

St. Mary's Ryken student named Horatio Alger scholar will attend University of North Carolina

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Emily Simmons, a graduating senior at St. Mary's Ryken High School and a \$20,000 Horatio Alger Scholarship winner, will attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Emily Simmons, a graduating senior at St. Mary's Ryken High School in Leonardtown and one of only 104 Horatio Alger scholars nationwide, will use her scholarship to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Simmons plans to major in molecular biology. "I would like to work in genetics and DNA to help find cures for diseases," she said in an earlier interview with the Catholic Standard.

Earlier this year, Simmons was awarded a \$20,000 scholarship when she was named one of the Horatio Alger scholars.

As a Horatio Alger scholar, Simmons and the 103 other winners participated last month in the National Scholars Conference in Washington.

Established in 1947 and named after the famous 19th century author, the scholarship is awarded through the Horatio Alger Association and honors students based on their academic achievement, involvement in extracurricular and community service activities.

With a 4.6 out of 5 grade point average, Simmons is a member of the school's National Honor

Society. She is also captain of the varsity field hockey team and was most valuable player on the girls' track team. At St. Mary's Ryken, Simmons started a "Rally for Life" program. Spurred by the death of her grandmother due to cancer, Simmons created the group to foster awareness of the disease and to raise money for cancer research.

In addition, she was named one of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School (XBSS) Stewards at her school. These stewards - selected at every Xaverian-sponsored school across the country - work with the campus ministry to provide Christian service opportunities at the school and in the community.

"We're going to miss Emily next year. She is an outstanding scholar-athlete who always made time to lend a hand in the classroom and the community," said Rick Wood, principal of St. Mary's Ryken High School. "She received the highest honor that St. Mary's Ryken can bestow on a student - being named an XBSS steward - and was a model student and leader."

One of four children of Michael and Mary Simmons of Hollywood, Simmons and her family attend St. Aloysius Parish there. Prior to St. Mary's Ryken, she attended Father Andrew White School in Leonardtown.

"I have been in Catholic school since kindergarten," she told the Catholic Standard. "Because of that I know my faith and I understand my faith."

Wood said that "Emily and the Class of 2011 have made our St. Mary's Ryken family proud."

The principal noted that the senior class earned more than \$12.7 million in scholarships, and has six National Merit Commended Scholars and 22 Maryland Distinguished Scholars, including three in the "Talent in the Arts" category. Two members of the graduating class will be attending two of the most prestigious music and art schools in the country: Megan Heavner will attend the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University and Bo-Yoon Kim will attend the Rhode Island School of Design.

"We celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates and remind them, as Pope John Paul II said, that 'a high and exhilarating task awaits you: that of becoming men and women capable of solidarity, peace and love of life,'" Wood said.

