

[https://www.thenewsenterprise.com/features/neighbors/area-students-among-those-honored-as-the-gatton-academy-s-class-of-2021/article\\_b2e4b466-162d-5a1d-8d58-201638277bcd.html](https://www.thenewsenterprise.com/features/neighbors/area-students-among-those-honored-as-the-gatton-academy-s-class-of-2021/article_b2e4b466-162d-5a1d-8d58-201638277bcd.html)

## Area students among those honored as The Gatton Academy's Class of 2021

May 14, 2021

On May 2, graduates representing 42 counties from across the Commonwealth of Kentucky were recognized during The Gatton Academy's 14th graduation ceremony.

The ceremony took place in Western Kentucky University's Diddle Arena, where masks were required and attending graduates and families were strategically spaced to adhere to COVID distancing guidelines. The graduation ceremony was simultaneously webcast to facilitate viewing by extended family and friends, alumni and WKU faculty and staff.

Gatton Academy Executive Director and Mahurin Professor of Gifted Education Dr. Julia Roberts expressed that the ceremony was a celebration for the entire state and commended students on their accomplishments.

Eighteen members of the class were selected as National Merit Finalists. Eighty percent of graduates participated in faculty-sponsored research during their Gatton Academy experience. Additionally, 25 graduates completed the STEM + Critical Languages sequences in either Arabic, Mandarin Chinese or Russian.

Among the graduates are three students who advanced to the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair. In addition, one student was named Regeneron Science and Talent Search Finalist, The Gatton Academy's first student to be awarded that accolade. Graduates won U.S. Department of State National Security Language Initiative for Youth scholarships, were named U.S. Presidential Scholar candidates and one became a finalist for the Breakthrough Challenge.

Area students include:

HARDIN COUNTY. Steven Reid Lunsford and Jazmine Moore, both of Elizabethtown High School.

LARUE COUNTY. Jada Hunter-Hays\* of LaRue County High School.

\* Gatton Community Scholar: These graduates are recognized for completing two semesters of research with a research outcome that was presented to a professional audience after being accepted through a vetted process or for completing four semesters of study in STEM + Critical Language pathway, and documenting 60 hours of service.