

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

12 Littleville Road Huntington, MA 01050

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Wendy V. Long, Public Relations ☒
(413) 685-1003

Finalists for Golden Achievement Award Announced

Huntington – Principal Jason Finnie has announced the five senior class finalists for the Golden Achievement Award: Dawson Atkin, Ryley Carleton, Joseph Coon, Audrey Gamble, and Jessica Van Heynigen. The Golden Achievement Award is Gateway’s most prestigious award and recognizes a member of the senior class who demonstrates outstanding leadership, scholarship and service throughout their high school career. The five nominees are selected by the senior class and the faculty will make the final determination of the winner.

Dawson D. Atkin is a National Merit Commended Scholar, who is the National Honor Society President, GSA President (grades 11 & 12), Band President, Student Council Vice President and Model United Nations Historian. He has been selected to the Western Massachusetts District Band (saxophone) all four years of high school, earning top audition scores and All State recommendations 3 of those years. He has also performed regularly with the Gateway Show Choir, earning ‘Best Male Vocalist’ as a junior and a shared “Best Male Vocal Group” as a senior at New England Show Choir Showdowns. He has performed in numerous roles with the drama club, including Hortensio in *Taming of the Shrew*; Jack (“*Into the Woods*”); as Jamie (and as the Music Director) in *The Last Five Years*; and as Milo in this year’s *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Dawson has completed school internships in communications and with the band. He was Gateway’s MassSTAR delegate in 2016 and is serving this year on the programming committee. He has performed annually with the Westfield Theatre Group since age 5, and has volunteered with Friends of the Homeless. The son of Lisa and D. Scott Atkin of Montgomery, Dawson will attend the Hartt School of Music, Dance and Theatre (part of the University of Hartford) and major in music composition.



Ryley E. Carleton serves as the Secretary of the Dana O. Weber Chapter of National Honor Society and as the School Store Manager for the Student Council. A member of National Honor Society, she has been recognized for academic excellence in English III Honors and Wood Technology, earning the RIT Innovation and Creativity Award and Scholarship last year. She has completed an internship at Littleville Elementary School in the special education department and was a part of the high school’s School Climate Group for several years. She is a member of the Gateway Cross-Country Team where she served as captain. Her hobbies include kayaking and various crafts. Ryley will attend Westfield State University in the fall and major in special education. She is the daughter of Philip Carleton of Huntington and Michelle Carleton of West Hatfield.





Joseph T. Coon, son of Trevor and Erica Coon of Montgomery, will attend the College of the Holy Cross in the fall where he is considering majoring in math and physics. A self-described "ukulele master", Joe has been active at Gateway on the National Honor Society where he serves as the Historian. He is also on the "As Schools Match Wits" team and competed in both wrestling and soccer for Gateway. He was one of the delegates to Massachusetts Boys State his junior year. As an underclassman, Joe was recognized for outstanding academic achievement in Honors Pre-Calculus, AP Physics, Advanced Chemistry, and Advanced Algebra II, earning him the Rensselaer Medal Award and the RIT Computer Medal and Scholarship. Outside of Gateway, Joe enjoys running and is a Manager at McDonalds.

Audrey E. Gamble is the President of Gateway's Best Buddies Club, Co-Social Media Director of the GSA, Secretary of Student Council (which she has served on for 3 years), and Treasurer of the Senior Class. Last summer, Audrey attended the International Best Buddies Conference at Indiana University. She is a five year member of the Varsity Softball Team and has been co-captain for two years, earning PVIAC All League Awards as a sophomore and junior. She also played Varsity Basketball for three years and was co-captain as a senior. A saxophonist, Audrey's performed with the high school jazz band for four years and concert band for three. She has volunteered at Littleville's summer day camp, as a recreational youth soccer coach and for many years at the American Legion Post 356 where she helps at local fairs and their annual car show. Audrey was part of a student team that won the Mass DOT Safe Streets Smart Trips High School Video Contest last year. She served as a communications intern for Gateway for two years, writing press releases, event planning, creating social media posts and blogging about her senior year. The daughter of Chris Gamble and Susan Kallerges of Huntington, Audrey will attend Ithaca College with a major in sports media and minoring in integrated marketing communications.



Jessica L. VanHeynigen will attend Merrimack College as part of the Honors Program, majoring in exercise science. Her eventual goal is to further her education to become a physical therapist. Jessica has been a class officer for three years (secretary in grade 11, president in grades 10 and 12) and served on Student Council all four years of high school, where she is currently its Treasurer. A standout soccer player, Jessica played varsity soccer all four years, captained the team as a junior and senior, and set a new scoring record for Gateway leading to numerous accolades and awards including the MIAA Student Athlete of the Month. Jessica completed internships in middle school physical education/health and with the athletic director, also serving as an MIAA student ambassador. Her community service work includes recreational soccer coach for 2 years, volunteering with the Gateway Athletic Booster Club, and completing NHS service projects such as Toys for Tots and the annual senior citizen brunch. She is the daughter of John and Jennifer VanHeynigen of Chester.



The Golden Achievement winner will be announced—along with the Valedictorian and Salutatorian—
at the Sr. Awards Assembly on Wednesday, May 30, which begins at 11:45 a.m. in the Gateway
Performing Arts Center.

###