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The Viking

GRAYSON COLLEGE

Connect. Commit. Complete!

-Viking Staff



Above: Tioga High School Dual-Credit students graduate from Grayson before graduating from high school later in the month. (Photos by GC Marketing)



Top Left, Top Right, and Above: GC Nursing graduates pose with loved ones. (Photos by GC Marketing)



Above: (L-R) Graduates Lavada Burse, Crystal Wilcoxon, and Amanda Favors pose with Dean of Students Dr. Molly Harris. (Photo provided by Amanda Favors)

Grayson College added 459 alumni this May! In total, the college awarded 303 Associate Degrees, 24 Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees, and 132 certificates over three days. We spoke to several Grayson grads to see where their next steps will take them.

Amanda Favors earned her Child Development certificate. With the encouragement of her professors, she plans to re-enroll to Grayson this fall to complete her associate's degree and then transfer to a 4-year university for her bachelor's.

Graduate and President's Award recipient Crystal Wilcoxon earned an Associate of Arts in Teaching 4-8, EC-12 and Special Education. She will be leaving Grayson County to attend West Texas A&M University in Amarillo for her Bachelor's of Science in Education with a focus on Early Childhood ESL and Special Education. Wilcoxon shared her appreciation for Grayson with us: "The teachers and staff at Grayson College are amazing with student success. Jeffri Hodge and the testing center staff are amazing helping students with special needs get the

extra help that they need to succeed."

Keynote speaker Lavada Burse graduated with an Associate's in General Studies. During her time at Grayson, Burse held a staff position with *The Viking*, was secretary of Black Print, and served as President of Phi Theta Kappa at the college, state, and international level. In her speech, Burse shared, "Grayson College and everyone here including faculty, staff, administrators, fellow students, and my Phi Theta Kappa family, will forever be important pieces in my life's puzzle."

Burse is waiting to hear from several universities. She intends to realize her dream of becoming a Certified Public Accountant and open her own firm. In the meantime, she plans to keep active in Phi Theta Kappa as an alumna.

Congratulations to all of our Spring 2021 graduates! We are incredibly proud of your accomplishments.

GC Music Student Wins Texoma Piano Competition

Anna Young, who came to Grayson College Music Department fall in 2019 to study with Adjunct Professor of Piano, Dr. Min Kyung Kim, was selected as a first-prize winner in the Category D at the 2021 Texoma Piano Competition.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University's music department was hosting this competition on April 10, 2021. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the competition took place virtually. Young prepared Robert Schumann's *Papillons* (Butterflies), *Op. 2* for this competition.

The *Papillons, Op. 2*, a musical portrait of events in Jean Paul's novel *Flegeljahre*, is Schumann's first set of program music for piano



Above: Anna Young (left) and Dr. Min Kyung Kim (right). (Photo provided by author)

- Dr. Min Kyung Kim, Music Professor

which combines twelve short pieces. These short pieces express multiple characters in each song, demanding that the pianist controls stabilization. Young communicated Schumann's imaginary personality, Florestan and Eusebius, so beautifully through a piano.

Young's big accomplishment is not her first. She was nominated and selected as an Outstanding Freshman in Music in May 2020. Besides playing piano, she plays clarinet in the GC Pep Band, and is a huge fan of analyzing music. Upcoming is her virtual sophomore recital is opening in May 2021 and includes Schumann's *Papillons*, Beethoven *Sonata*, and some Chopin music.

GC Phi Theta Kappa ranks second internationally

-Viking Staff

In April, Grayson's Omicron Psi chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society learned they ranked second of 1,275 chapters world wide.

"It felt awesome! As much as I joke about 'What did we miss [to keep from making number one]?' I'm still psyched we made second," explained '20-'21



Above: GC Phi Theta Kappa officers, alumni, and advisors pose together. (Photo provided by Phi Theta Kappa)

secretary Callie Keese.

To compete for a top chapter ranking, chapters must compete and submit two projects for judging: College Project and Honors in Action (HIA). The combined score for both entries determines a chapter's rank.

College Project is a service project created as a collaboration between the chapter and college administration. For their entry, Omicron Psi worked with GC Counseling services, the Dean of Students, and the Grayson County United Way to host a virtual resource fair in September. The chapter earned an Award of Distinction for this project.

HIA is a two-step research project in which a chapter identifies a concern in the community, researches its

causes, and develops an action to address the issue. The chapter's project "Creating New Truths to Combat a Legacy of Sexism" was named one of the top throughout the Society. Their project will feature in the 2021 *Civic Scholar: Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Undergraduate Research* to be published later this summer.

On May 19, Omicron Psi will be starting this year's Honors in Action research. All students are invited to participate in this year's project, regardless of their membership.

Those interested can email Phi Theta Kappa advisor Mary Linder at linderm@grayson.edu. You can also follow the chapter's social media @ptkomicronpsi on Facebook and Instagram. The chapter also has a TikTok @iloveptk.

Grayson 2nd Floor Gallery reopens for Year-End Student Show

-Viking Staff

Since March of 2020, the Grayson College 2nd Floor Art Gallery has lain dormant. That was until April, when the gallery finally reopened just in time for the Year-End Student Show.

Any student who had taken any GC Art class during the '19-'20 or '20-'21 academic year was allowed entry. Students from the painting class worked alongside professors Kristen Erickson and Jesse Reinhard to light and hang the gallery. The show included 70 works of art from students in a variety of mediums including acrylic, ceramic, charcoal, and photography. Subject matter spanned theology, still-life, portraiture and high abstract.

Art Department Head Erickson is hopeful this is the first show out of many to come in the following year. Updates about future gallery showings are expected to come this fall.



Left and Above: The 2nd Floor Gallery located near the east entrance of the Arts and Communications building. (Photo provided by The 2nd Floor Gallery)



Editorial Information

The Viking is published by Writers Unlimited and Sigma Kappa Delta as an ongoing service project to the college. This newspaper is provided as a forum for public opinion. Participation in the production of **The Viking** is open to all students, faculty and staff of Grayson College.

The views expressed in **The Viking** do **not** necessarily reflect the views of the editor, Writers Unlimited, Sigma Kappa Delta, the Board of Trustees, the administration or the faculty and staff of Grayson College.

WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK IN

Send your work to our editor, Emily Sileven, by emailing us at emsileven@vikings.grayson.edu!

If you are interested in joining **The Viking** staff contact our advisor, Dr. Marlea Trevino, at trevinom@grayson.edu

NEXT DEADLINE: TO BE ANNOUNCED

Homeless Homer part two

-Laura J. Haworth, Library Catalog-er

The next day, after school, I was alone when it came time to walk home. Jason and Sherry usually walked with me, but I couldn't find them anywhere and I assumed they headed home without me. I'd find out later that they had landed in poison oak while in the woods so they stayed home.

So disappointing for me, as I was hoping to tell all about the chaos that had erupted at my house after we had left The Rainbow Tree. My brother, Dale, a senior in high school, who had grown his hair past his shoulders, refused to get it cut, and my dad literally chased him out of the house, calling him a no good hippie. Dale countered with a vow to never to come back home, then spun his '58 Chevy out of the yard and over Montrey Hill, never calling, nor returning home.

Upset with all the yelling and the overall bad scene, I took off for the field of red clay behind the house. It was as large as a football stadium, barren as a desert, and riddled with marble sized, round rocks, as abundant as colored eggs on Easter Sunday. The only tree was an enormous Red Oak that I'd not yet climbed, what with its long, stubless trunk. As luck would have it, though, I found an old worn tire in the alley that I used to roll up to its base and stand on to reach the first limb.

While I sat there, looking up into the rest of the tree, I spotted a bird's nest way up high, and tried to reach it but the wind was so fierce and darkness had fallen, so I vowed to reach it after school, along with Jason and Sherry cheering me on.

But without them, I could only fantasize about what I would do after reaching the nest and finding eggs inside. I would show them off, of course; knock on their door and show them off, and watch their surprised and envious faces.

I didn't even head home first, just went straight to the tree. No one was there anyway. My parents were still at work and Dale hadn't come home, and he did swear that he wouldn't, so I was free to do as I pleased.

Just as soon as I started climbing, I heard baby birds chirping.

"You've hatched!" I cried out.

I was nearly at arm's reach of that nest when the mother blue jay came flying around my head, then nosedived and pecked the top of my skull! I tried to wave her off, but all that did was make me lose my balance. I grabbed at every branch I could to stop my fall, but they all broke. I remember screaming, but I don't remember hitting the ground. There's this vague memory I have of Buck barking furiously from the backyard, but no memories of being lifted up or carried.

My first full memory was waking up inside a strange house, my face pressed against a couch cushion and above me off white ceiling tiles. As I lifted my head, a piercing pain came from the very back of it, and I cried out. Then someone placed a cool, wet washcloth over

my forehead and eyes.

"Stay still awhile. You'll get dizzy, moving too quickly," a male voice said.

I pushed the washcloth away from my eyes and looked up. The person standing over me was Homeless Homer, looking concerned.

"Why does the back of my head hurt so much?" I asked.

"You fell on some rocks there, when you fell from that tree. They were pretty small and round though. The fall just knocked you out awhile."

I began to reach back and touch my wound when he firmly grabbed my arm.

"Don't touch it just yet. I need to change out that first bandage. I'll be right back."

He loosened his firm grip and left the room, leaving me time to observe my surroundings. I did so in slow motion, and even then I had to lay back down from pain and dizziness.

The windows were covered with white sheets and no furniture other than the couch and end tables. He re-entered the room from a long hallway, carrying medical supplies in his hands, which he placed on the table nearest to my head. He held up a small medicine bottle with red liquid in it.

"What's that?" I asked.

"It's iodine. Good for wounds such as yours."

"Are you a doctor?" I asked, knowing full well he wasn't.

"I've taken care of a few wounds in my day. Try turning your head slowly, so I can take a look," he instructed.

I did as he asked with my heart racing. Homeless Homer, doctoring my wound! What would Jason say?

"Well, it's still a little swollen," he said. "It needs some ice on it. Be right back."

He walked down the hallway again and back through an open doorway to the right. While he was gone, I reached back behind my head and discovered my hair was short and bristly around a painful bulge that felt wet. When I pulled my hand back and looked, I saw blood on my fingers.

"I'm bleeding and I've got short hair!" I yelled, my heart pounding.

He came back in the room with a small, rolled up towel.

"It's just bleeding a little bit. You'll be okay, and your hair is short because I cut some of it, so I could see that wound better and bandage it. Hold this towel of ice cubes against it. That'll help stop the swelling and bleeding."

I took the towel and held it lightly to my wound.

"So...I fell out of the tree, and you happen to find me on the ground?" I asked.

"Chance found you. We heard you scream. He took off, and I followed him. You were on the ground with broken limbs on top of you."

"Who's Chance?" I asked.

"He's my dog."

I envisioned Heinz touching my cheek with his nose as I lay on the ground.

"Oh." I said quietly, then pulled the towel away from my wound.

"This feels awfully cold. How long do I have to hold it here?"

"At least a few minutes longer, if you want it to heal and feel better." I nodded and placed the towel back on my wound.

"So is this your house?" I asked.

"It's my sister's rent house. She lets me stay here."

"So you're not homeless after all," I said. His eyebrows raised up.

I re-positioned the towel and muttered, "You're no Homeless Homer at all,"

"Who calls me that?" he asked.

"What? Oh...just a friend of mine. His dad gave you that nickname. He thinks you're a homeless person."

He frowned, and I suddenly felt embarrassed. Once again I took the towel away from my head and this time pointed to light pink stains on it.

"Not much blood at all now," I announced.

He nodded with a small smile.

"Okay, I'll go ahead and put iodine on it, then the new bandage. It might sting some," he warned, then held out his hand for the towel.

Feeling more relaxed, I slowly sat up, without so much dizziness this time. As he turned the medicine bottle over on a cotton ball, I grew brave enough to talk.

"I know you didn't know it but, my house was right there, just across the alley. My dog Buck, he was in the backyard, and I think he might've seen me fall and started barking," I said, as he leaned over with the cotton ball.

"So how far did you have to...ow, ow, ow... stop!" I said, feeling the sting of the iodine.

He leaned back and looked at me with a sideward smile.

"Sweetheart, how can I treat your wound if you don't let me touch it?"

I stiffened at the word "sweetheart."

"Why did you call me that?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Why not?"

"My mom calls me that, but you shouldn't. You call me Charla. That's my name."

He set the cotton ball down and put the top back on the bottle of iodine.

"Well, Becky never minded me calling her that," he said.

"Who's Becky?" I asked.

"My daughter." I grew very still, my eyes wide with surprise.

"Oh...well...it's okay to call her that. But not me."

He prepared a new bandage while I mulled over this new information.

Homeless Homer...a father? What father wanders the streets all day with a possibly vicious dog? And where was this daughter of his?

(Finale to come in our August issue)

EDITOR'S LETTER

The Viking editorship changes hands

-Storm Anderson, Outgoing Editor



Above: Meet your new editor, Emily Sileven!

Fun Fact: This photo was taken her first day at Grayson!



So here we are. It's the end of what I hope to be the weirdest year of our lives. It's been a while since I've written an editorial column, but it seemed appropriate given the occasion. For the past two years, I have been blessed to hold the position as *The Viking* editor. Now as I move on in my academic career, it's time to say goodbye and introduce you all to the paper's next leader.

Emily Sileven will begin her term as your new editor this fall. I believe Emily will be a great asset to *The Viking*. I'm looking forward to seeing how the paper grows under her leadership. I hope you will join me in welcoming her!

I'll let Emily introduce herself: "My hope is to transfer to a 4-year university and major in chemistry. When I'm not studying for a big test or quiz, you'll find me at home, singing my heart out, binge watching Disney movies, or outside rehearsing for the next play at Theatricks. I even helped direct *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. It was such a fun experience! On Sundays, I translate the songs we sing at church to ASL with another interpreter. We each take turns interpreting every other Sunday. I will soon be translating the entire sermon."

Now, if you will indulge me just for a moment, I would like to say some goodbyes.

To Dr. Trevino, thank you for the amazing opportunity to serve as the paper's editor! I honestly don't believe I would have finished my degree had it not been for *The Viking*. Working with you these past two years has been a wonderful experience that I will greatly miss.

To Emily: I would wish you luck, but you don't need it. I leave *The Viking* in your hands. I hope the editorship brings you the pride and joy it brought me. Good luck on your first issue! I can't wait to read it!

And that just leaves you, reader. Thank you for your ongoing support of *The Viking*. I've had a wonderful time serving as your editor. I am incredibly proud of the work I've done for *The Viking*, but really we did that work together. Being editor introduced me to so many of you and you created a support system I needed to thrive. Throughout the pandemic, it was you readers and submitters who kept the paper alive for the next generation of students. I hope you have an amazing summer.

You can send submissions for our August issue to our editor, Emily Sileven at emnsileven@vikings.grayson.edu.

Left: I've met amazing people during my time here at Grayson. I was glad I could get one last photo with a few of them.

L-R: Professor Mary Linder, Roy Grimes, Lavada Burse, Me, Amanda Favors, Dean Dr. Molly Harris.

Hard work and talent pay off for Leonard High School Ag students

-Alexa Rhone, Student

"We wake up before the sun, and we feed our animals, and then we get ready for school and go to school for about eight hours a day, and then we come home and work with our animals to make sure that they are ready for the show and to travel, and then after that, we do our school work, or we go to our actual job," explains Leonard High School senior Calli Damesworth, a member of the Vet Science team of the FFA--not a schedule that would appeal to the typical teenager.

Once known as the "Future Farmers of America," the organization changed its name in 1988 to "The National FFA Organization" since its members aren't just aspiring farmers but part of other aspects of agriculture, as well. The Leonard FFA members have competed several times this year, and almost all of the teams made it to Area competition.

Extensive preparation

Maddy Reaves, a senior at Leonard High School who is a part of the Horse Judging and Radio Broadcasting teams, has to study for hours on end to be prepared for the competition and then sit in silence for five hours or more to compete. "I have to study for hours and hours just to be prepared for what the different judges might think about each horse. Each judge is different in the way that they rate each event," she explains. Reflecting on the stress this preparation entails, she notes, "I never know if the judge is going to be thinking the same as me about each of the horses that are being judged."

In her other event, Radio Broadcasting, Reaves has to go into a radio booth and read a script but can't stutter or stumble on her words--she has to sound professional. Her preparation for this event is also stressful and time consuming. "I struggle to say some of the words that are on the script because I am trying to focus so hard on sounding good and sounding the right way," she says. In radio, one has to have a strong voice, and one has to be confident in what one is reading. "It is hard to find the perfect volume and the perfect sound for our group," she comments.

Another senior at Leonard High School, Angelina Bryant, is on the same team as Reaves in the Radio Broadcasting competition. "It 's hard to compete with people that have different voice levels and different tones because you have to match each person's tone and sound strong in what you are



Above: Leonard FFA Teams after they finished their competitions for the day at Tarleton State University on March 27, 2021 (Photo provided by author)

talking about," she describes. Bryant also struggles to be confident in the way that she sounds because she doesn't like the sound of her voice on recordings because she doesn't believe that it sounds strong. Bryant struggles with some of the wording, but she sounds confident when she speaks in each of the competitions. "I have to be able to sound super good," she emphasizes, "and I have to be able to pronounce and enunciate the words so that it sounds good on the other end of the radio station."

Damesworth performs with the Vet Science team, along with Bryant, showing cows and competing. She explains, "I have to be able to answer questions on the spot and be able to talk about the performance that we are doing." The team is assigned an animal and a Vet Science scenario and then has to explain all the actions they're performing on the animal. "It's really nerve racking to stand up in front of an audience and try to stay calm and talk about what tasks I am performing," Damesworth confesses.

Sometimes unappreciated

Some FFA members don't feel that the long hours they spend in preparing for their events are always appreciated by those outside of the agriculture club. "I feel like we work just as hard as the [LHS] sports teams work, but we never get shown the same importance as the people who play sports," Bryant remarks. "FFA is just as important as sports are," emphasizes Damesworth. "It isn't easy being a part of FFA," she adds. "It takes a lot of time and effort put in to be the best that you can be." Damesworth sometimes struggles to balance school and all of her "ag" work in order to be prepared for her competitions.

Leonard FFA sponsors Sabrina Davis and John Davis work hard to support the team, putting in long hours to ensure members are prepared for every competition. "We have to work together as a team to get our kids to where we need them to be so that they can be best prepared to compete and to have anything thrown their way," affirms Sabrina Davis.

Another successful powerlifting season for Leonard High School

-Ashleigh Butler, Student

When Mike Dills was first offered the job of coaching girls' powerlifting, he remembers asking, "What's that?" However, having two daughters and seeing how unfairly girls' athletics was often treated made Dills eager to take on the challenge, a decision that's been extraordinarily significant for him over the last twenty-five years of coaching both boys and girls in the sport.

Girls' powerlifting at Leonard High School has shone, most recently as a three-time regional champion team in Region Six, Division Three of the Texas High School Woman's Powerlifting Association in 2019, 2020, and 2021 due to the hard work put in by both the girls on the team and the three coaches--Mike Dills, Shane Fletcher, and Sarah Fielden.

As Dills became more accustomed to the regulations of the Texas High School Woman's Powerlifting Association, he eventually became the regional director for twelve years, then the THSWPA

president for two. But because his responsibilities as the regional director and president kept him from seeing his team as often as he wanted, he stepped down from his positions to focus more on his lifters.

COVID affects the season

At the beginning of 2020-2021 school year, Coronavirus had affected everything from school and sports to our everyday lives. So Dills was genuinely worried that he was not going to be able to have a season. He had four returning seniors this year, all of whom had been powerlifting state qualifiers for the past two or three years. However, he knew if basketball was played uninterrupted, then powerlifting would still happen. With that being said, this season would have to have a few modifications. The meets would be smaller, and Leonard would host a few meets for the first time in years.

Avery Crossland, a returning lifter and two-time regional champion in her

weight class, thought of the team as her lifeline. "This year's atmosphere in every sport had been different so far. It had felt flat and depressed. Lifting and being with the coaches and girls for the season is what helped me persevere through this year because when everything felt like it was falling apart at school, I still had a 'home' to relieve my stress," she reflects.

In "normal" years, the team begins lifting during football season, but with the uncertainty of the powerlifting season even happening, the team started later in the school year by a significant amount of time. Coach Dills' team consisted of 14 regional qualifiers returning from last year--his "best team in fifteen years"--so not knowing whether he was even going to get a season distressed him.

Coaches' support

Nakita Harris, a returning lifter, says, "I always enjoyed going to practices because the coaches made it worth going." After getting injured in a basketball game three weeks before regionals, she said it was nerve-racking lifting because she was worried of letting Coach Dills down due to the injury. Powerlifting always had a "great atmosphere and coaching demeanor," she recalls.

Crossland says powerlifting practice and meets are known for an extremely competitive atmosphere but also a friendly one. "From coaches to athletes, if you need something they are there to help," she testifies. "There is no one like Coach Dills or Coach Fletcher" because they spend so much time giving to their athletes and making sure they have all the resources and support they need to succeed. Crossland firmly believes the coaches deserve more credit and recognition than they are given. She's noticed that the meets are different from many other sports competitions she's been part of because even her competitors are encouraging, all about supporting others and uplifting everyone.

Broad success in regional meet

At the regional meet, Coach Dills left with six state qualifiers, his third regional championship in a row, three regional championships in three different weight classes, and an award for the winning coach. Girls' powerlifting was no doubt a successful sport this year because of the dedication by the girls and coaches. Where the lifters fell short, the coaches picked up the slack. "Nothing is like having something that feels like a family to spend time with at school," affirms Crossland.



Above: Leonard High School powerlifting girls take their third regional championship in a row on March 6, 2021 (Photo provided by author)