



Riverbend News

Serving Suwannee, Lafayette and Hamilton Counties

D
Section

www.riverbendnews.org • Wednesday, May 20, 2026 • Graduation Section

From "Pomp and Circumstance" to tossing the cap

Laura Young
Riverbend News

It's graduation time, and students everywhere who have completed education programs are donning academic regalia and marching toward their diplomas to the stately tune of "Pomp and Circumstance." This final shared experience with their Class of 2026 usually includes traditions that date to medieval times, along with other ceremonial flair unique to each school and class.

Today's graduation gowns are similar to those worn by scholars as far back as the 12th century, who used them to show their status, but also to keep warm in the unheated buildings of their schools. The graduation cap, called a mortarboard, also dates back to those same medieval scholars, whose headwear signaled the rigor of their educational endeavors.

The tassel began as mere ornamentation but has since evolved to take on increased symbolism. Moving the tassel from one side of the cap to the other signifies the student's transformation from candidate to graduate. This simple act carries several layers of meaning that represent the work involved in earning a diploma and the transition from one phase of life to the next. When a graduating class does this all together during their ceremony, it creates a special moment of collective celebration for the shared accomplishment.

The playlist for graduation features Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," a processional march first performed in 1902 to honor the coronation of King Edward VII of Great Britain. Three years later, Yale University played

the song when it bestowed an honorary degree on Elgar. After that, the song quickly became the hallmark theme of graduation ceremonies across America.

In this special section, we recognize the students in our communities who are graduating with high school diplomas. Congratulations, graduates!



Edward Acree



Emma Acree

Suwannee High School

Suwannee High School's graduation will take place on Saturday, May 23, at 8 p.m. It will be held at Paul Langford Stadium, located at 302 Parshley St. S.W., in Live Oak.



Jennifer Aguilar-Mejias



Emony Albert



Easton Alcorn



Emma Alcorn

Suwannee High School's valedictorian and salutatorian have not been announced as of Thursday, May 14. Keep an eye out for recognition of these individuals in a future edition of the *Riverbend News*.

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Hugo Aldana-Acosta



Shakalya Alexander



Bret Alicea



A'Nala Allen

Congratulations, AJ!

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A'Niyah Allen



Eulalia Andres Sebastian



Briseida Angeles Maya



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Aleyna Arroyo



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Carter Cannon



Latoya Carson



Joshua Castaneda



Isabella Cavazos



Mackenzie Champagne



Hannah Chauncey



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Noah Chauncey



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Charlotte Dunn



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Brooke Fernald



Bailyn Fico



Jeraid Filion



Jayden Francis



Naibi Franqueiro Yera



Jose Franqui



Gabriel Garcia



Abi Garcia-Esteban



Madeline Garrison



Hannah Gibson



Rieanna Glenn



Paula Golub



Yuridia Gomez-Ramos



Jeyre Gonzalez



Julissa Gonzalez



Kevin Gonzalez-Lopez



Brinley Gonzalez-Ricardo



Javion Gracey



Travis Green



Alexander Gregorio

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: July 26, 2026
Early voting: August 8-15
Election Day: August 18

Update registration • Register to vote
 Public Invited • Become Engaged



Suwannee County Republican Party
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Michael Hernandez



Frenelson Herrington



Ja'Vian Hewitt



Alin Hilario



Mercedes Hill



Maci Hingson



Ta'Kailyn Howard



Jayden James

Class of 2026



*To Aliyah Starling,
I am so proud of you! Always be
of like mind with God, be an
encourager, quick with that
beautiful smile & stay positive!
Love, Noni*



Kiera Jelks



Jeana Johns



Clay Johnson



Joshua Johnstone



Ja'Nya Jones



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Kallie Livecche



Noah Lopez



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Mia Martinez



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Joshua Pate



Hayley Patrick



Angel Pena Cerro



Darien Perez Hernandez



Paolo Perez-Jacinto



Yuliet Perez-Lugo



da'Kayla Perkins



Elizabeth Peterson



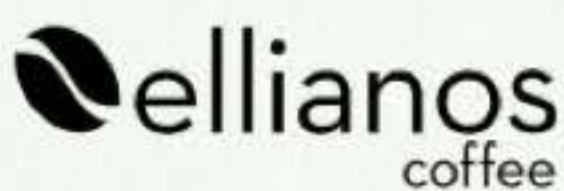
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Ana Pino



Omar Pino-Canjay



Kate



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Will

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Addison Tenbroeck



Ka'Mari Thompson



Lucas Thompson



Mia Tilley



Vanessa Toledano Mejia



Camya Toombs



Jayden Torres



Shiloh Tuckey



Samantha Turner



Albert Twiggs



Brooke Van Swearingen



Luzelina Vences



A'Niyah Vaught



Taylor Walker



Austin Wardrep



Austin Waters



Gracie Watley



Hunter Watson



Hannah Wells



Destiny Williams



Zaniya Wilson



Randy Womble



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as you graduate high school. It has
been the joy of our lives watching
you grow up and evolve into a
bright, beautiful young lady. Go
conquer the world, sweet girl!***

***We love you,
Grandad and Mimi***



Branford High School

Branford High School's graduation will take place on Friday, May 22, at 8 p.m. It will be held at the high school's football stadium, located at 405 N. Reynolds St., in Branford.

Branford High School's valedictorian and salutatorian have not been announced as of Wednesday, May 13. Keep an eye out for recognition of these individuals in a future edition of the *Riverbend News*.



Daniela Alvarez



Alexiss Bailey



Anthony Bailey



Autumn Bailey



Riley Barfield



Mallory Blue



Hayden Branch



Jennifer Camarillo



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Dakota Feeney



Cayden Fenton



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Joshua Gaouette



Luke Garcia



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Tatiyana Hernandez



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Giancarlo Hinojosa



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Jordan Langley



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Joshua Lovett



Matthew Lynn



Jasmyne Maldonado



Sarah Marsett



Ashton Massey



Ethan McCall



Sophia McCall



Cristina Medina-Moreno



Messiah Merrick



Lucero Mijangos



Jeffrey Miller



Sadie Miller



Deshauna Mitchell



Cian Moats



Cassidy Moody



Ashleigh Murray



Austin Noe



Trinity Onuska



Kalyn Osgood



Samara Perdomo



Perry e'Nalee



Blake Pilkington



Samantha Ray



Logan Richmond



Joseph Robinson



Noah Robinson



Ryland Roush



Faith Rousseau



Caiden Sapp



Kasey Sapp



Sara Savary



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Gage Sexton



Gavin Sexton



Marty Shuler



Thomas Sikes



Jackson Skinner



Camden Riely Smith



Timothy Smith



Blake Smith-Tillman



Jacob Snider



Breanne Snipes



Emma Soride



Elizabeth Sprowl



Caitlyn Stringer



Jessie Sutton



Aaliyah Taylor



Caige Tidwell



Andrew Vargas



Maurice Vought



Devin Waller



Savannah Ward



Kayleigh Wardle



Anthony Washington



Jon Weisner



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Antaniya Youte



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Hamilton County High School

Hamilton County High School's graduation will take place on Friday, May 22, at 8 p.m.
It will be held at the football stadium, located at 5683 U.S. 129, in Jasper.



Genesis Aldama-Vaquero



Marisol Andres



Sarah Armstrong



Brandon Atwood



Caleb Boatwright



Carmani Brister



Kyle Brown



Lauren Brown



Izak Burnett



Devin Carlisle



Michelle Castro-Rios



Keira Cline



Nevada Cooks



Seana Corbett



Kaden Crider



Aisia Daniels



Janasia Daniels



Jazmin Daniels



Elijah Devore



Ana Diaz



Ansley Dickinson



Ja'nara Dumus



Gabriel Epstein



Kimmy Ervine



Jakayden Flournoy



Cathy Francisco



Nayeli Franco



Samuel Freestone



Joseline Garcia-Rendon
Salutatorian



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As a lifelong Hamilton County resident and former educator, it brings me great joy to celebrate this incredible group of graduates. Your journey is just beginning, and your potential is limitless. Wishing you success, happiness, and bright futures ahead!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Menieca Kennedy
SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 5 CANDIDATE

Paid for by Menieca Kennedy for School Board District 5, Hamilton County.



Stephon Gibbons



Dyllan Grant



Reily Hearn



Janiyah Henderson



Cecilia Hernández-Díaz



Ana Hidalgo-Gregorio



Alden Hines



Andrea Holbrook



Alexandria Hughes



Jaiden Hurst



Keion'dre Jones



Nicholas Kent



Lilyann Law



Abigail Madden



April Marcum



Hayli Marshall



Jesus Martinez-Gregorio



Breanna Matthews



Kwan McCloud



Jadis McFadden



Dandre McRae



Ileana Paloma Mojica



Jmira Monk



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Christian Santana

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Kamuary Shackleton



Traviunna Simmons



Javen Smith



Ta'nijah Sowell



Ty'vion Starling



Caleb Steedley



Hayden Tabor
Valedictorian



John Richard Thomas



Carlos Andres Tomas



Alfonso Trejo



Janariyah Webb



Summer Willis

CONGRATS
Class of 2026!
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Ashley Worley



Camden Wright



Lindrose Lakota Yeomans

Memorial Graduates



Triston Derrick Fry

Jacob Michael Johns

Hamilton County Board of
County Commissioners

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**Congratulations to the
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Lafayette High School

Lafayette High School's graduation took place on Friday, May 15. It was held at the high school, located at 160 N.E. Hornet Ln., in Mayo.



Danesi Aguilar



Chrislet Aguirre-Cruz



Brantlee Ahrens



Sergio Arreguin



Julian Azbill



Andrew Barnes



Gavin Barnes



Caden Boatright



Delaney Bonds



Kade Brannon



Dawson Cannon



Brittney Cardona



Wyatt Chandler



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Arianna Haft



Molly Hamlin



Natalie Harper



Kaleb Harris

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Carolina Hernandez-Flores



Kagan Hewett



C'Koria Hill



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Mackenzie Hilton



Hallyn Hurst



Cailyn Hynds



Eva Jackson



Harrison Jackson
Salutatorian



Michael Johnson



Clara Knight



Brooke Lamb



Zabrien Lee



Dianna Makarevich



Daniel Mancilla-Acosta



Mia Martinez-Hernandez



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Ella McAdams



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Sara McDuffie



Christina Moore



Pearl Moreno



Kambry Moseley
Valedictorian



Sara Murray



Juan Paz-Garcia



Zeela Platt



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Pablo Posada



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Calvin Snyder



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Ryan Sullivan



Gracie Swindell



Alicia Swinson



Joseph Swords



Garrett Taylor



Maci Thomas



Emiliano Tovar



Brycen Troutman



Piper Wagenman



Saren Walker



Tywan Williamson



Kaeden Woods

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Whether you're continuing your studies or entering the workforce, we wish you much success and a bright future.

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Westwood Christian School

Westwood Christian School's graduation will take place at 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 21. It will be held in the Westwood Baptist Church sanctuary, located at 920 11th St. S.W., in Live Oak.

Westwood Christian School's valedictorian and salutatorian have not been selected as of Wednesday, May 13. Keep an eye out for recognition of these individuals in a future edition of the *Riverbend News*.



Kane Albritton



Brett Bozeman



Wyatt Crapps



Avery Crocker



Audrey Hogan



Addyson Horne



Lauren Martin



Lilliann Music



Avery Thomas



Addison Webb

Holy Cross Christian Academy

Holy Cross Christian Academy's graduation will take place at 7 p.m. on Saturday, June 6. It will be held at Camp Weed, located at 11057 Camp Weed Pl., in Live Oak.

Holy Cross Christian Academy's valedictorian and salutatorian have not been selected as of Wednesday, May 13. Keep an eye out for recognition of these individuals in a future edition of the *Riverbend News*.



Emely Benavides



Isaac Benavides



Elissia Boggs



Joseph Durbin



Brylee Durham



Dakota Gomez



Daniel Greeley



Julian Hawthorne



Rayden Horan



Eli Jenkins



Kiara-Grace Martino



Zackery Moses



Andrew Rouse



Ben Rouse



Olivia Schneider



Brianna Sivik



Macen Smith



Mackenzy Spooner



Conner Sykes



Cayden Blace Williams

Tabernacle Christian School



Kylie Steinbach

Melody Christian Academy

Melody Christian Academy's graduation took place on Thursday, May 14. It was held at the church, located at 10046 U.S. 129 S., in Live Oak.



Alexis Brown



Ashlynn Brown



Blake Dillon



Dayla Galvin
Valedictorian



Maddox Hancock



Jonathon Hand



Sarah Grace Hart



Kennedy Jennings



Ashton Mercer



Chandler Montgomery
Valedictorian



Malynn Neely
Salutatorian



Christian Nunez



Lou Jack Smith



Tiara Torres

Corinth Christian Academy

Corinth Christian Academy's graduation will take place on Saturday, May 23, at 10 a.m. It will be held at the academy, located at 1285 Florida St., in Jennings.



Jace Campbell



Mason Coleman



Justin Fowler



Kyler Hart



Katelynn Melvin
Valedictorian



Peyton Smith



Ricky Smith



Jonathan Solomon



Hunter Thomas



Andres Vargason



Aiden Wetherington
Salutatorian



Lighthouse Christian Academy

Lighthouse Christian Academy's graduation took place on Tuesday, May 12. It was held at Lighthouse Christian Center, located at 772 FL 51, in Mayo.



Wyatt Hillwig
Salutatorian



Ziah Martin



Kate Simmerson



Christopher Snipes



Connor Snipes
Valedictorian

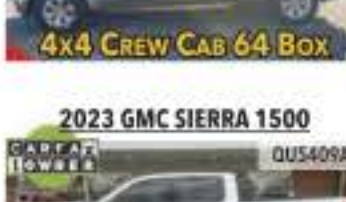
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Congratulations!
CLASS OF
2026

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CASS BURCH 2 GIANT QUITMAN LOCATIONS!

2023 CHEVY MALIBU LT SEDAN  C2022	2022 BUICK ENCORE GX  C1982 SELECT SUV	2023 BUICK ENCLAVE ESSENCE  C2069	2022 HONDA HR-V LX SUV  C1972	2023 HONDA PASSPORT ELITE  Q250077M
2024 CHRYSLER PACIFICA  QU5451	2024 CHEVY TRAX LS SUV  C2010	2022 CHEVY BLAZER 2LT SUV  C1981	2024 CHRYSLER PACIFICA  QU5443 CREW CAB 64 Box	2021 CHEVY TAHOE RST  QU5376
2020 CHEVY TAHOE LT  C2024	2023 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SE  C1973	2023 GMC ACADIA DENALI  Q260091A	2022 GMC ACADIA SLE  C2098	2022 GMC TERRAIN SLE  C2045A
2020 GMC YUKON  QU5129A DENALI	2023 JEEP RENEGADE  C1976 ALTITUDE	2022 JEEP COMPASS  Q260106S HIGH ALTITUDE	2024 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE  QU5447 OVERLAND	2022 JEEP GRAND WAGONEER  QU5470A SERIES II
2024 JEEP WRANGLER  QU5395A RUBICON X	2005 JEEP WRANGLER X  QU5431A	2020 JEEP WRANGLER  C260030N UNLIMITED SPORT S	2024 JEEP WRANGLER 4XE  QU5306 HIGH ALTITUDE	2021 JEEP WRANGLER  C2072 UNLIMITED SAHARA
2018 JEEP WRANGLER  QU5422A UNLIMITED SPORT S	2017 JEEP WRANGLER  C2074A UNLIMITED SAHARA	2021 JEEP WRANGLER  Q250208A UNLIMITED RUBICON	2022 JEEP GLADIATOR  C2086 WILLYS	2024 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500  C260023A CUSTOM CREW CAB
2020 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500  C2034 RST CREW CAB	2022 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500  C2036 LTD WT REGULAR CAB	2022 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500  Q240201A LTZ 4WD CREW CAB 147	2024 CHEVY COLORADO  C2039 LT CREW CAB	2026 RAM 2500 LARAMIE 4X4  Q260043 Leveling Kit with
2025 RAM 5500 CHASSIS CAB  QU5391 TRADESMAN 4x4	2024 RAM 2500 BIG HORN 4X4  QU5412 CREW CAB 64 BOX	2025 RAM 1500 LARAMIE 4X4  Q260085A CREW CAB 57 BOX	2025 RAM 2500 BIG HORN  Q250174A 4x4 CREW CAB 64 BOX	2023 RAM 1500 LIMITED 4X4  Q260115A CREW CAB 57 BOX
2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN  QU5435 4x4 CREW CAB 57 BOX	2019 RAM ALL-NEW 1500  QU5440A BIG HORN/LONE STAR 4x2	2023 RAM 1500 TRX  Q260063M 4x4 CREW CAB 57 BOX	2022 RAM 1500 BIG HORN 4X4  Q250140A CREW CAB 57 BOX	2021 RAM 1500 CLASSIC  QU5456 TRADESMAN 4WD
2022 RAM 1500 LARAMIE  QU5434 4x4 CREW CAB 64 BOX	2025 RAM 1500 LONGHORN 4X4  Q260119M CREW CAB 57 BOX	2024 FORD SUPER DUTY F-250  Q250129A SRW XL 4WD REG CAB	2021 FORD F-150 XLT 4WD  Q250212B SUPERCREW 5.5 BOX	2024 FORD F-150 XLT 4WD  Q250175A SUPERCREW 5.5 BOX
2023 GMC SIERRA 1500  QU5409A ELEVATION 4WD CREW CAB	2019 GMC SIERRA 1500  C2041A DENALI CREW CAB	2023 GMC SIERRA 1500  C1979 ELEVATION CREW CAB	2020 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLE  C2054M REGULAR WHEELBASE	2023 GMC SAVANA CARGO 2500  C2006 REGULAR WHEELBASE