

Military high school valedictorians bid aloha to Hawaii public schools

hookelenews.com/military-high-school-valedictorians-bid-aloha-to-hawaii-public-schools/

Ho'okele Staff

David Tom

School Liaison Officer, Navy Region Hawaii

For most military students, the month of May and high school graduations mark the end of continually changing schools and transitioning challenges with each PCS since kindergarten. Despite these hurdles, a number of military students have excelled and are graduating as valedictorians.

Kapolei High School has six Navy and Air Force (one Navy, two retired Navy and three retired Air Force) out of 12 total valedictorians. These military valedictorians will attend Gonzaga University, University of Hawaii, Brigham Young University, Waldorf University and Hawaii Pacific University.



(Left to right): Quentin Harris, Madeline Skrocki, Nicole Sager and Chandler Carlson, included among this year's valedictorians at Radford High School, are Navy and Air Force family members. Of the 17 valedictorians at the school, 10 are from Navy and Air Force families. Photo courtesy Radford High School

Radford High School has 10 military of 17 total valedictorians. The Navy students are Quentin Harris (Oregon State University), Emma Kurgan (deciding between Vanderbilt University and University of California at Berkley), Rebecca Law (University of Texas at Austin) and Nicole Sager (University of South Florida).

The Air Force students are Chandler Carlson (deciding between University of California at Berkeley, University of Denver and University of Texas at Austin), Madeline Skrocki (Yale University) and Rebecca Wood (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

Coming from Stuttgart, Germany, after the 10th grade, Carlson said, "I was looking forward to a more laid back type of schooling, but was delightfully surprised. Radford provided me with an incredible and diverse opportunity, matched with unending support from students, teachers and staff."

Harris, who attended Radford all four years, said he appreciated its diverse environment. "I learned about the wonders of high school by joining the robotics class and paddling club. My advanced placement classes helped me prepare for college. I will major in mechanical engineering and join ROTC," Harris shared.

"Everyone at Radford was very welcoming and supportive. I could always count on folks," said Sager, who entered Radford in the ninth grade.

"I heard rumors about school in Hawaii before arrival but found them to be untrue. I know that certain schools have an academic reputation, but I learned that what you put in is what you get out of all schools. I plan to study psychiatry," she said.

Skrocki lived in seven states and one foreign country, and she did not expect moving to Hawaii to have a profound impact on her life. “In time, I came to realize that Radford is more than just another public school. It is filled with caring educators and a student population rich in culture that accurately represents the microcosm of the Asian, Pacific and European cultures that define present-day Hawaii,” she said.

“My value as a distinct individual was recognized and embraced, just as I had embraced the individualism of the places where I had formerly lived. I will study political science and have accepted an Air Force ROTC Scholarship,” she said.