

Seven Hills 47th Annual Cum Laude Society Induction Speeches

ANKE LIANG

Angel, you have impressed so many faculty members with your wonderful attitude and spirit. In a year when it would've been easy to fade into the shadows of a Zoom room many time zones removed from us, your tenacity and positivity have shown through your interactions with your classmates and the faculty from afar. In every discipline you study, faculty have commented on your exceptional work ethic and study skills. You come well prepared, you participate, and you work well in a group with your peers. What you are learning, you are capable of integrating into your impressive base of knowledge, and then apply it to novel situations. Although you are very quiet in class, and this year often taking class in the middle of the night, you are engaged and expressive. Many of us feel your incredible dedication is only matched by the success you have as you pose astute questions, illustrate impeccable detail in your quantitative work, share honest comments, develop your poetic writing voice, and impress us with your independence and maturity. In spite of the challenges, you still find time to be a class leader both during live sessions, as well as working with others outside of class time. It is my honor to welcome Angel Liang to Cum Laude.

Jennifer Torline

KATHRYN GUO

Kathryn, your lively, engaged spirit has added a special presence to the classroom environment. You've consistently shown yourself to be a real leader in class, bringing keen insights and honing sharp critical thinking skills daily, while sharing your thoughtful analysis and insights. Many faculty members feel your positivity and classroom citizenship are commendable. Your enthusiasm for learning is contagious to both your peers and the faculty. You collaborate well with your classmates and are genuinely engaged whether tackling a problem set or leading a laboratory experiment. You have a great imagination and a creative mind that shines in your art studies. Kathryn, you are always prepared and willing to engage in discussion, asking the type of questions that lead to continuing conversations outside of class. You are a quiet but stealthy risk-taker as you push yourself to the next level of understanding by constructing questions on the nuances of whatever you study. You have high expectations for yourself but have ensured they are realistic. You are bright, engaged, and thoughtful, with a side of skepticism thrown in. You graciously seek to grow from your own mistakes while helping others continuously along the journey. On behalf of the faculty, we welcome Kathryn Guo to Cum Laude.

Jennifer Torline

JIANYI HOU

Jacky, as a budding entrepreneur, you understand that any successful endeavor needs to be scaffolded in thought and preparation akin to a business plan. And you have mastered that truism. Across disciplines, you have laid the foundation for an impeccable academic performance. Your teachers effuse about your commitment to your studies, seen in your probing questions in class discussion and your careful exploration of lab work. Never one to merely skim the surface on any topic, you demonstrate that you are as clever a problem-solver in precalculus as you are in economics, and because of that, you plumb every possibility with a thoroughness and

thoughtfulness that cannot be overstated. Furthermore, your writing is of the highest quality; time and again, you make compelling arguments using evidence in an original way. That you do all of this with such aplomb, and in your second language at that, is remarkable. You, Jacky Hou, embody all the virtues of a true scholar, and it's for these reasons that we welcome you into Cum Laude.

Beth Driehaus

ELLA JO PIERSMA

Ella Jo, you have managed to combine a mind of fierce intelligence with a spirit of gentle humanism. From conquering AP Biology labs to deepening your understanding of literature's nuances, your teachers are effusive in their praise of not only your work ethic, but also your fearlessness in delving into the messiest aspects of the intellectual enterprise. You are comfortable with the ironies and contradictions of history as much as you are with the intricacies of graphic design; and that versatility, coupled with a humility that belies your raw talent, is what makes you the impressive scholar-leader that you are. Indeed, when you raise your hand to add a thoughtful insight or to respectfully challenge an assertion in discussion, you command the attention of your peers because you approach your learning with an earnestness that is pure and unimpeachable. You elevate any classroom you set foot in with your habits of mind and your precise contributions, and simply put, you are just a pleasure to teach. It is for all of these reasons that we are thrilled to welcome you, Ella Jo Piersma, into Cum Laude.

Beth Driehaus

MANAN VIJ

Since coming to Seven Hills in ninth grade, you have consistently excelled not only in your own understanding but in your willingness and skill in sharing that understanding with your classmates. Your successes are grounded in an excellent work ethic and deft analysis in everything from interpreting literature to connecting mathematical ideas. You display motivation and dedication in all your classes; balancing attention to detail with insightful connections. In particular, you have consistently wrung accolades from your English teachers for your willingness to take intellectual risks and to back them up with deep thinking, meticulous preparation, an uncanny ability to seek meaningful details in both your reading and your writing. While it is undeniable that your English teachers have been most effusive in their praise, it is equally clear from every teacher's experience with you that you bring these same skills joyfully to all of your classes. It is my pleasure to welcome you to Cum Laude.

Marcus Twyford

HANNAH ELLURU

If you're ever picking sides, Hannah Elluru is someone you want on your team. Her teachers speak glowingly of her meticulous preparation, authentic curiosity, and intense focus. Others call attention to her role as an ideal classroom citizen, and more than one point to her work with our peer tutoring program as evidence of her genuine love of learning. These qualities alone would make Hannah a worthy inductee into Cum Laude. But, perhaps what distinguishes her is what one of her teachers calls "sheer grit." In whatever class, on any given assignment, Hannah embraces the opportunity to dig deeply into the subject matter.

She is never satisfied with her initial findings or first impressions. She writes and rewrites, examines and re-examines, until she can be sure that she has left no stone unturned or question unanswered. She digs deeply, and in doing so she makes connections that transcend the confines of her assignments. As one of her teachers writes, “If I could pick only one senior [for Cum Laude] this year, it would be Hannah.” Consider it done. Congratulations, Hannah. You are so deserving, and we are so pleased to welcome you to Cum Laude.

Nate Gleiner

JULIA MOSER

When asked to describe Julia Moser, her teachers use words and phrases like—superb, constantly engaged, really hard worker, lifelong learner, consummate scholar, a true intellectual. What remains to be said about a student who inspires such adulation from everyone who works with her? I offer, as an alternative, an excerpted transcript of some emails I have received from Julia this year.

- Sept. 22: Hi Mr. Gleiner! This is Julia from your Honors/AP American Lit class. How are you doing? I hope your spirit week has gone well so far!! I was hoping, if it’s not too late, to set up a meeting with you about my *There There* essay.
- December 15: Hi Mr. Gleiner! How was the rest of your day today? How’s Hanukkah been going? If you have a second, would you please look over my new outline for the essay on *A Mercy*?
- January 4: Hi Mr. Gleiner! How was your break? I am personally so excited to be back in school!! I just had a quick question. Is there a book you would like us to bring to class tomorrow?
- March 2: Hi Mr. Gleiner! I hope you had a good day since I saw you last and that today was better than yesterday simply because it is no longer Monday!! I just had a quick question about the format of the response for the Dillard and Thoreau comparison.

What, you ask, might be the relevance of these seemingly mundane correspondences? I think they show us, perhaps far better than grades achieved, or papers written, or awards won, what makes Julia such a wonderful student and person. Cum Laude demands of its inductees academic excellence and intellectual maturity, and Julia certainly possesses these qualities. But it is her care for others, and her desire to connect with those around her—to get at the humanity of school—that make her such an ideal candidate for this honor. We are so proud of you, Julia.

Welcome to Cum Laude.

Nate Gleiner

HOLLY WEISFELDER

Holly, a teacher commented on what a powerhouse you are when it comes to intellect and curiosity, and I couldn’t agree more! You were never scared or intimidated by a math problem that did not have an obvious answer; you seem to enjoy meeting all challenges head on. Whether it’s a research paper that kept growing with all of your insights or reinventing what Spanish Club means here at school, you have made an impression on the faculty and have made this community richer. You do all of this without looking for accolades or commendation. Simply knowing you have learned something or achieved a goal is enough recognition for you. You are bright, capable and engaged in every class you take while

also being open to feedback and advice when needed. On behalf of the faculty, let me welcome you to Cum Laude.

Anna Works-McKinney

GRACE ARYA

Grace, your teachers consistently mention your contributions to the classes you are in. Whether it is your ability to collaborate with everyone, the insightful questions you ask from your history class to your math class, or your ability to keep a conversation going when everyone else seems to have stalled, you are the kind of student every teacher looks forward to having in class. Not only are you willing to share your thoughts and opinions on different topics, but you are always open to thinking about other peoples' perspectives. You are a huge asset to your classes and your peers when they do not understand the material as well as you do. When surveying the teachers, they all commented on your worth ethic, character, and ability to take your natural talents and turn them into something so much more. On behalf of the faculty, let me welcome you to Cum Laude.

Anna Works-McKinney

JENNY HU

Jenny, it is rare for a student to possess extraordinary academic skills, an ambition founded in a sincere zest for knowledge, empathy for others, and a great sense of fun, but you do it all. The faculty agrees that you possess a genuine love for learning. You are a sophisticated thinker, eloquent speaker, and elegant writer, although, to say that you are an elegant writer is an understatement. Your use of language is exceedingly well-crafted; your every word is precise and graceful, in any of the seven or so languages you have studied. While you are eminently respectful of your peers' opinions and ideas during classroom discussion, it is often your profound insights, interdisciplinary connections, and cringe-worthy puns that drive the discussion, and your classmates' understanding, to a higher level. Jenny, your keen intellect, sharp wit, and kind heart are only a few of the reasons for which it is my pleasure to welcome you to Cum Laude.

Katie Swinford

SARAH CROOG

Sarah, you are a thoughtful and thorough student who challenges yourself to do superior work and master every academic demand made of you with diligence and good humor. You make your rigorous course load look easy! Whether parsing complex biological systems or roasting your classmates while playing a Roman senator on Twitter, you always bring perceptive and articulate analysis to your classes. In both classes and clubs, you are dependable and trustworthy in all tasks and you never shy away from responsibility. You work cooperatively with your peers, patiently guiding your classmates to the finish line, and you are always willing to go the extra mile for your group. The faculty recognizes you, Sarah, for your intellectual curiosity, your graceful leadership, and your easygoing attitude. For all of these remarkable qualities, Sarah, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Cum Laude.

Katie Swinford

CHARLES RINGEL

Charlie, you are here today because of the patience, diligence, and hard work you have brought to all your Upper School classes. You have consistently sought advice on how to improve, and then applied it successfully on later assignments and in later classes. You are always an excellent classroom citizen, bringing a positive tone, a willingness to get your hands dirty (literally and metaphorically), energy, and the habit of taking time to ponder new ideas to every class. You courageously ask questions when clarification is needed. You are both willing and insightful in helping your classmates when they have questions. You have consistently found a balance between collaboration and individual work that advances your own understanding as well as that of your classmates. You advance your team's discussions with shrewd observations and well-developed ideas so that your classmates see you as a leader. Charlie, you epitomize scholastic excellence, honor, and integrity. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Cum Laude.

Lenore Horne

CAROLINE ROUTH

What's up, Stinger Nation? This is Mrs. Newton with a Cum Laude announcement. For those of you who don't have the pleasure of hearing this each morning over the PA system, it is the cheerful way Caroline Routh greets the Upper School without fail, and it is representative of what Caroline has brought to our school. She brings endless energy and dedication to her many extracurriculars, including the obviously easy and not-time-consuming job of Student Body president. This dedication would cause many students' work in the classroom to fall by the wayside. But Caroline has always displayed a mature ability to balance that passion for school involvement with her coursework. She has a quick mind and a desire to chip away at ideas in order to get to the heart of them, asking pointed questions and seeing learning as a conversation, a welcome approach in a world that is growing ever more complicated. In AP English, she is like a lawnmower operator, pulling the cord to start a sleepy engine with conversation starters and by engaging her classmates. But she will also happily mow the grass, maintaining relentless engagement in whatever topic is being discussed. Her teachers have consistently noted her insatiable curiosity, ability to work well with anyone in the room, and kindness when a peer needs encouragement. Caroline, you have encouraged us every day through a particularly tough year. It's time for us to return the favor. You show open-minded generosity in the classroom and unparalleled commitment to our school, and we are so proud to welcome you into Cum Laude.

Marielle Newton

ALEXANDRA NATHAN

Two Time FIFA Women's World Cup Champion, Olympic Gold Medalist, sports analyst, and political activist Julie Foudy commented, "Leadership is loud. It is quiet. It is thoughtful and emotional and cerebral and nerdy and goofy and joyful and motivating." Allie, I have had the pleasure of knowing you for many years and can attest that you have demonstrated all of these qualities. You have proven that you don't need to be the loudest or the most dynamic to get the respect of your teachers and peers. You do it by hard work, perseverance, grit, and by treating those around you with civility and kindness. Your teachers comment on your keen observations, intellectual insight and curiosity, outstanding work ethic, and the courage to take on challenges in the classroom, rehearsal space, and the soccer field. Those successes are a result of your

resiliency and effort, and through that, you remain humble and lead by example, not a loud example, but certainly a genuine one. On behalf of the faculty, we are pleased and proud to welcome you to Cum Laude

John Rising

WESLEY GARDNER

All of your teachers agree that you are an academic powerhouse and bring enthusiasm, curiosity, and a clever sense of humor to each and every class. Over the past four years, you have steadily matured, grown intellectually, and have challenged yourself with high academic standards, which you continually meet. You have established a reputation for the effort put forth in the sciences, language and literature, and performing arts. By conscientiously listening, as well as actively participating in class discussions, you demonstrate creative thinking, a quick wit, and the ability to tackle, analyze, and solve complex problems across all disciplines. You are a young man of character, who obviously loves to learn, and one who has fantastic taste in music! As important, you listen to and find ways to help those around you grow, both students and teachers. Whether in the classroom, the rehearsal room, or running countless laps on the track and trails, you have left your mark at Seven Hills. For these reasons, we are pleased and proud to welcome you to Cum Laude.

John Rising

ANNIE ICENHOWER

Annie, you are a dedicated and accomplished student and a leader in academic life and beyond. Your teachers remark on the drive, maturity, and empathy that you bring to the classroom. In AP English, for example, you write with "precision and control" and you galvanize class discussions. Your peers, likewise, prize working with you in groups or on teams, because you bring your trademark enthusiasm, responsibility, and concern for others to everything you do. This year, you shared those qualities with the school as a whole. As a student government leader, you helped to model for all of the other Upper Schoolers how, with resilience, creativity, and a positive attitude, we can make the best out of a challenging year. Congratulations on your induction in Cum Laude.

Matt Bolton