at The Geneva School, Dr. Mike Beates served at Ligonier Ministries (1989–96), at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando (1996–2002), and as a pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church (1993–2008); he has also taught courses over the years at Florida Southern College, Belhaven University, and Reformation Bible College. Mike and his wife, Mary, had a student at Geneva in its charter year—Jameson, now thirty-six, was in the inaugural third grade class and graduated in 2003. Their daughter Abbie also graduated from The Geneva School in 2008, and sons Abraham and Elias also attended TGS for some years; the Beates children spent a combined thirty-three years at Geneva. Mike stayed involved as a parent for Geneva's first fifteen years, and he has been a teacher and administrator since 2008. Mike, and Mary love Geneva and its mission. When he's not in the classroom teaching seventh and eighth graders Old and New Testament survey classes, he and Mary can often be found attending many sports and fine arts events cheering on students.

You can listen to Dr. Parsons' homily at [genevaschool.org/baccalaureate2022](https://www.genevaschool.org/baccalaureate2022). Dr. Beates' commencement address follows.





# Commencement Address

## The Geneva School Class of 2022

by Dr. Mike Beates

**B**oard of governors, esteemed colleagues on the faculty, parents, students, and, most especially, you twenty-two members of the class of '22:

I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to address you all today. But I also recognize that much more important things are waiting to happen here and elsewhere and my comments may seem merely to delay the really good stuff. I get that. Since so many really good people have said so many good things, what could I possibly say that might be memorable, or that you don't already know, having learned so much from this esteemed faculty? Some commencement addresses are indeed memorable. David McCullough Jr. became famous ten years ago when his commencement address entitled "You Are Not Special" went viral. Then in 2014, Adm. William McRaven got a lot of attention when he challenged University of Texas grads to start each day by making their beds.

Regardless, when I was sitting where you are, some forty-eight years ago (yes ... I can see you doing the math in your heads right now!), the last thing I wanted to do that day was listen to some old guy I did not know. Well, at least I think you all know this old guy, but I get it, you'd rather start celebrating than listen to me, so I'll keep this brief.

Let me get this out there right off the top: I hope you all know I love you all with a godly affection—we have some history, this class of 2022 and I. Yes, admittedly, half of you came to Geneva after the more veteran half had attended my classes in seventh and eighth grade for Old and New Testament Survey. But checking the guest book at my home, I was fondly reminded that almost half of you have been in my home, some of you on multiple occasions. Good times, good memories. I sincerely wish I had more time with those of you who are "latecomers" to Geneva, but you've had to make do hearing the stories of classes or backyard BBQs with Dr. B. But it's all good. Love you all!

I had lots of thoughts rumbling around in my head to share with you, and I could not decide ... I thought maybe some

advice from an old hillbilly might work. Things like these suggestions and adages:

- Keep skunks, bankers, and politicians at a distance.
- Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
- A bumblebee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
- If you don't take the time to do it right, you'll find the time to do it twice.
- Never corner something that's meaner than you.
- It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
- Don't be bangin' your shin on a stool that's not in the way.
- Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.
- The biggest troublemaker you'll ever have to deal with is that rascal lookin' back atcha from the mirror every mornin'.
- Good judgment comes from experience, and most experience comes from bad judgment.
- If you ever get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.
- Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.

Not bad, right? But I finally thought I would just collect my "Top Ten" thoughts I hope you will consider and perhaps remember. Don't worry, they are brief! Some of you may remember some of these from our times together, and perhaps for others, these might be new thoughts. But trust me, I am confident none of this is original with me ... I just can't remember anymore where or from whom I first heard most of this. So here we go:

**Number 10:** Do not love the world or the things in the world. I remember where this one comes from: the Apostle John in 1 John 2:15—rather love the Lord Jesus Christ. The world sings a siren song; it's enthralling and it's attractive. But it leads to death. Yes, as followers of Jesus, we live *in* the world, but we do not belong *to* the world—do not let the world own you. And if you come to a place where the world (that is the powers, the cultural influencers, the trends, that big rebel-

lious mindset contrary to what God has created in his world and desires for his people) applauds what you say or do, take a careful, long, honest look in the mirror and ask if you are still following Jesus. Jesus told Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen [all the signs Jesus performed] and yet believe.” So believe, surrender, trust, and live in Jesus. This is my hope and the hope of every one of my colleagues here for each and every one of you. Believe, surrender, trust, and live in Jesus. Do not love the world.

**Number 9:** Over the past thirty years, the tapestry of Geneva has become more complex, with more vibrant colors and textures and depth—but its essence will not, indeed must not, change: goodness, truth, and beauty are always worth pursuing. Geneva is your home and you will always be loved and welcomed here. Take Geneva with you, all that you have learned, all the friends you have made, and all the truth you have absorbed. And remember these: goodness, truth, and beauty. In that regard, remember also the words from Isaiah 30:21: “And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.” And the LORD also said through Jeremiah, “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.” One of J. R. R. Tolkien’s goals was the recovery of “old light in the world”—go out and take the old, well-worn, trusted paths, and listen for God’s leading as you take turns in your road ahead. Discover, recover, and exalt the old light, the true light that gives light to everyone. Remember that trends and movements will come and go, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

**Number 8:** To quote Cinderella (or at least her mother), “Have courage and be kind”—even when this means making people angry. Whether Martin Luther said it or not (it has been attributed to him at least), it’s still true as a maxim: “Peace if possible, but truth at all costs.” Our cultural moment prizes empathy over truth. Be courageous enough to stand for truth in an age beguiled

by lies and untruth. But also be kind in your stance as you defend the truth. There is no prize for being a jerk while you defend truth and the Good News. Things may become hard if you continue to walk as Jesus calls you (us) to walk. The world may hate you. You may be like Frodo before embarking on the Quest (no, not like the movie in the mines of Moria, but at Bag End) when he says to Gandalf, “I wish it need not have happened in my time.” Gandalf famously replies, “So do I, my dear Frodo, and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” So have courage and be kind.

**Number 7:** You will learn *nothing* of any lasting value from pleasure and comfort—though too often this is the goal of the autonomous modern self. Let not pleasure and comfort be your goals. About twenty-five years ago, I heard John Piper say “Move away from comfort toward need,” and that is still true. Do the hard thing. The most beautiful gems are found only after digging deep with lots of sweat, pain, personal sacrifice, and loss. If pleasure and happiness are your goals, then like a butterfly, they will always be just beyond your reach, or profoundly fragile and unsatisfying if caught by your hands.

Don’t go looking for the painful stuff; (trust me, I know this is true) it will find you sure enough in this broken and fallen world. But remember that God redeems pain, suffering, hardship, and loss, and the most precious lessons are learned in the midst of the most difficult circumstances.

**Number 6:** Getting radical now. Follow God’s first commands in Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over ... every living thing that moves on the earth”—but get married first. Too many people try to be god over their own world, not marrying, not having children. Find that love

for life, have children, lots of ‘em if God so blesses you, and change the world. The richest rewards in life come from the simplest tasks: marry, be faithful, have children. Again from Tolkien, remember Thorin Oakenshield’s final words to Bilbo:

#### Top Ten” from Dr. Beates

**Number 10:** Do not love the world or the things in the world (1 John 2:15–17). Believe, surrender, trust, and live in Jesus.

**Number 9:** Goodness, truth, and beauty are always worth pursuing (Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 6:16). Remember that trends and movements will come and go, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

**Number 8:** “Have courage and be kind.” “Peace if possible, but truth at all costs.”

**Number 7:** You will learn *nothing* of lasting value from pleasure and comfort. Let not pleasure and comfort be your goal. Remember: the most precious lessons are learned in the midst of the most difficult circumstances.

**Number 6:** Follow God’s first commands: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over [it]” (Genesis 1:28)—but get married first.

**Number 5:** Plant an oak tree under whose shade you know you’ll never sit. Cultivate optimism for the future. Play the long game!

**Number 4:** God will probably break you before he really uses you. Remember: the wounds God gives you are meant for your good and for his glory.

**Number 3:** God hardly ever does things the way we expect, and he often uses people you’d least expect. God is sovereign; you are not.

**Number 2:** You are not special! Serve the one who is special. Love others with a basin and a towel.

**Finally, Number 1:** Be people characterized by steadfast love and faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3–8).

"If more of us valued food and cheer and song [and I would add marriage, children, and family] above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world."

**Number 5:** When you get old like me, plant an oak tree under whose shade you know you'll never sit. Cultivate optimism for the future. You are my oak trees. My optimism says that there are people yet to be born decades from now whom some of you will teach when you are old like me, and *those* people will be leaders in and change the world one hundred years from now in the twenty-second century. Play the long game!

**Number 4:** Have a humble perspective on life and your calling because God will probably break you before he really uses you—I wish it weren't that way, but there it is. J. I. Packer's final brief, little book, written as he was going blind and failing in health, was entitled *Weakness Is the Way* (I recommend it!). So cultivate humility. It will serve you well. And remember that the wounds God gives you are meant for your good and so that he gets the glory.

**Number 3:** God hardly ever does things the way you expect, and he often uses people you'd least expect; you may be sitting close to someone who will change the world! So treat people with godly respect. Expect God to surprise you. Remember that God opposes the proud, but he exalts the humble. So be like David, remembering his words from Psalm 31: "I trust in you, O LORD, I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands." God is sovereign, you are not.

**Number 2:** Remember what McCullough said ten years ago: you are not special! Unique? Yes! Made in God's image and known by name by the Creator of the universe? Absolutely! But special? Not so much—despite what the self-absorbed culture of the world wants you to think. In light of this, go out and serve the one who is special. The world is selling you the idea that you are number one. But Jesus says be "number last" and give yourself away for the sake of others. Do not think of yourself first, but be like Jesus: deny yourself, serve the needs of others before yourself. The world says "self-care" but Jesus

says "self-denial." Be *contra mundum*! Remember Dr. Vande Brake's reciting to us the words of Jesus: "The greatest among you will be servant of all." So go be great as you fly off to whatever new adventures God has in store for you. But remember you are not special. Love others with a basin and a towel. Be a servant.

**Finally, Number 1:** Proverbs 3 says (in part):

Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones (Proverbs 3:3–8).

What can one add to such wisdom of the ages? But I urge you—each of you—take those verses, write them on a card, keep them with you, put them on your desk at college or wherever the Lord takes you from here. Follow those admonitions, and you will do well. Put *hesed* and *emet*—steadfast love and faithfulness—onto the tablet of your heart; it is an interesting thought that when we memorize something, we know it "by heart," not by mind. Bind steadfast love and faithfulness around your heart—these are two qualities God uses most often to describe himself; but importantly, they are also attributes he shares with us so that we can demonstrate love and faithfulness to the watching and desperate world.

Be people characterized by steadfast love and faithfulness. Draw from and cling to the steadfast love of Christ, and remember always that God, the

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is faithful.

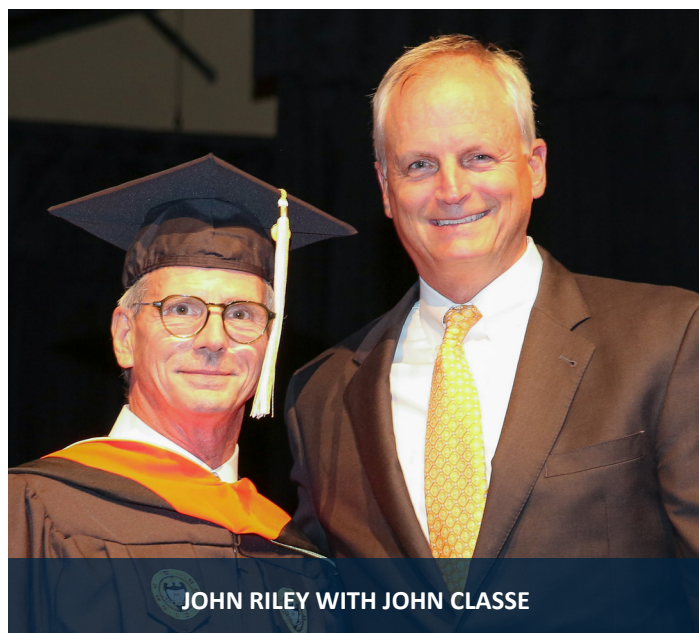
Class of '22, you have left your mark on The Geneva School. Well done! Now cling to Jesus so that he may use you further to stamp his mark on the world and to build his kingdom through your faithful service. God bless you all. Amen.





JASON MAGES WITH KATIE DEATHERAGE

as we are mystified as to how a magician does his tricks, we all wonder how Jason can make all of these amazing things happen. Through his company and personal initiative, Geneva's branding shows up across our campus. Similarly, Jason and Meg themselves continue to appear, showing up to help Geneva. In particular, he and Meg showed up and infused this year with joy for the senior class, and like any good magician, he has made a multitude of things appear seemingly out of thin air. Inexhaustible in energy and humble of spirit, Jason Mages is this year's recipient of The Order of the Towel Award.



JOHN RILEY WITH JOHN CLASSE

## Order of the Towel

The Order of the Towel Award is named to commemorate Christ's selfless act of devotion on the night of the Last Supper. Gathered together with his disciples, Jesus washed the feet of each one. We acknowledge students in the closing ceremonies whose lives demonstrate these virtues, and each year at graduation, we acknowledge the servant leadership demonstrated by a Geneva parent. The Scriptures tell us to honor those to whom honor is due. This afternoon, it is our pleasure and delight to do that.

Geneva students read fairy tales and stories filled with heroes and villains, where plots twist and turn and magicians sometimes save the day. We also desire that The Geneva School campus be enchanting—an environment that nurtures wonder, where the moral imagination captivates the goals and aspirations of students, and where people easily recognize that this is a special place defined by our shared beliefs and loving community. We want Geneva to be magical in the eyes of our students, with colors and symbols and images beautifully portrayed around the halls and walls of the school. We want to celebrate our Geneva community with banners and ball caps, with Geneva logoed apparel and yard signs that gladly proclaim that "This is the home of a Geneva Graduate." We want events like Senior Surprises to magically appear out of nowhere, much like pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

However, it takes a magician to create enchantment, as Disney's Magic Kingdom well knows. Fortunately for Geneva, we know our classical languages, and the Greek word for "magic" is "magus." With that clue, it was actually quite easy to discover who our "magician" would be. For thirteen years, Jason Mages has fulfilled and exceeded any hopes and dreams the school could have prayed for in his spiritual leadership, creative expression, and delight in all things Geneva. Even

## Come-Alongside Award

Geneva has always enjoyed the friendship and generosity of many people within the Greater Orlando community. One such person is Dixie Fraley, who in 1999 tragically lost her husband in the plane crash that also took the life of golfer Payne Stewart.

In the grief-stricken months that followed, Geneva board member Crosland Stuart took it upon herself to do anything and everything she could to assist her dear friend Dixie in the aftermath of such a horrible accident.

As a tribute to her, Dixie created and named the Come-Alongside Award as a testimony to the selfless devotion Crosland displayed during her time of need. In the hope that it will inspire others to live likewise, Dixie has asked that Geneva honor members of the Orlando community that have "Come-Alongside" Geneva with similar selfless devotion.

Geneva is growing! And behind the scenes, there are many contributors to that growth. Along with John Classe managing the building committee, Jim Bruce managing the banking relationships, and Katie Deatherage managing fundraising,

we have been blessed with the efforts of many organizations. Because of the enormous projects involved with getting us on this new campus, recent Come-Alongside Award recipients have been those organizations: our site-work contractor, JMHC, and the Blomeleys; our bank, Fifth Third, and Steve Wortman; our architect, SchenkelShultz, and Dave Torbert; our general contractor, Clancy & Theys, and a team too broad to name individually.

Let me give you a quick history. The Geneva School started in May 1993 with thirty-four students. For ten growing years we rented facilities all around Winter Park and Casselberry until we found a vacated Sports Unlimited (aka Jumbo Sports) building on SR 436, and we moved in nineteen years ago. We opened the early childhood campus (ECC) three years later.

In 2006, we bought the current property and were fully permitted when the Great Recession hit two years later. Eight years later, after a redesign and permitting, we began the process of building the athletic complex, the upper school building and gymnasium, the new lower school building— opening next month—and the varsity fieldhouse, which will be finished by Christmas.

Later phases will bring a chapel, a middle school, an arts and science building, a grander black box theatre, and a grander yet performing arts building on the three acres next to campus.

Throughout this process, we have had one captain: a man who never flinches, who never delivers a challenge without a solution. I have to admit, I can get a little anxious at times. But when I get to worrying, John Classe reminds me, “We are just building a box.” Well, if I were the CEO of Walt Disney World’s Reedy Creek Improvement District, I might have thicker skin too. But John Classe is, and he does, and we thank God he leads all these efforts. We congratulate our Geneva dad John Classe as we honor him with the Come-Alongside Award.

## Blaise Pascal *Fide et Literis*

**P**icture this: I am in my sophomore algebra class at the end of the long day, longing for the bell to ring. My teacher asks me to graph variations of sine and cosine, I comply, and I watch the differently colored waves grow on my calculator. But suddenly, watching the waves grow, I am somehow overcome with how this all works. I am fascinated with the way a simple addition of  $(x+1)$  changes the graph. I make rainbows and designs, consumed in the tiniest details and changes.

Then I got the longest spring break of my life!

The following year, having lost all my love for learning through online school, I was hoping to skate by and just do the necessary work. I came to class, sat down, waited for the bell to ring, then went to my next class. However, something quickly ended this behavior, particularly in my Scientific Revolution class. I fell back in love with the discovery of details. Details like the harmony between mass, force, and velocity, and the precise angle needed to determine the period of the planets. I recall my class solving the limit to a very complicated equation that literally took days of a meticulous process, just for it to equal zero. All that work, all those detailed steps, for something so seemingly simple. I believe that this is what makes math and science beautiful. It is made up and defined by the most intricate yet still crucial steps.

More than this, I believe that these details mirror their Creator. The Lord is a God of intentionality. He is a God that shows up in the little things and small moments that you carry with you. The Creator of the entire complex universe is still present in the minor details of limits, vectors, and chemical equations. But it doesn't take a skilled scientist or mathematician to appreciate the intentionality of the details of our world.

In that Scientific Revolution class, we spent a good portion of our class outside, appreciating God’s creation. We studied the movement of the clouds and the stars in the sky, and we even observed the wind. Nature is filled with beautiful, elaborate processes and activities that everyone can enjoy. We have been gifted a world in which we are surrounded by wonders, all supported by scientific laws and facts. However, we have also been gifted from God with the ability to appreciate the sublime qualities of what surrounds us. This gift can only come from such an intentional, caring God: a God who knows every star in the heavens and you and me by name. It truly is a blessing we have been given to be able to recognize not only the beauties of math and science and all it supports but also the intimate qualities of its Creator.



SARAH BARNHART



MOIRA FORRESTER

## John Colet *Fide et Literis*

A great teacher once told my class: “You are never too old for fairy tales.” It was such a good quote, it made it into my commonplace book. It’s one of about three whole quotes I ever wrote in that book. Now, I know what you all are thinking ... “What great teacher said that?!” I don’t mean to pick favorites when it comes to teachers, but I think Mr. Forrester takes the cake. This year, we got to have my dad as a teacher again, and we read a chapter from G. K. Chesterton’s *Orthodoxy*, where he wrote about rediscovering fairy tales as an adult and finding meaning in them. We also read C. S. Lewis’ essay “On the Reading of Old Books,” where he encourages us to, well ... read old books. \*gasp\* Plagiarism!! I thought that everything in that quote was original.

But that’s just the thing. Everything we read, learn, investigate, and teach is inspired. That’s what makes a story so good—that we can relate to it, that we can recognize the patterns. Mrs. Turnbull and Ms. Alexander taught us about themes like the hero’s journey and nature versus man. Dr. Brodrecht taught us about the problem of justice we see repeated in history. Even films like *Star Wars*, *MARVEL*, and *Batman* can and do get these right. Sometimes.

Now, imagine if one of those movies or books decided to change things up a bit. Imagine if an author, a director, or teacher decided to tell us that there was no redemption—that the hero didn’t actually win. Why does that make us uncomfortable? It’s because deep down we all have a desire for truth. It’s part of who we are as children of God. We want the things we read, learn, and teach to be grounded in reality, to speak truth. That’s why a hero who accomplishes his journey in five minutes doesn’t tell us a story. If Luke Skywalker found out his father’s identity at the beginning of the movie, would he still have joined the cause? If Captain America hadn’t been buried in the ice, who’s to say Thanos would’ve been defeated? If

our country hadn’t fought the Revolution, would we be where we are?

There is a recurring theme of “trial and error” that must happen on the hero’s journey. To quote G. K. Chesterton again, “Without the rain, there would be no rainbow.” We can’t pick and choose just the happy parts of our life. There are going to be bad grades. There are going to be sandwich tests. And yes, there are going to be Doctor’s ninety-six-question Constitution tests. Think about this in the context of our Christian life. Jesus tells his followers, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The reason we read the same old stories, the reason we live the same old moments is because we need the reminder. We need to remind ourselves in an ever-changing world that there is still good in the world. If you can’t tell already, I love Chesterton, so here’s one last quote from him: “Fairy tales do not tell children the dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be killed.” We read those cliché old books because we find the meaning of life. We wait in anticipation and hope that one day we will reach the highest joys. The Christian life is the life of waiting and teaching: the life that strives endlessly for the truth while we enjoy the temporary joys God has blessed us with here on earth. As we recited every morning in English: “What is hope?” “The Christian knows that however long he must journey, however difficult the road, he cannot fall to doom for his destination is certain and it is heaven.”

## Capstone Thesis Award

Alexander Schmemmann writes, “Our world is incredibly verbal, and we are constantly flooded by words which have lost their meaning and therefore their power. Christianity reveals the sacredness of the word—a truly divine gift to man. For this reason, our speech is endowed with tremendous power....To control speech is to recover its seriousness and its sacredness.”

At the Geneva School, words are at the heart of what we do. And because words are God’s gift to us, we praise eloquence when it serves the good and the true. The Senior Thesis gives students a chance to practice eloquence and pursue wisdom as they attempt to persuade an audience that something must be done about a contemporary issue. The Capstone Thesis Award recognizes a student who epitomizes the scholarly and rhetorical qualities we seek to foster through the senior thesis program. To determine the finalists for this award, we look not only for a lucid written argument that is delivered in a convincing and winsome manner but also at the students’ character, as evidenced by the way they approach their task and how they relate to their mentors in this process. The finalists for the 2022 Capstone Thesis Award were Sarah Barnhart, Kate Costar, Anna Mages, and Charlotte Weir.

If you were lucky enough to hear our winner speaking and defending her thesis, you know that it was authoritative, eloquent,

and compelling. This student worked very hard to focus her topic and to organize and support it in a way that would be cogent and relatable for her audience. She read books and academic journal articles and she interviewed two experts—all in order to do the best she could in making her case. In recognition for her urgent call for parents to do more to protect their children from the dangers of internet pornography, this year's Capstone Thesis Award goes to Charlotte Weir.

*Charlotte's thesis was entitled: "Be Careful, Little Eyes, What You See: The Problem of Adolescent Exposure to Internet Pornography." Her thesis advisor was Isabel O'Driscoll. Read her thesis at [genevaschool.org/capstone-thesis](http://genevaschool.org/capstone-thesis). The Capstone Thesis Award is a \$750 scholarship funded by a private individual upon the recommendation of the thesis directors and the upper school academic administration.*



CHARLOTTE WEIR WITH NATHAN RALEY



CAPSTONE FINALISTS FROM LEFT: SARAH BARNHART, KATE COSTAR, ANNA MAGES, AND CHARLOTTE WEIR WITH NATHAN RALEY



QUEST AWARD RECIPIENTS: DR. BEATES WITH KATE COSTAR, ANNA MAGES, AND ALEC ORTIZ

## Quest Award

The Quest Award is presented to graduating seniors in recognition of thirteen consecutive years of Christian classical education at The Geneva School from kindergarten through twelfth grade.



## Imago Awards

Given to the seniors whose vibrant imagination, remarkable skillfulness, and creative works best imitates the artistry of our creator, the Imago Awards are \$500 scholarships funded by private individuals upon the recommendation of the upper school academic administration and the arts faculty.



SHELLY BRADON WITH ANNA MAGES

**Rembrandt Imago Award:** Given for exemplary achievement in the fine and visual arts; awarded to Anna Mages

**J.S. Bach Imago Award:** Given for exemplary achievement in the performing arts; awarded to Laura McKnight.



LAURA MCKNIGHT WITH ABIGAIL NOBLE

## Valedictorian

### Kate Costar

I'd like to start off my speech with some wise words from my longtime hero, Ferris Bueller. "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Originally I had put this as my senior yearbook quote because I just thought it would be funny. But as this year went on, this quote gradually took on a whole new meaning. Graduation just kept getting closer and closer, and I found myself subconsciously wanting it to get farther and farther away. Now this is not because I don't want to graduate; I know my time here is over, but it's a bittersweet feeling. Class of 2022, in exactly one week, we will be alumni of The Geneva School. No more trying to think of one hundred different excuses as to why we were late, no more laughing at the people who doze off during class, no more late-night cramming, no more trying to get away with not wearing the chapel uniform—it's over.

When reflecting on my time here, a well-known quote by Andy Bernard came to mind that I think captures not just my thoughts but the thoughts of my classmates as well: "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them." Generally, I think it can be said



KATE COSTAR

that a lot of us live life by looking to the next big event. The eighth graders are looking forward to being in high school, the juniors can't wait to be seniors, and the seniors can't wait to graduate. But by living this way, we fail to see all the moments in between that actually make our experience here to be one that we don't want to give up. When it is all over, we finally turn around and see that we've left the good old days and nothing will ever be quite the same. Enjoy every moment because you can never go back, you can only remember.

Last week, the seniors were given the opportunity to walk through the lower school hallways, high-fiving all the kids. Afterwards, we were given free time to wander the campus, so Alec, Anna, and I went to our old classrooms to reminisce about what we called “the good ol’ days.” I found myself wanting to go back and relive just one more day of elementary school. One more day of singing grammar jingles, one more day of going to the kindergarten store, one more day of dressing up as someone from a different time period, one more day of PE, one more day of being a Geneva student. Life does move pretty fast, and if you don’t look around once in a while, you will, in fact, miss it. For those of you who still have time left here, enjoy it because, although it might not seem like it, I can promise you it goes by a lot faster than you think.

## Anna Mages

At the senior dinner this past fall, I delivered a speech about my love for questions. Any teacher or friend who has known me these past thirteen years would know that I ask a lot of questions. However, my questions have not always been rooted in a desire to learn. I have struggled to overcome asking questions merely for the sake of acing a test or achieving an academic title. My questions were the tool to achieve perfection but not the kind of perfection that glorified God; instead, they sought to gain worldly glory. Concluding that speech, I discussed how Geneva shaped my appreciation of complex questions specifically through the guidance of my teachers.

Delivering this speech in the fall, I had no idea how my final year at Geneva would expand this understanding of learning and perfectionism. This fall, I particularly discussed the profound impact of my teachers, but in an equally important manner, my classmates’ actions have shown me the marks of a truly God-glorifying life. As my class has grown closer, I have witnessed the importance of Christian community, especially within the context of learning. Specifically, I have grown to understand the significance of balancing friendships with other responsibilities. While never encouraging me to disregard my studies, my friends constantly reminded me to relax, take a deep breath, and enjoy every moment at Geneva to its fullest. Through their encouragement, I have begun to understand that I should ask other important questions, ones that point us towards following Christ’s calling. My understanding of how to love our neighbor as ourselves or how to love the Lord your God with all your heart are only two examples of what this class has taught me in times full of laughter and celebrations, hardships and sadness. Through their guidance and consistency, these friendships have shown me that academic idols are not what we are called to live for.



These years full of elementary plays like *Winnie the Pooh* and *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, endless games of four-square, and reenacting historical events like the Revolutionary War have meant so much not merely because of the irreplaceable memories but because of what I have learned from the people in those memories. In his book *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasizes the importance of this kind of community as he writes, “Christian community is not an ideal we have to realize, but rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate.” In reflection, I have realized that without my classmates’ friendships, I might still be the student hyper-focusing on grades rather than appreciating our education.

For my class, it is my prayer that we may all find communities that lift us up as a reminder of how to glorify God by asking the right questions. To the rest of the students, it is my hope and prayer that you embrace the reality of our community now as, however cliché this may be, time will fly by. Look around you and recognize the twenty-one or so friends that you realize are in reality, your family.



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1

**HOUSE CUP AWARD**

Mrs. Lisa Hines and Mr. Scott Thigpen to the House of Alexandria

2

**ART**

DIALECTIC: Mrs. Shelly Bradon to Allison Forney  
RHETORIC: Mr. Matt Clark to Sarah Stander (not pictured)

3

**BIBLICAL STUDIES**

DIALECTIC: Dr. Mike Beates to Sophie Heidmann

4

**DRAMA**

DIALECTIC: Mrs. Lisa Hines to Evelyn Crosby  
RHETORIC: Mrs. Lisa Hines to Gracie Coplin

5

**ENGLISH**

DIALECTIC: Ms. AnnMarie Hamilton to Annie Iverson  
RHETORIC: Mrs. Mandy Turnbull to Josiah Swain

6

**FRENCH LANGUAGE**

RHETORIC: Miss Tamara Molyneaux to Aubrey Clark

7

**GREEK LANGUAGE**

RHETORIC: Mr. Nick DeGroot to Anjolie Francois

8

**GUITAR**

RHETORIC: Mrs. Abby Noble to Savannah Mathias

9

**HISTORY**

DIALECTIC: Mrs. Kelli Brodrecht to Astrid Feeny  
RHETORIC: Dr. Grant Brodrecht to Anna Mages

10

**JOURNALISM**

RHETORIC: Ms. AnnMarie Hamilton to Charlotte Weir

11

**LATIN LANGUAGE**

DIALECTIC: Mr. Jordan Stewart to Ransom Limber  
RHETORIC: Mr. Nick DeGroot to Moira Forrester

12

**LOGIC**

DIALECTIC: Mr. Joe Moon to Maria Seneff

13

**MATHEMATICS**

DIALECTIC: Mrs. Kamillia White to Mim Robbins  
RHETORIC: Mrs. Christine Miller to Lindley Rives



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16



# 14 MUSIC

DIALECTIC: Mrs. Abby Noble to Isaac Kang  
RHETORIC: Mrs. Abby Noble to Joshua McKay

# 15 PHOTOGRAPHY

RHETORIC: Mrs. Kellie Harding to Emmy Harger

# 16 PHYSICAL EDUCATION

DIALECTIC: Coach Hollie Benjumea to Lincoln Hunter

# 17 RHETORIC & CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

RHETORIC: Mr. Nathan Raley to Anna Mages

# 18 SCIENCE

DIALECTIC: Mr. Evan Pederson to Thomas Milajecki  
RHETORIC: Mr. Robbie Andreasen to Laura McKnight

# 19 SPANISH LANGUAGE

RHETORIC: Mrs. Susan Hering to Gabriel Philippe-Fisher

# 20 STAGECRAFT

RHETORIC: Mr. Scott Zellner to Joey Rowe

# 21 NATIONAL FRENCH CONTEST

## Mention d'Honneur Certificate

Addison Bowman  
Sona Bowen  
Giuliana Flores  
Olivia Kyle  
Layla Mander  
Hayden Peters  
Samantha Petrak  
Kalena Seguin  
Mattie Shepherd  
Lura Shepherd  
Kaden Smith  
Charlotte Weir  
Catherine Wilhite

## Lauréat National Certificate:

### Bronze Level

Lillian Frazer  
Olivia Liguori  
Sofia Lopez  
Abigail Grace Thomas  
Sophie Orndorff

## Lauréat National Certificate:

### Silver Level

Aubrey Clark  
Angelie Gonzalez  
James Cooper Reid  
Joseph Noah Reid

# 22 JUNIOR MARSHALS (see note)

Aubrey Clark  
Josiah Swain  
Charles White

# 23 NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED STUDENTS—CLASS OF 2023

Aubrey Clark  
Anjolie Francois  
Cooper Reid  
Sarah Stander  
Josiah Swain  
Charles White

# 24 ORDER OF THE TOWEL

Rhetoric School  
Anna Mages  
Cooper Reid

Dialectic School  
Mim Robbins  
Isaac Kang

Grammar School  
Liv Agurto  
Collins Davis



24



24



24



24

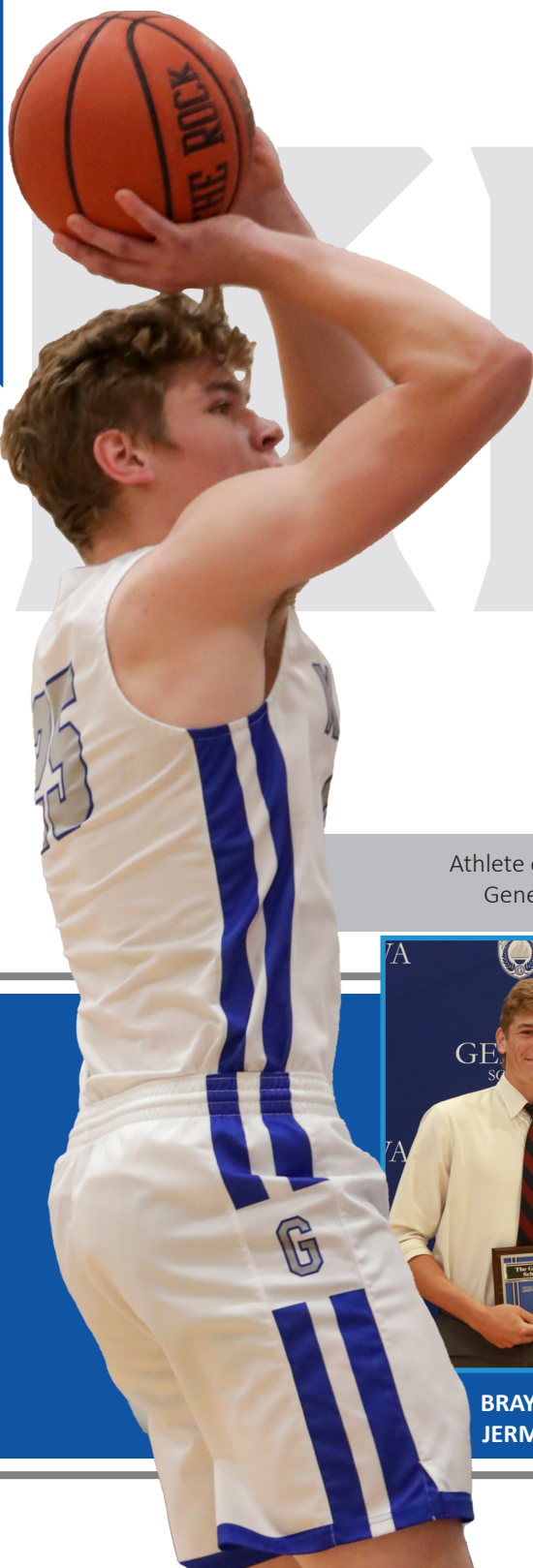
**NOTE:** Junior Marshals are the juniors with the three highest GPAs, who are chosen to lead the entrance into the baccalaureate and commencement ceremonies carrying the school regalia—flag, Bible, and mace.

GREEK AWARDS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE FALL COURIER.



# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## ATHLETIC AWARDS



Athlete of the Year awards are presented to the top male and female athletes at Geneva as determined by the athletic director in consultations with coaches.



**BRAYDEN VOGT WITH  
JERMAINE REYNOLDS**



**KATE COSTAR WITH  
TRACY TALESNICK**



# EXCELSIOR AWARD



Excelsior Awards are presented to male and female athletes exhibiting the highest moral character, exemplary sportsmanship, and Christian leadership.



**SARAH BARNHART WITH  
HOLLIE BENJUMEA**



**JOSH MCKAY WITH  
JAMES WILLIAMS**



**ALEC ORTIZ WITH  
SHRELL CHAMBERLAIN**

Awarded to seniors who have earned the distinction of having received three varsity letters in each of their four years of high school. This award was presented by Athletic Director Dan Harger.



CHARLOTTE WEIR

KATE COSTAR

The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) announced the 27th Annual Florida Dairy Farmers Academic All-State Team, a recognition program that honors twenty-four graduating student-athletes who excel in both athletics and academics. With this being one of the most important special recognition programs the FHSAA sponsors, twelve girls and twelve boys from all over the state are awarded a total of \$50,000 in scholarships. Congratulations to Geneva senior Kate Costar for being named one of the twenty-four student-athletes honored with this award!



Our very own girls soccer coach, Tracy Talesnick, was selected as the Seminole County Coach of the Year! She was honored at the Seminole County Night of Champions awards ceremony, which celebrated the accomplishments of Seminole County student athletes, coaches, and high school athletics along with the Seminole County Sports Hall of Fame on May 18. Emma Bastian, a homeschooler who competes for TGS, was also honored as the softball player of the year.



TRACY TALESNICK

EMMA BASTIAN

**Three-Sport Athletes competed in three upper school sports during one school year.**

**Sarah Andreasen**  
Volleyball, Basketball,  
Beach Volleyball

**Oliver Clark**  
Cross Country,  
Soccer, Track & Field

**Kate Costar**  
Volleyball, Soccer, Softball

**Rachel Seneff**  
Volleyball, Soccer, Beach  
Volleyball

**Maddie Stafford**  
Volleyball, Basketball,  
Softball

**Charlotte Weir**  
Volleyball, Soccer, Beach  
Volleyball

Scholar Athletes participated in at least two varsity sports and maintained a weighted GPA of 3.7 or better for the first three grading periods of the current school year.

Sarah Andreasen  
Sarah Barnhart  
Kate Costar  
Josh Cox  
Jackson Credle  
Niscelly Cuellar  
Keith Dixon  
James Lies  
Savannah Mathias  
Pippa Maughan  
Grace Miller  
Kaitlyn Moyer  
Ella Raesly  
Ford Robbins  
Evan Sarnicki  
Rachel Seneff  
Aidan Vollenweider  
Georgia Wagner  
Ricky Walters  
Charlotte Weir  
Bailey White  
Charles White  
Catherine Wilhite



### BOYS GOLF

*Most Improved Player:* **Baker Costar**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Gabriel Prisciandaro**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Alec Ortiz**

### BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

*Most Improved Player:* **Jed Flood**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Josh McKay**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Charles White**

### GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

*Most Improved Player:* **Abigail Buffington**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Ella Raesly**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Ella Raesly**

### VOLLEYBALL

*Most Improved Player:* **Eloise Johnston**  
*Most Valuable Players:* **Olivia Kyle & Charlotte Renfrow**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Sarah Barnhart**

### GIRLS SOCCER

*Most Improved Player:* **Elle Black**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Ella Petersen**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Kate Costar**

### BOYS SOCCER

*Most Improved Player:* **Ryan Ding**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Palmer Hendrix**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Elias Clark**

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

*Most Improved Player:* **Ella Kinnett**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Ailani Collazo**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Georgia Wagner**

### BOYS BASKETBALL

*Most Improved Player:* **Michael Sharp**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Brayden Vogt**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Alec Ortiz**

### ARCHERY

*Most Improved Players:* **Anjolie Francois & Augustine Jho**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Sarah Paul**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Sarah Paul & Skye Alexion**

### SOFTBALL

*Most Improved Player:* **Chloe Incinelli**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Emma Bastian**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Ava Colet**

### BASEBALL

*Most Improved Player:* **Elias Clark**  
*Most Valuable Players:* **Brayden Vogt & Evan Sarnicki**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **James Lies**

### BOYS TENNIS

*Most Improved Player:* **Joseph Wood**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Noble Renfrow**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Tanner Dietel**

### GIRLS TENNIS

*Most Improved Player:* **Gabriella Sonbol**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Astrid Feeny**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Makeda Grimaud**

### GIRLS TRACK & FIELD

*Most Improved Player:* **Loralei Flores**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **D'Asia Duncan**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Ella Raesly**

### BOYS TRACK & FIELD

*Most Improved Player:* **Aidan Vollenweider**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Campbell Hendrix**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Josh McKay**

### BEACH VOLLEYBALL

*Most Improved Player:* **Maria Seneff**  
*Most Valuable Player:* **Rachel Seneff**  
*Christian Leadership Award:* **Charlotte Weir**

# FACULTY & STAFF APPRECIATION AWARDS



**ELIZABETH YAWN**

## **20-YEAR EMPLOYEE**

**ELIZABETH YAWN / CONTROLLER**  
**REMARKS BY BOB INGRAM**

Somebody has to set the banqueting table, or else the feast would never be enjoyed. For the previous twenty years Elizabeth Yawn has lovingly set an ever-enlarging banqueting table for the delight and benefit of the entire Geneva community of students, parents, and staff. However, she rarely, if ever, partook of the banquet she so artfully prepared.

To anyone's knowledge, Elizabeth never sat in on a story-time discussion with Lorrie Stewart. Nor did she use her problem-solving skills to "follow the question" in Joe Moon's logic class. And for all of her love of numbers, she never sat in on one of Ravi Jain's Scientific Revolution classes when they were solving equations for James Clerk Maxwell's theory of electromagnetism. But had she, she would have

added knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to the discussion.

How fitting that Elizabeth should have graced us for twenty years (and counting!). We are a Christian classical school, and she is both a dear Christian sister and a classic in her own right. And by classic, mind you, we are not addressing age but rather something of priceless and enduring value. Louise Cowan, in her *Invitation to the Classics* reminds us that "classical" is understood as a tradition that upholds a very high order on matters of immense importance. The classics, she says, establish "a category of their own." Surely Elizabeth has upheld the highest of financial standards in matters of immense importance, and years ago she was singled out for the Bravo Award for establishing a category of her own by forwarding the mission and vision of the school in unprecedented ways.

Lest we forget, the classics, and those who are classical, have withstood the test of time and faith. They are revered for their virtue, for their ennobling character, and for the manner in which they prosper the good, the true, and the beautiful. They are worthy of being imitated for the greatness of soul inherent within them.

Elizabeth is truly a "classic" in the embodiment of all of these virtues and personal characteristics. She has attained all of this without the benefit of sitting under this marvelous faculty! Instead, she "set the table" for the

banqueting feast that they and untold hundreds of others have benefited from during these past twenty years. We thank her for her servant leadership, unfailing graciousness, inexhaustible energy and dedication, and for her friendship.



**CAROL BETH HAYNES**

## **TYCHICUS AWARD**

**CAROL BETH HAYNES /**  
**ADVANCEMENT**  
**PRESENTED BY BRAD RYDEN**

In the New Testament, Tychicus is mentioned several times for the servant leadership he demonstrated with his work with the apostles, and particularly for the Apostle Paul. The award is given to that member of the staff whose willing spirit and great work ethic has made a significant impact upon a broad segment of the entire Geneva staff and community.



**ERIN GORANSON**

**HEAD OF SCHOOL AWARD**  
ERIN GORANSON / MATH FACULTY  
PRESENTED BY BRAD RYDEN

An award given at the discretion of the head of school for exemplary service either in the teaching faculty or the administration and support staff.

**EMILY FRASER**

**BRAVO AWARD**  
EMILY FRASER / ART FACULTY  
(not pictured)

Given to the staff member who has made a definitive contribution to the life of the school, in a manner that has forwarded Geneva's mission, vision, and values to a new threshold. It is given in the spirit of the acclaim, "Bravo, Bravo!" It is a red brick (symbolic of the act of building some aspect of Geneva's life, program, outreach, etc.) with an engraved plaque that reads, "Let us rise up and build.' So they strengthened their hands for the good work" (Nehemiah 2:18).



**LINDA MEYER & JILL SCHUBERT**

**BOARD AWARD**  
JILL SCHUBERT /  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL CURRICULUM  
LINDA MEYER /  
ASSISTANT TO THE HEAD OF SCHOOL  
REMARKS BY GORDON CLOKE

I wonder if any of you feel like me when you hear the words "FCIS accreditation"?

I will confess: the prospect of undergoing a thorough inspection while also producing mounds of evidence and documentation in advance—on top of everything else on my plate—fills me with a sense of latent panic and dread anticipation.

It does not seem to help that we have successfully undertaken the process in the past. After all, "past results are no guarantee of future performance," as the small print always reminds us, and so much has changed (or been forgotten) since the last time, including the accreditation standards themselves and a "now—fully digitized" submission process.

Neither does it seem to help that, at least to start with, the deadlines are months away. This somehow prolongs the already exquisite agony while playing unhelpfully into a natural, but always self-defeating, tendency to procrastinate.

Nor does it seem to help that one is surrounded by very capable helpers. If, like me, you are designated as chair of a committee responsible for a particular standards area, then face it:

the buck really stops with you. And now you also have to coordinate the work of a whole committee and make further demands of all the members of said committee, whose own schedules are already full to overflowing and with whom you are reluctant to share such an onerous burden!

Of course, my remarks to this point are somewhat tongue in cheek and exaggerated (at least a little bit). However, this much is definitely true: there is one major decisive factor that allows the school to face accreditation, and that is the calm and persistent competence of the two recipients of this year's Board Award.

Between them, they orchestrate an effort that engages every area of school life and touches every member of the faculty, staff, administration, and board.

- They break down a complex and long-term project and make it actionable on a well-defined timeline.
- They become experts in the standards themselves, the accreditation process, and the submission portal—and tirelessly answer all our questions about them.
- They communicate with and encourage all parties (including FCIS) with clarity, courtesy, and grace.
- They cheerfully make themselves available to assist or advise throughout.
- On top of their regular workload and responsibilities, they quietly invest many, many hours of their own time to set us all up for success.

In all this, they not only dispel any unwarranted sense of panic or desperation, they fill all of us with confidence, stir us into effective action, and remind us why all this is worthwhile.



**LIZ SMITH, LEIGH SWAIN, & ROBBIE ANDREASEN**

### **PAIDEIA AWARDS**

LEIGH SWAIN / SECOND GRADE FACULTY

LIZ SMITH / FIFTH GRADE FACULTY

ROBBIE ANDREASEN / UPPER SCHOOL FACULTY

These awards are given to one member of the early childhood staff, one of the lower school staff, and one member of the upper school staff for their commitment to growth and for their achievement in the art of teaching. The commitment to growth is both personal—a commitment to improve one’s own art—and communal—a desire to see others inside and outside The Geneva School community improve and to aid in their improvement. This award is also about achievement—about more students learning more deeply through these teachers’ commitment to understand (1) their field of learning, (2) the educational practices that best fit with their field of learning, and (3) the practices that fit with the ages and abilities of the students with whom they successfully engage every day.

The Paideia Awards are determined by faculty within each of the three programs: early childhood, lower school, and upper school.

#### **LEIGH SWAIN PRESENTED BY HEIDI HEINSCH**

As most of you know, in order to be hired by Geneva, a teacher needs to teach a sample lesson in front of a class of students and a number of administrators and/or teachers. From the moment this woman knew she was going to be giving a math and a history lesson, she exhibited a teachable spirit and a desire to know the students she was about to teach. She showed diligence in her preparation, competence as she thought about how best to present the material, and an enthusiasm that was infectious—actually, that’s an understatement. It was clear from the very beginning that this lady was a gifted teacher!

After she learned the curriculum for one grade and taught for one year, she was asked to move to a new grade. This gifted teacher jumped in with both feet as the newly appointed team leader and worked throughout the summer to be prepared. After teaching that particular grade for a year as team

leader, she then spent the entire next summer updating, improving, and writing the grade-level scope and sequence (all on her own without any additional compensation). This lady’s work ethic is top notch.

To this day, she still makes it a point to know her students well and work diligently to adapt the curriculum to best promote learning. She lovingly challenges each student at his or her level, and I have even witnessed loud expressions of joy or tears when a student’s reading ability has increased during the year. “Mrs. Heinsch, you have to come in here and listen to this!”

Progress is celebrated and seen, and joy exudes through every part of her being!

She skillfully creates a family atmosphere where students learn to truly understand the meaning of loving your neighbor as God loves them. Her class sincerely cares for one another. Not only does she pour into her students during the school day but she also leads others in after-school activities such as typing class and cheerleading. (You can now be thankful I did not dress up in a cheerleading uniform and give a huge cheer—even though I thought about it.)

This woman loves her God and the gospel and is intentional about making sure her students understand what God is teaching them through his Word and what difference that should make in their everyday lives. It was in the nineteenth century that Henry Adams concluded “A teacher affects eternity.”

The teacher I am describing to you only confirms that it is so. Enthusiastic, passionate, dedicated, masterful. Any one of these adjectives could be this eternity shaper’s middle name, and if you can’t guess it by now, perhaps the rewriting of this nursery rhyme may help:

There was a little girl  
Who had a lot of curl  
And was dramatic, funny, and smart.  
To Geneva she came,  
Impacting children’s lives and  
With her talent became known as “legendary.”  
Congratulations, Leigh Swain—Early Childhood Paideia Award  
winner!

#### **LIZ SMITH PRESENTED BY KEIRA RAESLY**

I remember when I first graduated from college and went directly into teaching high school; at the time, I lived with a roommate who taught kindergarten. I remember that whenever we were out and about and people asked what we did, she would say that she was a kindergarten teacher, and people would ooh and ah over her career selection. When I would tell people that I taught high school, I would get looks of sympathy and people basically insinuating that I was crazy.

So when I shifted my focus to elementary education, I thought for sure that people were now going to ooh and ah over my job. Little did I know that telling people that I taught fifth grade would also earn me sympathetic looks and implications that I must not be in my right mind.

Why is that? I soon realized that I was in a minority of people who really love to teach the big kids and can see the beauty in them. But really, in such an awkward phase, what is the beauty? I know the average person doesn't see it.

Now, bear with me because I am going to shift gears to another craft where there are some parallels. I'm going to talk about blacksmiths, and I know a lot about blacksmiths because I've been to Williamsburg four times now.

Blacksmiths take a rod or a mass of metal that is nothing special to look at and serves no purpose on its own, and they turn it into something really great that has beauty and purpose. How do they do that? To the average person, the mass of metal doesn't seem flexible or moldable. As a matter of fact, it seems downright hopeless that you could turn the clump of metal into anything else.

Blacksmiths don't see an inflexible clump. They know exactly how to add heat to this metal to make it flexible, and they know exactly where to apply the pressure to reshape and toughen this clump into something beautiful and purposeful.

We have a "smith" of sorts teaching fifth grade at The Geneva School. Each year, she welcomes in students that are no longer adorable little people-pleasers. They are starting to become a little skeptical and a little cynical and, let's face it, a little stinky. Our fifth grade teacher takes these students and applies just the right amount of heat in terms of high expectations and just the right amount of pressure in terms of guidance to help these students grow in their reading and writing abilities and also to grow spiritually and socially. Like a blacksmith looks at metal and sees possibilities, this teacher looks at her upper grammar students and knows the beauty that they can express. She loves to see amazing glimpses of spiritual depth and social maturity, and she loves being a witness to exponential growth when this age group begins to rapidly apply all of their foundational skills and read deeply and to write elegant, and solve complex problems.

As in the case of most smiths, this teacher is one who studies her craft. Over the last three years, I have watched as she arrived early, even with two young children in tow, just to have time to collaborate with other teachers and prepare for the day. We all watched as she would give up her planning time to talk with other teachers on their planning time, or even observe other teachers, to gain fresh ideas and approaches. She also constantly reads articles and shares them with others and is always looking for ways to inspire students and get the absolute best out of them. This smith has been on a mission to keep fifth grade moving ahead according to Geneva's mission,

and all that she has created and added to the curriculum has been on point and worthy of sharing with others, which she freely does. Whenever this teacher makes a recommendation, we all listen and take it to heart.

I'm sure that you have already guessed that our smith is, in fact, Liz Smith, and she has quietly and humbly earned the utmost respect and admiration from our faculty, staff, and administration and the genuine appreciation of our parent and student community.

Liz Smith, thank you for devoting yourself to the craft of molding upper grammar students to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.

### **ROBBIE ANDREASEN PRESENTED BY ROB SHELTON**

Enthusiastic. Exemplary. Innovative. These are just a few of the words that colleagues use to describe Robbie Andreasen. His enthusiasm for truth and teaching is infectious, and his energy and passion impact students and faculty at Geneva year after year. As one colleague stated, "His desire to help form the whole student and not merely to pass on information means that he reads broadly, speaks emphatically, jumps on tables occasionally, and inspires awe continually. He is an image-bearing force of nature!"

His creative pedagogy impacts students profoundly. He works hard to integrate Christian classical thought and theology into his science classes, and he weaves Geneva's vision for Christian classical education into each class.

His colleagues have read his work; his students have taken his famous (or infamous?) Sandwich Test. Many of us have been steered by his dynamic traffic directing. And now we would like to honor him with this year's Paideia Award for an upper school teacher. Thank you, Robbie, for your tireless, joyful, inspiring presence and work at The Geneva School.



**THE GENEVA SCHOOL**  
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Current families, please join us for Meet the Teacher and the Information Expo on August 15. Your children, whether in lower school or upper school, can take this opportunity to find their classrooms, meet their teachers, and catch up with friends. After visiting your child's teacher (or teachers), please come to the Information Expo in the upper school gym. We will have carpool signs and welcome-back family bags for you to pick up. You will also find valuable information about various programs and resources at TGS, including music, athletics, our school nurses, aftercare, the lunch program, background and driver checks, volunteering, and more.

Students in 5th–12th grade can bring supplies to set up their lockers at this time. Used uniforms will be available to purchase. New upper school students will need to pick up a fob and morning devotional book.