

PANAMERICANA



A LOOK INSIDE

President's Corner, 2
Scholarship Profile, 2
Planned Giving, 3
Senior Awards, 3
2009 Valedictorian &
Salutatorian, 4
Honor Roll of Donors, 5
Faculty Spotlight, 6

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Desiree Gutierrez, Editor

2009 Graduation

Forty three Presbyterian Pan American School students graduated on Wednesday afternoon, May 13, 2009 at the school's chapel. Laura Paola Escamilla was named the 2009 valedictorian and Daniel Villarreal was the salutatorian.

The valedictorian and salutatorian speeches addressed responsibility, teachers, family, friendship and the future.

Senior speakers Hei-Tung (Olivia) Pun and Kyoung-Jea Lee spoke of family, friendships and God.

2009 graduates include Javier Aguado, Josue Amador, Alejandro Amaro, Jehu Avila, Claudia Banuelos, Sergio Barrera, Tania Barreiro, Karina Bello, Juan Chavez, Hong Hui Choi, Carlos Cortes, Christian Cortes, Griselda Duran, Laura Paola Escamilla, Adalberto Fernandez, Azri Flores, Sheree Flores, Walter Flores, Ruben Garcia, Elisa Godinez, Cesar Gomez, Christa Gomez, Sara Gonzalez, Jose Rodolfo Guerrero, Raul Gutierrez, Gustavo Guzman, Jonathan Hau, Paola Hernandez, Santiago Jimenez, Han Sol Lee, Kyoung Jea Lee, Laura Lopez, Alejandra Meave, Erick Moreno, Jose Rodrigo Palmas, Hei-Tung (Olivia)



Dr. Barbara Stottlemyer, Dean of Academic Affairs; Roberto Moreno, teacher; Dr. Eugene Tims, Chair for Board of Trustees; Mrs. Bell and Pan American School Trustee Patricia Turner.

Dr. Matthews, Dr. Tims and Ellie Perez, Academic Counselor, presented five awards.

The Berta Murray Award was granted to Laura Paola Escamilla; Skinner/McLane President's Award to Walter Flores; Elena Reisner Eagle Award to Elisa Godinez; Top Ranking Student Award to Hei-Tung (Olivia) Pun and Teacher of the Year Award was presented by Dr. Olga Carranza to Patrick Hardy Robertson, mathematics teacher. The Student of the Year Award was given to Junior Sarai Jimenez and was announced at the school's awards assembly on May 6. Dr. Matthews and Dr. Tims awarded the diplomas.

Dr. Matthews led the blessing and charge to the graduates and The Rev. Joe Turner concluded with the benediction. The class joined in a circle outside the chapel after the ceremony, kneeling as Class President Kate led a final prayer, a long standing tradition for Pan Am graduates.

Pun, Alma Quiroga, Cecilia Ruiz, Josue Rivera, Zian Rivera, Kate Thompson, Arturo Vasquez and Daniel Villarreal.

Griselda Duran, Paola Escamilla, Kyoung Jea Lee, Melissa Lopez, Olivia Pun and Daniel Villarreal were named Texas Scholars.

Fifteen graduates were members of the National Honor Society and 13 attended classes at Coastal Bend College (CBC) in Kingsville.

The prelude was written by Henry Coleman and the processional by Edward Elgar. The prelude and traditional graduation processional were played by Dr. Robert Scott, organist.

Dr. James Matthews, President of PPAS, provided the welcome, Rev. Ed Seeger offered the invocation and Mrs. Clayton (Peggy) Bell of Dallas, Texas read a scripture and meditation.

The Commissioning of Class of 2009 was given by

PRESIDENT'S CORNER ~DR. JAMES MATTHEWS

"That time of year thou mayst in me behold..." Shakespeare's words about the impact of time have special meaning for schools at this time of year.

Graduation time is a reminder that time marches on, that day follows day in a seemingly endless succession... a class of seniors walk across the stage and a class of juniors moves up to replace them.

Graduation marks the end of high school and the beginning of a new adventure, but it also marks the end of another year in the life and history of a school.

Commencement 2009 at Pan Am may have seemed just like the



ninety six that preceded it...gowns and tassels, pomp and circumstance, speeches and prayers.

But this was not a typical graduation,

not so much because this class stood out academically but because of the circumstances. I am speaking, of course, about the Swine Flu scare.

A few weeks before the scheduled date of Commencement, we were forced to take some drastic measures in the face of the perceived threat... campus was closed to all visitors, the exam schedule was compressed, underclassmen were sent home early, and the traditional ceremonies of Baccalaureate and Graduation were combined and held mid-week rather than on a Saturday.

In spite of all that, Commencement 2009 was, in the pop phrase, "as good as it gets."

SCHOLARSHIP PROFILE ~TANIA RODRIGUEZ



Tania Rodriguez can be described as nothing short of ambitious. Not only is the petite 17-year-old motivated in the classroom

but shows enthusiasm for the student body at Presbyterian Pan American School as well as our Mother Earth.

"The conservation of the environment and its resources is my main interest," said Tania of Mexico City. "It is one of the worst issues the world is facing right now, and I try to be a voice to make people be aware of the problem and change their way of thinking to live a better life in a better world."

Tania, who will be a senior this fall, joined Student Council in 2008 and immediately pushed for recycling on campus. Student Council now regularly recycles cans and paper. This past February, Tania was honored

at the 10th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet for placing second out of seven in the essay contest for the Kleberg-Kenedy Soil & Water Conservation District.

"There is a solution for our water and soil problems and it starts with us making a difference," she said. "It is so important to recycle and save our limited resources. We need to protect our environment."

Tania has also participated in cross country, cheerleading, choir, basketball, track, youth group, newspaper, yearbook, National Honor Society and was sophomore class president two years ago.

"I am a person who likes to participate and it is better if it's an organization in which I can help people or solve concerns," she said.

In academics, Tania shares the same enthusiasm. She came to Pan Am two years ago and currently has the highest ranked grade point average in her class.

"I believe I have accomplished good things through determination and discipline," Tania said. "I always

try to set my goals and work hard until I get the best results."

For Tania, she sees her experience at Pan Am as multiple opportunities including the improvement of her English skills and a chance to receive a higher education in an American college.

"I'm still undecided where I want to go or what I want to study after graduating," Tania said, "but I would like to stay in the U.S. and two of the careers that interest me are environmental law and international business."

Tania's achievements and life goals have been developed at Pan Am only with the generous support from churches and individuals who make meaningful gifts to the school. But whichever field Tania chooses, she is confident that she will succeed.

"I don't believe in luck, I believe in me," is my favorite quote. I believe that the most important thing to achieve your goals and succeed in life is to believe in yourself and the potential you have as an individual."

PLANNED GIVING

Presbyterian Pan American School hopes that its many friends and donors will want to do what millions of people have already done: make a charitable bequest in your will. Few schools and colleges operate on tuition revenue and annual gifts alone. Endowment income received through wills helps a school stay strong and move confidently into the future.

Please consider some of the benefits of naming Presbyterian Pan American School in a charitable bequest:

1. **You can be certain that your assets will be used to support causes that are important to you.** Unless you give specific instructions, none of your assets will pass to Pan Am or to any other charity. Your children or others may choose to honor you with a gift in your memory, but that is beyond the direct control you can exercise with a charitable bequest.

2. **Leave a legacy.** Even if your annual budget allows you to make occasional gifts to Pan Am, for most of us it seems far beyond our reach to make the size gift we would like

during our lifetimes. Many of us need access to all of our assets or the income they can generate. At the end of our lives, however, those assets will be available to distribute as we wish, as set out in our wills. Pan American School's endowment fund has grown over the years thanks to donors who wished to leave a legacy to benefit this school in perpetuity.

3. **Your will could allow you to continue your current level of annual support.** A couple who currently make an annual \$5,000 gift to our Scholarship Fund could make a charitable bequest that would make it possible for that level of support to continue after their deaths. Estimating that an endowment will generate approximately 5 percent in distributions each year, a bequest of \$100,000 would provide ongoing support at the level that couple had been giving.

4. **You may realize federal and state inheritance tax benefits.** Federal estate tax can claim 45 percent of a decedent's taxable estate above a certain threshold amount — \$3.5

million for 2009. But a charitable bequest can shield from this tax the amount passing to Pan American School. Moreover, it may also reduce state inheritance tax.

5. **You can review your will and change your mind any time there is a significant change in your life circumstances.** Should your assets increase, you may decide to do more for certain beneficiaries. Or if one of your children becomes significantly more or less financially secure, you may wish to modify the division of assets among your children.

We are on the Web...

Presbyterian Pan American School has updated their school website, www.ppas.org. The website provides several opportunities such as downloading an application for admission, reviewing tuition and fees and financial aid options. The website also highlights the school's calendar, news, events and activities. The school's quarterly newsletter, PanAmericana, and student newspaper, Eagle X-Press, are available for viewing. Graduates of Pan American School can also access the alum website, www.ppasalumni.org, through the school website.

2009 SENIOR AWARDS

Each year at Presbyterian Pan American School, faculty are asked to nominate recipients for five distinguished awards, which are announced at the graduation ceremony.

The five awards are the Skinner/McLane President's Award, Berta Murray Award, Elena Reisner Eagle Award, Student of the Year and Teacher of the Year.

At the 2009 commencement, Senior Walter Flores was given the Skinner/McLane President's Award. This award is presented to the graduate who best demonstrates a positive attitude in every aspect of the school's program of worship, study and work. Walter is 18 years old from Chiapas, Mexico and plans to study architecture at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

The Berta Murray Award was given to Senior Laura Paola Escamilla this

year. This unique award is presented to a senior girl who best exemplifies the ideals of service, academic excellence, and spiritual growth. It is given in honor of Miss Berta Murray, the former president of the Presbyterian School for Mexican Girls. Laura Paola, 17, is from San Fernando, Tamaulipas, Mexico and will study medicine at the Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon in Mexico.

This year, the Elena Reisner Eagle Award was given to Senior Elisa Godinez. The recipient of this award is chosen on the basis of overall leadership potential including Christian character and service, academic stability, personal integrity, future educational plans, reputation among and regard of peers including leadership positions elected by peers. Elisa, 18, is from Matamoros, Mexico and will study architectural engineering

at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

The Student of the Year Award is typically presented to a student who is not a senior—one who best represents the mission of Pan American School. This student demonstrates stability in academic endeavors, leadership in worship, responsible citizenship in the Pan American community and leadership in activities that enhance the lives of all the members of the Pan Am family. The award was given to Junior Sarai Jimenez. Sarai is 17 years old from Mexico City, Mexico and would like to study graphic design at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in California after she graduates in 2010.

The Teacher of the Year Award was given to Patrick Hardy Roberston, who teaches mathematics. Hardy was one of the senior class sponsors.

2009 Valedictorian & Salutatorian ~LAURA ESCAMILLA & DANIEL VILLARREAL



Laura Paola Escamilla has been named Valedictorian for the Class of 2009 at Presbyterian Pan American School.

"I feel very proud of myself because I think all my hard work was worth it. I worked hard these three years in all my classes and when I found out that I was the valedictorian, I felt really happy and excited," she said.

Paola, as she is referred to at school, is 17 years old from San Fernando, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Her parents are Martin Escamilla and Laura Luna and she has two sisters.

She came to Pan Am as a sophomore wanting to improve her English skills.

"My parents thought this school was a great opportunity to mature and become independent," she said. "I think God put me here and I really thank Him for this opportunity."

Not only did Paola learn independence but responsibility as well. She also enjoyed the friendly and safe Pan Am environment as well as the opportunity to make friends from

a variety of countries.

In academics, Paola shined and was named Student of the Month in November of 2007. She was also recognized on the President's List for maintaining an average between 95 and 100.

While attending Pan Am, Paola played on the school's basketball, volleyball and track teams, was a member of National Honor Society, Student Council, choir, newspaper and worship committee.

In her free time, she enjoys playing the guitar, painting, singing and watching movies. In the fall, she will attend Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon in Mexico to study medicine.

"Since I was a little girl, my parents were a great inspiration by teaching me the importance of helping others," she said. "And I will do my best to help my country in the health area, maybe donating my time to help and consult people with lower economic positions. I would also like to be a part of a group in my church so I can help others following God's will."

Paola said she will leave Pan Am mature, responsible, independent, with lifelong friendships and closer to God.

"I don't know where God wants me but I'll be there," Paola said.

Daniel Villarreal has been named Salutatorian for the Class of 2009.

"I felt happiness and euphoria after I found out I was salutatorian," Daniel said. "My parents are happy to see that another one of their sons is going through the success path. And I worked so hard for three years, so I think that it is worth it."

Daniel is 17 years old and was born to Juan Villarreal and Diana Trevino in McAllen, Texas. Daniel's hometown



though is Camargo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Daniel came to Pan Am as a sophomore following in his two older brothers' footsteps.

Daniel was active in Student Council, National Honor Society, choir, youth group and was named to the President's List for maintaining an average between 95 and 100. He also served as junior class treasurer and in March of 2007, Daniel was named Student of the Month.

Daniel was also nominated and recognized as a finalist for the 2008 Caller Times-Citgo South Texas Distinguished Scholars for career and technology.

In the fall, he will attend Texas A&M University-College Station to study construction science.

Daniel enjoys photography and would like to develop that hobby in college.

Daniel said he had an amazing experience at Pan Am.

"I got more courage to do what is right and my faith increased so much," he said.

NEW ONLINE DONATION AND TUITION PAYMENT SERVICE

We are excited to announce the release of our new on-line donation and tuition payment service. You can now securely give to Presbyterian Pan American School

by credit card or electronic draft from your bank account using your home or office computer – no need for paper checks or stamps!

Also, if you are a parent of a

student at Pan Am, you now have the option of making your child's tuition payment online.

Check out these new features on our website at www.ppas.org.

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT ~HARDY ROBERTSON

Patrick Hardy Robertson truly enjoys mathematics and enjoys teaching it even more.

"I expect the very best of all of my students," Hardy said. "Mathematics is the foundation for all careers and they must all understand this and have the capability to adapt these principles into the field of their choice."

Hardy started teaching algebra II, geometry and pre-calculus at Presbyterian Pan American School two years ago in January of 2007.

"I love to teach and when I was little, I was always helping my classmates in math," said Hardy of Ricardo, Texas just outside of Kingsville.

The graduate of Texas A&M University-Kingsville, who enjoys golf, baseball, bowling, and spending time with his wife and kids, teaches grades 10-12.

"I enjoyed the campus very much from the start," he said. "I like the community environment this campus offers. I like that the school is Christian and it teaches good values and to be respectful. That is so important to form good people."



Hardy added that the staff was very accommodating from the start which made it easy for him to fit right in. The small class size and family setting also appealed to Hardy.

"I am able to work one-on-one with the students and really get to know them," he said. "This school is the foundation for all of these students' future and I am glad to be a part of that."

In March of 2008, Hardy was named Teacher of the Month and at the graduation ceremony for the Class of 2009, he was announced Teacher of the Year.

"It was an honor. As a teacher you hope that the hard work that you put into your lesson plans and the necessary

communication that occurs between teacher and student is appreciated," he said.

Hardy's work does not end with math. This year, he served as one of the senior class sponsors. Hardy spent several evenings and weekends helping with fundraisers.

"Being senior class sponsor was a challenging and rewarding experience," he said. "It can be difficult to coordinate the ideas and opinions of 43 individuals but I have enjoyed getting to know them on a more personal level."

But his work did not go unnoticed. The seniors decided to dedicate the 2008-2009 yearbook to their math teacher. Two pages are filled with pictures of Hardy and the seniors as well as a thank you letter written by the class.

"My favorite part of teaching is when I can see that a student understands what I am teaching—really understands" he said, "then they are able to move to another level in their learning and use the strategies I have given them for mathematics in other aspects of their lives."