



St. Andrew's 92nd Commencement Ceremony Celebrates the Class of 2025

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On Sunday, May 25, the largest graduating class in St. Andrew's nearly 100-year history was celebrated on the Front Lawn under blue skies and sunshine. Commencement was the capstone to a week of senior traditions that included the class tree planting, which brought beloved former ceramics instructor Marjike Van Buchem P'89 to campus to help prep the ground for a tree honoring her husband, former classics instructor Evert van Buchem P'89; Senior Awards Night, in which Saints were recognized for their dedication, contributions, and passion across arts, academics, and athletics; the senior wall carving in Founders Hall, and much more.

The Class of 2025 will enter the history books not only for its size, but also for its parallel relationship to the arrival of Head of School Joy McGrath '92.

"We arrived together here with a blank slate," McGrath said in her opening remarks of the Class of 2025, who were III formers when she began her headship. "I was a new head of school standing outside Sippelle Field House shaking the hands of the new III formers and families who were also arriving that day. Many times that morning I wondered how you would turn out. And although it was my third reincarnation here—I had already been a student and a faculty member earlier in life—I wondered how I would turn out, too. This

morning, I think it's fair to say that we have settled in and found our footing. I am grateful for all you have done, Class of 2025, to help and support [my husband] Ty [Jones '92] and me in these years."

The Commencement address was delivered by an alumnus whose connections to St. Andrew's run deep. A professor of radiology and medicine at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Dr. Michael Atalay '84 has sent three children to St. Andrew's: Amelia '17, Xander '19, and Zach '23. His father, Dr. Bulent Atalay, is also a St. Andrew's graduate of the Class of 1958.

"My chief and recurring message is this: be a life-long learner, adapt, and strive to keep getting better," said Atalay. "There is no rush to get to your final destination and it's OK to be uncertain. You've heard it before: it's the journey, not the destination. But in your journey keep learning, keep adapting, and getting better. Be curious. Read books. Attend lectures that aren't assigned. Lose yourself in museums and galleries. Learn about other cultures and then go visit them."

He advised Saints to live in "perpetual beta," a phrase computer scientists use to describe a system that remains in a constant state of testing, development, and improvement—for these smart, inspired, curious, gritty and prepared young people, it was a timely reminder that we are all a work in progress.

"'Perpetual beta.' This is a perfect description of how you and I should live our lives," he said. "Always getting better and never finished."

Student body class president Leah Horgan '25 reflected on her time at St. Andrew's, the culture of her class, and stories yet to be written, while offering parents a detailed glimpse of something they might find difficult to envision: what an *actual* day in the life of a St. Andrew's student looks like. After detailing a "random Tuesday" in the life of a Saint, Horgan said, "Our shared experience of St. Andrew's allows us to thrive in a routine, and yet create such a unique perspective from everything in between. Within common ritual, we find our most incredible memories, friendships, and sense of belonging. That is what I find most magical about this place. ... Our senior class has preserved and built upon a culture that is worth protecting. Our aim was to foster a welcoming home, which is defined in different ways by each of us. Our class is grateful to take the many memories and stories we have created here, but our greatest impact will be measured by the culture we leave behind and how we have inspired the younger students to follow. To the class of 2025, I cannot wait to see every story and memory we have not yet created."

You can watch the entirety of Commencement 2025 [here](#), and access a full gallery of Commencement and other Senior Week photos [here](#).

During Commencement, members of the Class of 2025 and underformers were recognized with a number of time-honored St. Andrew's awards, which are listed below:

Commencement Awards

Christopher Wilson '99 Award & Scholarship - Grayson Friedli '25, Lillian Rand '25
Given by his parents in memory of Christopher Edward Wilson '99, the award recognizes seniors who best embody Chris' virtues and personal qualities: a love of St. Andrew's, a quiet and authentic appreciation of life, friendship, and community; a devotion to service and to children; and a kind and generous spirit.

Cristin C. Duprey '04 Diversity & Inclusivity Award - Ashley McIntosh '25, Amanda Meng '25, Gloria Oladejo '25
Given in memory of Cristin C. Duprey '04 to the VI Form student/students who have provided exceptional service in the cultivation of a diverse and inclusive St. Andrew's School community.

John McGiff Fine Arts Award - Brandon Blake '25, Ember Theeke '25
Awarded to the student who has made the greatest contribution in the fine arts and demonstrated a depth and quality of talent that demands our recognition.

Henry Prize - Leah Horgan '25, Jack Myers '25
Awarded to a VI Form boy and girl who have been of the greatest service to athletics. It recognizes not only personal athletic skill, but also service to the teams of which the students were members.

Jonathan B. O'Brien Head of School Award - Ember Theeke '25, Emma Hunter '25, Ray Quiñones '25
The Jonathan B. O'Brien Head of School Award celebrates the brilliant and courageous leadership and vision of St. Andrew's third headmaster, Jon O'Brien, who led the school from 1977 to 1997. The Award recognizes seniors who contribute to the ethos of the school with integrity, humanity, generosity, and love.

King Prize - Eleni Anastasia Murphy '25
Awarded to the leading scholar during the VI Form year.

Founders Medal - Eleni Anastasia Murphy '25
Awarded to the scholar in the graduating class who, during his or her career at St. Andrew's, has achieved the best academic record in the form.

William H. Cameron Award - Lindy Black '25, A'zir Carey '25, Grey Durham '25
Given to VI Form students who have performed outstanding service to the school.

St. Andrew's Cross - Leah Horgan '25
Given in honor of the late Bishop Cook of Delaware, who was associated with the founding of the School, in recognition of the student whose contribution to the school has been distinguished by Christian qualities of concern for others, humility, and high principle.

Robert T. Jordan Award - John Kim '27, Charlotte Green '27
Given by his classmates and former teachers at St. Andrew's in memory of Robert T. Jordan, Class of 1986, who died September 11, 2001 in the World Trade Center attack, to the IV Form boy and girl who display the qualities that made Robert so memorable and distinctive: a love of humanity, an appreciation of friendship, a willful perseverance and resolve amidst adversity and opportunity, a unique and refreshing perspective on life and all its possibilities.

Prior to Commencement, seniors delivered speeches about academics, athletics, arts, student life, and community service at Awards Night, which you can watch [here](#). Members of the faculty bestowed awards onto VI formers, as well several underformers, for their significant contributions to the St. Andrew's community across disciplines and aspects of campus life.

Awards Night Awards

Cresson Prize – Peter Bird '25, Katherine Meers '25
Awarded to the VI Form students who have demonstrated the greatest improvement in athletic skill, sportsmanship, and leadership.

Larry L. Walker Music Prize for Orchestral Music – Daisy Wang '25
Awarded to the students who have made outstanding contributions to the Orchestra.

Larry L. Walker Music Prize for Jazz Ensemble – Brandon Blake '25
Awarded to the students who have made outstanding contributions to the Jazz Ensemble.

Choir Prize – Isabela Hernandez '25, Ethan Kim '25

Awarded to the student who has contributed the most to the success and development of the choral program.

Drama Prize - Yiru Wang '25, Grayson Friedli '25, Ashley McIntosh '25

Awarded in memory of John Fletcher Hinnant, Jr., Class of 1953, to the students who have made the most significant contribution to the Theatre Program, and have shown exceptional growth as actors.

Hoover C. Sutton Drama Prize (Tech) - Isaac Cheung '25

Awarded in honor of Hoover C. Sutton, drama teacher at St. Andrew's School from 1980 to 1993, for the greatest contribution to the Theatre Program in technical work.

Dance Prize - Nelle McVey '25, Eleni Murphy '25

Awarded to the students who have shown exceptional leadership, dedication, and artistry in dance.

Keri J. Advocat Photography Prize - Elijah Proctor-Moore '25

Given by the Class of 1991 in memory of Keri J. Advocat, whose love and passion for the arts will always be remembered by her classmates. Awarded to the student of photography who has shown a strong mastery of technical skills and presented a portfolio of creative images.

Film Prize - Yiru Wang '25

Awarded to the student who has shown extraordinary creativity, technical skills, and dedication to the study of the moving picture in all of its forms.

Art Prize - Quinn Ferguson '25, Catherine Foster '25

Awarded to the student who has contributed the most to the Art Program in effort, originality, and technique in various art forms.

Purchase Prize - Emma Hunter '25

Awarded to the student who has created an outstanding piece of artwork in either a minor or major plastic arts course. This work is chosen by the school to enter its permanent collection.

Chester E. Baum Prize for English - Quinn Ferguson '25, Sophie Forbes '25, Yiru Wang '25
Given by the members of the English Department in honor of Chester Earl Baum, for 29 years an outstanding teacher of English at St. Andrew's School, to the VI Form students who have excelled in English scholarship.

Charles H. Welling, Jr. Prize for Writing - Erik Liu '25, Eleni Murphy '25
Given by members of his class in honor of Charlie Welling '45, writer and raconteur, to the student who has produced exemplary non-fiction writing in all disciplines throughout his or her career at St. Andrew's.

Amanda Leyon Prize for Creative Writing - Lindy Black '25
Given in memory of Amanda Leyon '95 by her classmates, to the student who has excelled in creative writing.

Louis C. Mandes Library Prize - Gloria Oladejo '25
Given in memory of Louis C. Mandes, Jr., school librarian, to the student who has demonstrated a love of books and a deep appreciation for the library.

Sherman Webb Prize for History - Erik Liu '25, Eleni Murphy '25
For outstanding work in history.

W. Lewis Fleming Prize for French - Saskia Hood '25
Given by the alumni in memory of W. Lewis Fleming to the student of French who is most deserving in interest, effort, and achievement.

The Nancy K. Hargrove Prize for Spanish - Sofia Golab '25, Frankie Elliott-Ozug '25
Given by Joe Hargrove, Class of 1967, in memory of his wife, who was a great admirer of St. Andrew's. Awarded to the student doing outstanding work in Spanish.

Chinese Prize - Alex Triantafillou '25, Sophie Forbes '25
Awarded to the student doing outstanding work in Chinese.

G. Coerte Voorhees Prize for Classical Languages - Peter Bird '25, Grey Durham '25
Given by his children in memory of their father, G. Coerte Voorhees, Latin teacher at St.

Andrew's School from 1935 to 1962. Awarded to the student who has done outstanding work in Latin and/or Greek.

Walter L. Harrison Prize for Mathematics - Eleni Murphy '25, Daisy Wang '25
Given in memory of his mother by Walter L. Harrison, Class of 1966, to a student of high achievement, whose work in mathematics is distinguished for its depth of interest, imagination, and creative thinking.

John Anthony Higgins Award - Yiru Wang '25
The John Anthony Higgins Award is given by members of the Math Department in honor of John Higgins, beloved and legendary Math teacher at St. Andrew's from 1980 to 2012. Awarded to a student who shares John's joy for learning, who appreciates the beauty, precision, and utility of mathematics, and who seeks to infuse this passion in others.

The Computer Science Prize - Lillian Rand '25
Awarded to the student of Computer Science who has demonstrated exceptional skill, understanding, and depth of interest in the field.

William Day Scott Prize for Science - Daisy Wang '25, Amanda Meng '25
Awarded to the student who has taken at least two science courses and, through performance in these courses, has demonstrated real promise in the field of science.

William H. Amos Prize for the Life Sciences - Grey Dugdale '25
Given by William H. Amos, member of the faculty from 1947 to 1985, to the students who have demonstrated exceptional interest and ability in the life sciences.

Virginia Layton Orr Prize - Grey Dugdale '25
In recognition of Virginia Layton Orr's efforts to preserve Cape Henlopen State Park and other natural areas, this award is given to a student who has made significant contributions to the environment.

Walden Pell Prize for Religious Studies - Peter Bird '25, Yiru Wang '25, Amanda Meng '25
Given to VI Form students whose work in Religious Studies is distinguished by their understanding of the relationship between faith and learning.

Francis L. Spalding Award - Kadence Sun '27, Bo Vaughn '27

Awarded to IV Form students who have achieved a commendable academic record by distinctive effort.

Harry C. Parker Prize - Ember Theeke '25, Juliet Klecan '25

Given by Harry M. Parker '64 in memory of his father, Harry C. Parker, to the VI Former who has achieved the greatest academic improvement in their St. Andrew's career.

DyAnn Miller Community Service Award - Emma DeRamel '25, Porter Read '25

Named in honor of DyAnn Miller, exuberant teacher and counselor at St. Andrew's from 1984-2005, who helped build and develop the community service program, and then by her example dedicated her energies and spirit to the service of others.

Calder Prize - Alexi Onsomu '28, Beau Taylor '28

Given in honor of Dr. Joseph R. Calder and Virginia Calder and awarded to two III Form students who combine the qualities of good scholarship and a commitment to the service of others.

J. Thompson Brown Award - Liam Robinson '26

Given to the students below the VI Form who have made the greatest contribution to community life.

Malcolm Ford Award - Sol Bean Lee '25, Toby Nix '25

In memory of Malcolm Ford, given to the boy and girl below the VI Form who best combine the qualities of leadership, good sportsmanship, and a cheerful spirit.

Robert H. Stegeman, Jr. Award - Andrew Merriman '26, Margaret Gilheany '26

Given in honor of Bob Stegeman, inspirational history teacher, academic dean, assistant headmaster, and dean of faculty at St. Andrew's from 1978 to 1999, awarded to students in the top academic ranks of their class who have demonstrated intellectual leadership and who have made exceptional contributions to the life of the school and community.