



Saint Viator Valedictorian and Salutatorians Have More Than Book Smarts

May 6, 2011



Saint Viator High School's valedictorian and salutatorians reminisce with Principal Eileen Manno. From left to right: Robert Moynihan, salutatorian; Anthony Pensa, valedictorian; Eileen Manno, principal; and Gregory Perkowski, salutatorian.

"I wanted to challenge myself," he says. "I enjoyed my classes. I liked how much everyone participated."

Two of Pensa's classmates who challenged him every step of the way were named dual salutatorians: Robert Moynihan of Schaumburg and Gregory Perkowski of Inverness earned a grade point average of more than 104 percent, and they achieved many awards along the way.

Most recently, Moynihan was named a National Merit Scholar, while Perkowski was named a semi-finalist in the USA Biology Olympiad, a national competition hosted by the Center for Excellence in Education.

Saint Viator Principal Eileen Manno says the entire senior class looked up to these three outstanding students.

"They're exceptional," Manno said. "To have three such high achieving students, who set high academic standards, they inspired all of their classmates to succeed."

Perkowski and Moynihan also had outside activities to round out their academic career. Moynihan was a power forward on the varsity basketball team, while also competing with the math team. He heads to Washington University in St. Louis to pursue an engineering degree, while Perkowski will continue to keep up with Pensa. He too will head to Northwestern University in the fall to pursue degrees in integrated science and biology.

Perkowski was a staff writer on the school's award winning newspaper, the Viator Voice, while also participating in the Spanish Club. But science, he says, remains his first love.

Anthony Pensa of Arlington Heights will address Saint Viator's Class of 2011 at Sunday's graduation as its valedictorian. Named No. 1 in the class of 288 graduating seniors, he finished with a grade point average of more than 105 percent.

But he brings more to the role than his academic excellence. Pensa served as captain of the football team, as well as an officer of the Italian Club and a member of social justice organizations aimed at heightening awareness of the atrocities in Darfur.

This fall, he will attend Northwestern University, where he plans to major in integrated science and biology. His interests reflect the rigor he maintained while at Saint Viator, where he took eight Advanced Placement courses, as well as multiple honors level classes.

All three say they never set out to be named one of the top students in the class but instead focused on their school work and challenging themselves with top-level courses.

“Stay committed to doing your best,” Pensa said. “Don’t put one class over another, but try and do well in all of them.”