**2018 Celebration of Excellence**

**Distinguished Student: McKenzie Schneider Distinguished Educator: Ms. Kristine Anderson**

**Parents: Dan & Melissa Schneider Kennedy Elementary School**

Ms. Kristine Anderson was my 3rd grade teacher at Hillcrest Elementary School. I chose her  
because she is a wonderful teacher and an even better person. Every student in our class had a special connection with her. I was honored to have one of those very special relationships with her. I enjoyed every minute of her class. She always made it very fun and enjoyable. She was a teacher who was always easy to talk to if you ever had a problem or needed help. Not only did I connect to her through school but also on a personal level outside of school. We’ve had a remarkable relationship through my years of taking dance and the fact that I have Cystic Fibrosis. It is such an honor to recognize such an amazing teacher/person.

**Distinguished Student: Logan Johnson Distinguished Educator: Ms. Edie McClafferty**

**Parents: Mike & Deanna Johnson Hillcrest Elementary School**

Ms. Edie McClafferty made a tremendous difference in my life at a young age. School has always been easy for me and until I had Ms. McClafferty as a teacher I couldn’t be bothered to really focus on what I was learning. Ms. McClafferty changed that by making class and learning fun. Also, the way Ms. McClafferty taught allowed me really to retain what I learned. Ms. McClafferty was also a very understanding teacher and was able to single out students’ individual needs and push everyone to reach their goals for the year. Finally, Ms. McClafferty still cares about my interests today and is still a valuable educator for myself and younger generations.

**Distinguished Student: Ryan Marthaller Distinguished Educator: Ms. Melissa Johnson**

**Parents: Karl Marthaller & Chrissy Recore Webster Garfield School**

I met Melissa Johnson two years ago. She may be the dean at the Butte High Career Center, but I have never considered her as my dean. She is a role model and a friend.  In just two years she has made a wonderful difference in my life. Melissa Johnson is someone who always has a smile on her face. No matter the weather that day she always has a way of looking at the light in a dark situation. She makes great commitment to ensure that students will succeed academically in their high school years. She has helped me so much in two years with my academics. Melissa has made the last two years of my high school career memorable and has impacted me and many others. I will always be thankful for her and what she has done for me. People like Melissa who have made such an immense impact can never be forgotten or thanked enough.

**Distinguished Student: Cade O’Neill Distinguished Educator: Ms. Julie Johns**

**Parents: Jim & Traci O’Neill Butte High School**

There have been many people that have come along in my life who have caused a substantial impact on my lifelong endeavors, but there are few who surmount that of Mrs. Julie Johns. Not only an outstanding teacher who never fails to nurture me with the proper material to the full extent and beyond, but also an extremely close friend who I am capable of both holding a casual conversation and sharing my feelings during a rough patch. She has given me an ideal portrayal of what true strength and compassion entails. Her sarcasm and humor have the potential to break that “awkward silence” that everyone fears in certain situations. The most important thing, in my opinion, that Mrs. Johns has given me throughout my high school career, is the self-confidence that I had been lacking my whole life prior. The growth of the confidence I have in myself has grown immensely over the years I have known her, and she has given me a sturdy foundation that I will be able to build off in the future. I am truly honored and blessed to have Mrs. Julie Johns in my life, there is no other individual I respect more. Thank you, Julie, for giving me such an amazing opportunity in honoring you at the Celebration of Excellence and giving me the tools and thoughts that have worked wonders in my maturation into an adult. You will forever hold a special place in my heart and my educational career.

**Distinguished Student: Erik Casagranda Distinguished Educator: Mr. Marc Gilboy**

**Parents: Joe & Lynette Casagranda East Middle School**

Mr. Marc Gilboy has had a tremendous impact on my life when I took his class 8th grade year. He was a great English teacher who made writing enjoyable, while also teaching me the language and grammar skills I still use today. More importantly however, Mr. Gilboy helped me develop important characteristics in my life such as responsibility and consideration. I was very childish going into his class but throughout that year, he helped me mature and become the person I am today. He simply did this by showing me right from wrong, and teaching me that it is important to be honest and respectable at all times, even when it may seem hard to do so. For that, I am very grateful to have had Mr. Gilboy as a teacher.

**Distinguished Student: Zayne Miller Distinguished Educator: Mr. Roger McCullough**

**Parents: Dill & Adrienne Miller Butte High School**

Mr. McCullough has influenced who I am as a person. He has taught me to work hard and always do my best. I would describe him as always being fair, happy and cheerful. It doesn’t matter what my mood was before I walk into his classroom, because he would always bring a smile to my face. He is kind and patience to each and every student in his class. Those are character traits that I feel I have improved upon because of him. Another important thing that he has taught me is to believe in myself. Because of his belief in me, has made work even harder, which only leads to success. I hope that throughout the rest of my life, I can demonstrate the same great qualities that I find in Mr. McCullough. Mr. McCullough gets to know each student as an individual and helps each student excel. My two years in his honors english class was a great experience I made it upon his wall of honor both years and am very proud of that and received a mini WWE championship belt which I will cherish the rest of my life. Mr. McCullough is a big fan of WWE Wrestling and the lessons that Mr. McCullough has taught me are invaluable, not only have they strengthened the foundation of my life, they are the building blocks of my future, but he has also taught me that WWE is not just entertaining, it is real. All jokes aside Mr. McCullough has been an exemplary role model and has taught me to have many strong traits. I can be trustworthy and hard-working, while never losing sight of who I am as an individual. Mr. McCullough has been the one teacher that has affected my life the most. He did not need to influence me to be a rocket scientist or brain surgeon, but he has influenced me to become the best at anything that I set out to be.

**Distinguished Student: Cameron Cassidy Distinguished Educator: Ms. Rochelle Ryan**

**Parents: Tim & Carleen Cassidy East Middle School**

Although my time at East Middle school was short lived, there is one particular teacher that has not been forgotten. Ms. Ryan was my eighth grade social studies teacher, and also my homeroom class. I was not very enthused entering social studies on the first day considering I did not have a great interest in the subject. Ms. Ryan was a teacher who not only made me enjoy learning about social studies, but showed me how to face everything with a positive attitude. She never let us feel unsure about what we were learning, and took it upon herself to teach us in ways that were fun and easy to understand. On short days that were spent in homeroom, I was always overjoyed I had her because she made every day exciting and fun. Not only did she go to great lengths teaching, she also went the extra mile to get to know each of her students personally and care for all of us as if we were her own. Her positive personality and uplifting spirit made entering the classroom something to look forward to no matter how you were feeling that day, because you could count on her to brighten each and every day. I am very thankful to have had Ms. Ryan as a teacher and for all the great memories in her classroom. I can only hope to have as much of a positive impact on someone else’s life as Ms. Ryan has made on mine.

**Distinguished Student: Niklaus Zora Distinguished Educator: Ms. Katie Walters**

**Parents: Mark & Deanne Zora Butte High School**

I had the privilege of being in Mrs. Walters’s English class for both my sophomore and junior year. In that time, Mrs. Walters helped me learn not only about literature but also about life. The creative freedom that she encourages in her classroom let me build on my interests and become an enthusiastic learner. She never places limits on a student’s potential and truly allowed me to flourish, even if it meant having to correct a 20-page paper rather than a 5-pager. She has given me wise advice for my future and helpful criticism for self-improvement. Mrs. Walters truly takes her profession as her passion and does all she can to help her students succeed. She has helped me immensely and is one of the best teachers I’ve ever had.

**Distinguished Student: Erik Rosa Distinguished Educator: Mr. Jim O’Neill**

**Parents: Chris & Kristen Rosa Curriculum Director**

Mr. O’Neill was the principal at Margaret Leary Elementary school and was one of the most influential people in my life. Mr. O made school a great place not only to learn, but to also a fun place that I could look forward to attending every day. Mr. O was one of my biggest role models growing up because every day he showed not only me, but everyone at school what it means to be a good human. I have so many great memories that involve Mr. O that include doing things like running in the Governor’s Cup, playing some intense dodgeball, and he even taught me that trees on the playgrounds don’t need extra watering. I would not be where I am today without him.

**Distinguished Student: Madison Joseph Distinguished Educator: Mr. Travis Johnson**

**Parents: Frank & Sherrie Joseph Butte High School**

I am lucky to honor you tonight, it is the least I could do for you, after all you’ve done for me. Your office door is always open, and as you know, I am quick to make good use of it. Any time I come to you with a problem, you listen intently, then lead me to a solution. Any time I am hard on myself, you remind me what I am capable of and motivate me to continue on. Any time I do something worthy of praise, you are the one to congratulate me first. As a driving instructor, a counselor, and also a coach, you allowed me to work sticky situations out for myself, which I need to do in order to grow. Thank you, Mr. Johnson, for putting up with my moodiness, my frustration, and most importantly, my short jokes. I cannot thank you enough. See you at graduation.

**Distinguished Student: Sadie Aanstad Distinguished Educator: Mr. Chris Fisk**

**Parents: Sterling & Sophia Aanstad Butte High School**

A good teacher provides the knowledge students need to succeed. A great teacher is someone who connects this knowledge to the real world and is someone you can rely on and go to for help. Chris Fisk was the first teacher who had made the pages of a textbook come to life. I was able to learn about history but I was also able to see where it took place. He has been a constant throughout my high school experience. Anytime I needed help, I knew I could ask him and if he didn’t know he would find someone who did. A great teacher is more than a teacher they’re also a friend.

**Distinguished Student: Lathan Ricketts Distinguished Educator: Mr. Lloyd Magnuson**

**Parents: Ron Ricketts & Heather Yeo Retired, East Middle School**

At East Middle School, Mr. Magnuson taught me two of the most important things in my life. The first was during Earth Shuttle. While doing room check before lights out, he told me to “take the mask off” and become my own person. Mr. Magnuson believed in me and saw more in me than just my athletic potential. He helped me become a self-determined individual that is capable of creating my own path. In my eighth grade science class, Mr. Magnuson emphasized the difference between short term and long term memory. He explained that short term memory is for things that may not always need to stick with you, but long term memory is where you put what matters most. While I may not remember the names of ALL the constellations, Lloyd Magnuson and his impact upon my life will forever remain in my long term memory.

**Distinguished Student: Martini Bercier Distinguished Educator: Mr. John Bercier**

**Parents: John & Staci Bercier Butte High School**

I had my dad, John Bercier, as a teacher my freshman year of high school. Although, he has been like a teacher to me my whole life. I learned a lot from him ranging from artistic skills to life lessons. He is very smart and talented and is a huge inspiration to always do my best. My dad has had many opportunities and experiences he has been able to have because of his hard work and I really admire that. He is a wonderful teacher and offers a lot of knowledge and skill to his students. I learned a lot in my time in his class and even more from him throughout my life. I am very lucky to have such an amazing teacher and father.

**Distinguished Student: Jeremiah Mohr Distinguished Educator: Ms. Lana Whelan**

**Parents: Todd & Gina Mohr Butte High School**

Mrs. Whelan has, by far, been one of the most influential teachers to instruct me in my time in school. She gives a short assignment on day 1 of every school year that asks students to give a few details about themselves. This may seem like a silly or inconsequential assignment for a physics teacher to give, but to me it is an early attempt at connecting to her students. I quickly formed a bond with Mrs. Whelan as she constantly reminded me that I had the same name as Jeremiah the Bullfrog. I have had the pleasure of having Mrs. Whelan both my freshman year, and currently in my senior year at BHS. She has the optimal combination of humor and seriousness in her lessons, keeping students engaged while thoroughly covering the material. Mrs. Whelan has helped to sustain my love of physics that was founded by Mr. Magnuson of East Middle School. Her class has been a favorite of mine both years that I have had her, and I am incredibly grateful for her sustaining my drive for knowledge. Her classes have been a challenge, but one that I enjoy, and I look forward to applying the knowledge she has given me.

**Distinguished Student: Julia Vercella Distinguished Educator: Ms. Ruth Walters**

**Parents: Jerry Vercella & Laura Tresidder Butte High School**

Mrs. Walters is a one of a kind teacher. Everyone she interacts with can’t help but smile. Her humor and kindness is why I picked her to honor. I had Mrs. Walters my freshman year and she made that year much easier and more fun with not only her amazing teaching abilities, but her huge heart. Any day I have walked into her classroom the last 4 years she always has a huge smile on her face and is ready to be funny and supportive. Mrs. Walters has given me a lot more self esteem. She would ask me to help other students in the class, which made me feel smart and appreciated. I am so glad that I had Mrs. Walters as a teacher and a mentor these past four years.

**Distinguished Student: Jo Valle Distinguished Educator: Mr. Mike Kujawa**

**Parents: Terri Valle Butte High School**

Mr. Kujawa has donated so much time to his students. Every Thursday he is at school for hours helping students at art club. He also takes a group of students to either Seattle or Portland for a week every year. He has helped me a lot over the last four years with my pottery. In the beginning I never thought I would be any good at pottery but he never let me quit. Overtime I got better but it was because of him not letting me quit that I got better. He has taught me that you can’t expect everything to come out the way you want it to. Thank you Mr. Kujawa for helping me so much for the past four years.

**Distinguished Student: Lauren Sullivan Distinguished Educator: Ms. Janeen Walsh**

**Parents: Kelly & Sherry Sullivan Butte High School**

It is both a privilege and honor to recognize Mrs. Janeen Walsh as one of the most inspirational educators I have had. I first met Mrs. Walsh when I started school at Kennedy Elementary with her son, and had hoped to have her as a teacher at some point. It took until my senior year, but I finally got her as a teacher. I chose Mrs. Walsh as my distinguished educator for the compassion and kindness she shows to all students. I knew that whenever I had a problem, whether it was with something in her class or even a personal problem, she was always there for me. Mrs. Walsh, thank you for not only touching my life, but touching the lives of all your students.

**Distinguished Student: Hailee Regan Distinguished Educator: Mr. Arie Grey**

**Parents: Mac & Holly Regan Butte High School**

I have had the honor to have Coach Grey as my track coach for 4 years and throughout those 4 years he has not only inspired me to be a better person but a better athlete. He is one of the most positive people I have ever met and no matter the situation he always finds the good in everything. There are not many coaches out there who put in the effort to get to know their athletes like Coach Grey does and also make them feel comfortable enough to talk to him about anything. I have had many track meets that have not gone the way I had hoped but Coach Grey always figures out a way to make me smile and remind me that everything is going to work out in the end. He has been a role model to me since the day I met him and I am so grateful for the lessons he has taught me and the encouragement he has given me over the years. I am truly thankful to have been able to spend the last four years with him but most importantly I am thankful for the unforgettable impact he has made on my life.

**Distinguished Student: Elsie Dickerson Distinguished Educator: Ms. Maureen Driscoll**

**Parents: Ken & Leslie Dickerson Butte High School**

Heading into my junior year at Butte High School, my friends started talking about their plans for college. I began to panic as I knew that I really had no clue about what I wanted to study. Having Mrs. Driscoll as a teacher changed that and showed me a love of chemistry. Not long after beginning chemistry my junior year, I realized how interesting the subject was to me. Mrs. Driscoll inspired me to look into possible majors and careers that would allow me to pursue studies in chemistry. Her class is always engaging and challenging, and it has given me direction. I am extremely grateful for the role Mrs. Driscoll has had in helping me find my passion.

**Distinguished Student: Brandon Quinn Distinguished Educator: Ms. Heather Ricketts**

**Parents: Jim & Brittany Quinn Hillcrest Elementary School**

When I first walked into Ms. Yeo’s class in the fall of 2011 I was greeted by her encouraging and approachable attitude. We had an immediate connection with our obsession of organization and our bond only grew as the year progressed. Throughout the year she made learning fun and taught us there were lessons to be learned beyond the classroom. One of Ms. Yeo’s key principles was that you must always do the right thing. She installed this value in her students by constantly telling us “what is popular isn’t always right and what is right isn’t always popular.” Her influence on me has lasted long after I finished her class. I continue to be enthusiastic, positive, and try to always do the right thing just like Ms. Yeo encouraged us to do.

**Distinguished Student: Alexandria Anderson Distinguished Educator: Ms. Amber Walter**

**Parents: Les & Denise Anderson Butte High School**

Ms. Walter deserves much more than to be my honored educator for all she does for her students. Taking Ms. Walter’s class has tremendously impacted my life and future. I now know how to say acetylcholine and how it is used in the body, but taking anatomy also gave me the opportunity to create a relationship with Ms. Walter which I will always cherish. She has encouraged me to pursue my future goals and work hard for what I want. Ms. Walter is incredibly dedicated to everything she does and goes above and beyond for her students. She has inspired me to be my best self. I am so grateful I have been able to get to know Ms. Walter.

**Distinguished Student: Brittney Long Distinguished Educator: Ms. Patsy McCarthy**

**Parents: Tracey Long & Chad Dietz East Middle School**

Mrs. Patsy McCarthy is one of the most amazing people I have ever met, and teachers that I have ever had. From the day I walked into her 8th grade reading class, I knew she was going to change my life. Not only did Mrs. McCarthy teach me valuable reading skills, she also taught and demonstrated more kindness to me than most teachers ever had. She always listened to me and pushed me to do my best. Mrs. McCarthy never doubted me and always believed that I would achieve my goals. Even after I walked out of her class room, Mrs. McCarthy has kept up with me as I’ve grown up. She has a sense of humor like no other and always puts a smile on people’s faces, there is no one else I would rather honor than Mrs. Patsy McCarthy.

**Distinguished Student: Isaiah Weldon Distinguished Educator: Ms. Jennifer Nardielo**

**Parents: Tedd & Sarah Weldon East Middle School**

I will always be grateful for having Ms. Jennifer Nardielo as my eighth grade science teacher. She provides a fun atmosphere for learning, and prepares students for high school and beyond. My favorite part about her teaching is making her students responsible for their own success. She is a great teacher and always provides help to students who take the initiative. Ms. Nardielo played a huge part in developing my passion for science, and I was honored when she selected me for Science Student of the Year. I’ll never forget the big smile and hearty laugh that welcomed me into her classroom, and I still laugh at her quotes to this day. Ms. Nardielo, I greatly appreciate everything you’ve done for me and thank you for going above and beyond to provide a quality education for your students.

**Distinguished Student: Austin Gerry Distinguished Educator: Mr. Aaron Arntson**

**Parents: Randy & Cathy Gerry Butte High School**

My most memorable and favorite educator, the one who taught me 2+2=5, is the man, the myth, the legend Mr. Aaron Arntson. Throughout the course of my sophomore year, I more than enjoyed waking up every morning and walking into Mr. Arntson's class at 8:15 am to start the day off. He would start the class off by saying loudly "So uhhh, open your books up and read the section for today's lesson". Then some days he would notice people dozing off instead of reading and we would have a pop quiz over the section we just read. Even though I would tell him he didn’t even know the answers to the questions he was asking, he would still ask them with the big Arntson grin across his face that we all know. After we read the section, he would then lecture. The lectures had hardly any words written on the board, I think it is because his hand writing looks like chicken scratch, instead it was lectures we had to comprehend as students to get our own notes out of. By doing this he taught us, as students, how to pull out the important information we needed from oral lectures, rather than give it to us on the board to copy down. This has helped me as a student and as a person in the real world. It taught me not everything in life is going to be handed to us, instead we are going to have to work for what we want. Even though Mr. Arntson tries to make himself seem like a hard-stern guy, he is a kind-hearted man that enjoys his job. Thank you, Mr. Arntson, for making history enjoyable and giving me life lessons throughout the way. Your class has been the most enjoyable class I have taken. History consists of the greats, and you Mr. Arntson will go down in history.

**Distinguished Student: Caitlynn Rader Distinguished Educator: Ms. Diana Kujawa**

**Parents: Steve & Heidi Rader Butte High School**

Senior year is hard, but moving your senior year is much harder. As students, we each have a mentor, someone who will talk about our problems and someone who will help us through them. My mentor is Ms. Kujawa. Ms. Kujawa was my English Composition teacher my first semester at Butte High School. She has helped me get into are, back into the National Honor Society, and whenever I have troubles, she is always there. Since being her student she and I have created a bond I would have never expected. She introduces me as her adopted daughter, and I call her “Momma K.” Moving to Butte, I was terrified I would not create relationships with people, but I was wrong. One of the relationships is with Ms. Kujawa, and this is something I am forever thankful for.

**Distinguished Student: Eleanor Kuoppala Distinguished Educator: Frau Wendy Schoonen**

**Parents: Thomas & Sherrie Kuoppala Butte High School**

There are no words to explain how amazing Frau Schoonen is. When I first started her class, I was sure that learning a different language would be impossible, but I was quickly corrected. Over the years I found that she doesn't just teach a lesson and move on, she persuades you into wanting to learn more, and stays by your side until you can do it on your own. Whether it be through a pattern, a song, or even a dance, she never gives up on you. Through her lessons I learned more than just the material, I learned life lessons, and gained experiences I never would have imagined. Without her guidance in my life, I would not be in such a good place, and I thank her for everything she has done.

**Distinguished Student: Trevor Komm Distinguished Educator: Mr. Scott Cooney**

**Parents: Brian & Alison Komm Butte High School**

Mr. Cooney has been my teacher and mentor all throughout my high school career. I first had him for English I as a freshman, and he went on to teach my English classes for the next two years. This last year, I chose to be his classroom aide because at this point, it wouldn’t be high school without Mr. Cooney. Throughout the last four years, Mr. Cooney has always challenged me to go above and beyond and be my best. We’ve had powerful discussions, shared countless laughs, and even belittled each other from time to time- but all in good fun. He has an affinity for teaching, and it’s obvious that he loves his job and sincerely cares about each of his students. Although our time together has been ephemeral, I will never forget the invaluable lessons he has taught me. If I can be candid, Mr. Cooney has been a truly remarkable teacher and an unforgettable friend.

**Distinguished Student: Jackson Maloney Distinguished Educator: Mr. Dale Burgman**

**Parents: Steve & Celine Maloney Butte High School**

During the past few years of high school I have changed a lot. When I transferred schools I was timid and quiet, however I now am a much more outgoing and extroverted person who makes their voice heard. I accredit much of this change to my teacher Mr. Burgman. I have had the amazing experience of have Mr. Burgman two of my four years of high school in both my A.P. U.S. History and my A.P. U.S. Government. However, before these he was my coach during my freshman year at Butte High for basketball. During the season I quickly developed a great relationship with him during our many after practice discussions, However I still hold a grudge against him for being placed on the “B” team that. When it comes to teaching “The Iceberg” has a unique style. There has never been a day I have walked out of his class without having learned something whether it be about history, Government, or college basketball. His lectures have taught me so much more than any book or power point presentation could ever. He has the ability to even make the Great Depression seem fun and can make a pun from anything. However most importantly Mr. Burgman has set me up to succeed in life by challenging me to think deeper and examine both sides of an argument. He has been a great teacher as well as a friend to me and has been a major factor in my success as an individual.

**Distinguished Student: Emmalee Hildreth Distinguished Educator: Ms. Amanda Peterson**

**Parents: Blaine & Larene Hildreth Butte High School**

I have had so many amazing teachers throughout my life. So many people who have influenced me to grow and become a better person. When I was choosing someone, a few teachers came to mind very quickly one of which was Mrs. Peterson. She was my history teacher in 8th grade. I had never found history or politics interesting, but she has a unique way of teaching that made me stay focused and intrigued. She is extremely organized which makes the subject easier to learn. I remember quite a lot of what she taught me, and it has helped in the classes I have taken in high school. Not only did she teach me about history, but she also taught me how to be organized, inquisitive, and most of all how important it is to be kind. I am so glad I was able to have this opportunity to thank you for what a great role model you have been to me.

**Distinguished Student: Robert Leipheimer Distinguished Educator: Mr. Luke Blaskovich**

**Parents: Robert & Renata Leipheimer Butte High School**

It was 2015, my sophomore year when I had first met Mr. Blaskovich. My freshman year I had heard many things about the man who couldn’t scratch his head, so I didn’t know if I should be intimated or excited that he was my first-period teacher. After first meeting him and reviewing how the year would go, I knew that he would be a great teacher, one who would be helpful and caring. Mr. Blaskovich is a biology teacher. Not only did he teach about organisms and the world around us, he imparted wisdom and life lessons in his classroom. He is a man who lives by a single and simple rule, respect. He made sure that respect was portrayed in every way possible in his classroom. Every day he brought his kindness, happiness, and intelligence into the classroom; this in hand created an elated classroom climate eager to learn. Besides helping his students mature, Mr. Blaskovich’s teaching abilities helped students quickly grasp concepts and feel at ease. He never gave up on students. Mr. Blaskovich would not only teach us the material, but he would go in depth with his lesson until we knew the criteria. He gave us organization skills and was always free after class in case we needed the extra help. Mr. Blaskovich has been an inspiration to myself and others, he does not take a day off and is always eager to get in his classroom to be with his students.