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The Times-Tribune announces 2014 Scholastic Superstar team

BY SARAH HOFIUS HALL

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JASON FARMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER The Times-Tribune 2014 Scholastic Superstars. Front row, from left, Carbondale Mayor Justin Taylor, Laura Romanovich, Maisha Anjum Shamim, Kelsey Widdick, Shirley Tung, Mekenzie Voglino, Megan Dougherty and Dencil Wilmot. Second row, Rachel Fritz, Paul Chichura, Jeremy Cummings, Zachary Fiscus, Caleigh Wildenstein, Katie O'Neill, Danielle Rutkowski and Caitlin Mary Dermody. Back row, Eric Onofrey, Justin R. Gensel, Thomas Skrutski Jr., John Ruby, Keith Bates, Leif-Axel Berg, Alex Dennis and Benjamin Gendelman.



Carbondale Mayor Justin Taylor checks out the medal from Thomas Skrutski Jr. during the reception after The Times-Tribune 2014 Scholastic Superstar ceremony on Wednesday, at the Scranton Times Building.



JASON FARMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Carbondale Mayor Justin Taylor speaks at ceremony. Mr. Taylor was a member of the 1996 class of Scholastic Superstars.

They hope to be doctors, scientists, engineers, lawyers and teachers.

They plan to make a difference in the world, especially in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Of the more than 5,000 students who will graduate from the region's high schools in June, 25 are among the best and brightest and are now members of the 20th class of Times-Tribune Scholastic Superstars.

During the last two decades, 500 graduating seniors have received the honor after being nominated by their high schools. The students not only excel in their classrooms, but on athletic fields, stages and in the community.

The 2014 team was honored Wednesday at a medal ceremony and reception at The Scranton Times Building in downtown Scranton.

Members of the 20th class of Scholastic Superstars are Keith Bates, Honesdale; Leif-Axel Berg, Blue Ridge; Paul Chichura, Scranton Prep; Jeremy Cummings, Abington Heights; Alex Dennis, Blue Ridge; Caitlin Mary Dermody, Scranton Prep; Megan Dougherty, Pittston Area; Zachary Fiscus, Scranton; Rachel Fritz, Honesdale; Raket Galeano, Wallenpaupack Area; Benjamin Gendelman, Wallenpaupack Area; Justin R. Gensel, North Pocono; Katie O'Neill, Forest City Regional; Eric Onofrey, Abington Heights; Laura Romanovich, Valley View; John Ruby, Scranton; Danielle Rutkowski, West Scranton; Michael Schwab, Pittston Area; Maisha Anjum Shamim, Delaware Valley; Thomas Skrutski Jr., Holy Cross; Shirley Tung, Abington Heights; Mekenzie Voglino, Carbondale Area; Kelsey Widdick, Holy Cross; Caleigh Wildenstein, Western Wayne; and Dencil Wilmot, Delaware Valley.

"I am always amazed by our Scholastic Superstars," said Bobby Lynett, a publisher of The Times-Tribune and CEO of Times-Shamrock Communications. "Their accomplishments both inside and outside of the classroom are tremendous. This group of young individuals will no doubt go on to be leaders in the communities that make up Northeast Pennsylvania. Their parents, families, friends and teachers must be so proud of them as are all of us in The Times-Tribune family."

This year's team was selected from nominees from two dozen Northeast Pennsylvania high schools. All local high schools were invited to nominate up to three seniors who excel in academic performance, school activities and community service. A panel of judges made up of administrators from local colleges and universities, including Ken Knely, executive director of communications and marketing at Baptist Bible College & Seminary; Dominick A. Carachilo, vice president of academic affairs at Johnson College; Lois Draina, retired dean, Marywood University; Frank Goskowski, retired academic dean, Lackawanna College; Sarah Keating, vice president for enrollment and marketing at Keystone College, and Joseph Roback, associate vice president

of admissions and enrollment, University of Scranton, chose the team from the submitted nominations. Judging is done without knowing students' names or schools, to ensure that each student's merits and accomplishments are judged equally.

At Wednesday night's ceremony, Carbondale Mayor Justin Taylor, a member of the 1996 class of Scholastic Superstars, spoke to the students, their families and educators, and encouraged the Superstars to return to Northeast Pennsylvania.

"You are an elite group," Mr. Taylor said. "It's a great honor for you as students, for your individual schools and for your families as well."

Starting today and for the next 24 days, each team member will be featured in alphabetical order in a story on Page A2 of The Times-Tribune. Keith Bates' profile appears on A2 today.

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Nominees

Students honored by their schools with nominations to The Times-Tribune 2014 Scholastic Superstar Team include:

- Abington Heights: Jeremy Cummings, Eric Onofrey, Shirley Tung
- Blue Ridge: Leif-Axel Berg, Alex Dennis
- Carbondale Area: Cory Boyko, Eliza Totsky, Mekenzie Voglino
- Delaware Valley: Josiah DeVizia, Maisha Anjum Shamim, Dencil Wilmot
- Dunmore: Megan Connors, Emily Fischetti, Abby O'Neill
- Elk Lake: Paige Parkhurst
- Forest City Regional: Nicholas Kovaleski, Michaela Martines, Katie O'Neill
- Holy Cross: John Luczkovich, Thomas Skrutski, Kelsey Widdick
- Honesdale: Keith Bates, Rachel Fritz
- Lackawanna Trail: Sarah Botscheller, Nicole Rosa
- Lakeland: Jacqueline Jadick, Cody Morcom, Morgan Sedorovitz
- Mid Valley: Haley Drutarovsky, Kyli Gibbon, Kendra Wuestling

- Mountain View: Mikaela Phillips
- North Pocono: Justin Gensel, Eric Woelkers, Marissa Wolfe
- Old Forge: James Aversa, Lauren Carey, Anne Cherundolo
- Pittston Area: Megan Dougherty, Michael Schwab, Rachel Simansky
- Riverside: Jonna Boyda, Matthew Lucas, Ariel Kimes
- Scranton: Zachary Fiscus, John Ruby, Taylor Stetzar
- Scranton Prep: Martha Carter, Paul Chichura, Caitlin M. Dermody
- Susquehanna Community: Micaela Rhone, Sarah Serfilippi, Emily Staros
- Valley View: Morgan Caselli, Santina Possanza, Laura Romanovich
- Wallenpaupack Area: Kayla Askey, Raket Galeano, Benjamin Gendelman
- Western Wayne: Michaela Killian, Caleigh Wildenstein, Devon Williams
- West Scranton: Cara Anzulewicz, Kaela Palmiter, Danielle Rutkowski