

Williams will pursue medical degree at UF

VALEDICTORIAN

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This Friday at Dorsett Stadium, Williams will do just that.

"It was a lot of work and meant putting in the work even when I didn't want to. It meant finding the dedication and seeing the need to do it - and then getting it done," he said.

Williams not only tackled high school academics, but was dual-enrolled at North Florida College (NFC) where he earned 48 credits - well more than half the 60 credits needed to complete his Associates in Arts degree.

His grade point average (GPA) for his senior year was 4.738.

He credits his parents, Diana and Dimitri Williams, for their support and "always being tough on my grades. If I had homework, they made sure to remind me that I needed to get it done. They also kept tabs on my grades.

While we had an idea that I might be valedictorian, they were still pretty shocked when I told them."

When the COVID pandemic hit during Williams' sophomore year and classes went virtual, he stepped up and helped his younger sister, Tiana, with her classes.

"Mom and Dad had to work, so I helped her with math and science. The good thing was it was before my junior and senior year, so it didn't redefine my high school experience. Although it did help shape who I am during that long break. I think it delayed my social awakening. I was really shy when I started high school as a freshman, and returning after COVID, I was even more shy and quiet.

"But by doing things like joining band and volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club, I pushed myself into social situations and environments," Williams said.

He said English professor Paula McCullers at NFC was one of his most influential teachers.

"Before taking her class, I didn't really have a good understanding of essay writing and academic research. But with the three courses I have taken with her, I have become more confident in my skills, which has helped win the AT&T scholarship I received at the Sunshine State Scholars event last year," Williams said.

He was one of 15 students from across the state awarded the AT&T scholarship out of a field of 101 Sunshine State Scholars.

While chemistry and English were among his most challenging subjects, they were also his favorites.

"Although they are hard, I find their difficulty invigorating and engaging," Williams said.

Williams will begin classes this summer at the University of Florida, where he plans to pursue a degree in chemical engineering and then enroll in medical school, a goal fueled by medical issues he has seen firsthand in his own family.

"One grandmother had heart issues, and another battled cancer. I thought that if I gain some knowledge, then I can help in some capacity," he said.

At the moment he is looking at a career in anesthesiology.

He said he hopes to one day start a pharmaceutical firm or medical practice.

To incoming high schoolers, he offers this advice: "Don't be shy. It is not as scary as you think it is. Do as many things as you can, because it will be worth it in the end. Likewise, don't let the 'I don't want to do this' attitude override your desire to learn. Push past your fatigue and academic comfort zone, and really challenge yourself."



Dimitri Williams II (left) is the current TCHS band drum major and has participated in National Honor Society, Key Club, Student Government and Dreamers and Doers Program, as well as a host of other clubs. Beyonce Zheng (right) was active in Little Women and the National Honor Society, and kept busy with personal projects and school work.

Salutatorian honor: 'this is newsworthy'

SALUTATORIAN

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N.Y., the summer before she started second grade. Her parents, Ping Lin and Steven Zheng, are from China, and Zheng is bilingual.

She has a younger brother, Vincent, who is an incoming senior at TCHS.

"Being bilingual is not a problem, and it doesn't hinder me in any way. I understand what everyone is saying," she said.

Zheng was active in Little Women and served as vice president of the National Honor Society (NHS).

Personal projects at home and school work kept her

busy, she said.

When COVID struck during her sophomore year and school went virtual, Zheng said she weathered the change with few challenges.

But, the pandemic continues to loom large in her life, as she chose to wear a face mask for her senior photo session, and continues to wear personal protection whenever she is around people.

"We are in a global pandemic, and I don't want to spread it to my parents and family," she said.

Becoming class salutatorian was never a specific goal, Zheng said, but being told she had earned the distinction was an honor.

"I thought cool...this is newsworthy," she said.

Math was her favorite subject in school, but when asked to name her favorite teacher, she could not single one out, simply replying, "all of them."

Her advice to incoming freshmen who want to excel academically is to "keep on top of your classes, and do the homework."

She knows that going off to college is going to bring big changes, and she is ready.

"I'm going to be more independent, but I know I'm leaving a lot of stuff behind - my teachers, my friends and my family," she said.

A \$20,000 surprise!

Taylor County High School (TCHS) Class of 2022 Valedictorian Dimitri Williams II received a \$20,000 surprise during Monday night's annual Awards Ceremony when he was named this year's recipient of the Howard and Gretchen Leach Scholarship.

The announcement of the award was a complete surprise to the graduating senior.

Travis McCoy, chairman of the scholarship selection committee, said that the purpose of the scholarship is to assist a student who has enrolled in a four-year program by awarding them a scholarship in the amount of \$20,000.

"This four-year, \$5,000 per year scholarship is not solely based upon academics, but the overall merit of the student, which includes the character,



Travis McCoy (left) awarded the Howard and Gretchen Leach Scholarship to Dimitri Williams II during Monday night's annual Awards Ceremony at the high school.

community involvement, extra-curricular activities, work ethic and academics.

"The student selected for this scholarship was required to complete an application and interview with the scholarship committee.

"For many, this is their first time experiencing

the interview process," McCoy said.

"I have to note that not only did Dimitri show all the characteristics the committee desired, we were most impressed by the maturity and frankness he expressed during his interview," he said.

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY TAYLOR COUNTY ANNOUNCES THE ANTICIPATED AVAILABILITY OF STATE HOUSING INITIATIVES PARTNERSHIP (SHIP) FUNDS

The Taylor County Housing Program announces a possible award of \$350,000 in State Fiscal Year 2022/2023 funding available through the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program to be used for the following Local Housing Assistance Plan strategies: Housing Rehabilitation, Purchase/Down Payment Assistance and Housing Demolition/Replacement.

• Home Buyer Assistance Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to provide down payment assistance and principal reduction to all eligible home buyers. The maximum amount of SHIP funds that may be awarded per unit is \$10,000; the maximum is not awarded to all applicants. Homebuyers may not have claimed homestead exemption in the last three years (this excludes mobile homes). **Mobile homes and rental properties are not eligible for assistance.**

• Housing Rehabilitation Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to provide repairs or improvements needed for safety and sanitary rehabilitation and/or correction of code violations. The maximum amount of SHIP funds that may be awarded per unit is \$35,000; the maximum may not be awarded to all applicants. The homeowner must claim homestead exemption and the home must be occupied to be considered for rehabilitation. **APPLICANTS ARE LIMITED TO ASSISTANCE ONE TIME. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED SHIP ASSISTANCE IN THE PAST, YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY. Mobile homes and rental properties are not eligible for assistance.**

• Housing Demolition/Replacement

The purpose of this strategy is to provide total replacement of houses that are more than 51% deteriorated based on an inspection by the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist using a formula developed in the Local Housing Assistance Plan. Deteriorated structures are then demolished and replaced with a new site-built home. The homeowner must claim homestead exemption and the home must be occupied to qualify. **IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED PREVIOUS SHIP ASSISTANCE YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY. Mobile homes and rental properties are not eligible for assistance.**

All interested persons will need to initially apply or re-apply. SHIP Applications will be available beginning Thursday, May 19, 2022 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, EST, Monday thru Friday by calling **Tara Reynolds, Government Services Group, an Anser Advisory Company at (850) 681-3717.**

All applications will be considered on a **first come/first qualified** basis using the LHAP priorities regarding funding strategy goals and limitations. **Funding priority for all categories will be persons with special needs as defined by 420.0004 Florida Statutes.** Awards for all strategies is subject to availability of funds. Questions regarding the SHIP program and application process should be directed to Tara Reynolds, Government Services Group, an Anser Advisory Company at (850) 681- 3717.



LEGALS

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THE TIME OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM. All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED. The date of first publication of this notice is: May 18, 2022. G. CLINE MOORE ATTORNEY AT LAW, P.A. AUSTIN COREY ROWAN

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INVITATION TO BID

The City of Perry is accepting sealed bids for the Center Street Storm Rehab. For more information regarding this bid visit the City of Perry website: www.cityofperry.net or contact Steve Caruso at 850-584-3709 and/or scaruso@cityofperry.net
Taylor Brown, City Manager
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