

Merit Scholars Named

One of the biggest honors a student can receive in his high school career is being recognized by the National Merit Foundation as having achieved a high score on the PSAT's and SAT's. By being named a Commended Student, Semi-Finalist, Finalist, or Scholar, a student can receive many scholarship opportunities and other benefits.

In the fall, over a million juniors take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). The test consists of one math section and one English section.

The score of each section is computed out of 80 possible points. The English score is doubled and added to the math score, creating the Selection Index. In the spring, the National Merit Foundation announces the names of those students whose index was above 180. These names comprise the top 5% of students in the nation and are named Commended Students.

Sycamore had 24 Commended Students this year. One of these, Robert Humphries commented, "It is a great honor to be named a Commended Student, to be recognized as one of the

outstanding students in the country."

Out of these Commended Students, few will progress to be named Semi-Finalists, who make up one half of one percent of test-takers. This year, Sycamore had 10 Semi-Finalists.

Atul Salvekar stated, "The biggest benefit to being a Semi-Finalist, besides the fact that colleges are impressed when they see it on an application, is that there are a lot of scholarships available. Companies, schools, and the National Merit Foundation itself have scholarships for Semi-Finalists."

After being named a Semi-Finalist, students fill out an application that includes grades, activities, and an essay. In the spring of the senior year, Finalists are announced.

Finalists who receive scholarships are named National Merit Scholars. Only about fifty percent of Finalists become Scholars, because not every school awards scholarships, and companies will usually only give scholarships to children of employees. The National Merit process is long and hard but for those who do receive monetary awards, it's worth it.

by Courtney Shackelford



National Merit Finalist and senior Cheryl Ho takes a break from her rigorous schedule to make tie-dye T-shirts in Physics class.

National Merit Students

Finalists

James Ashton
Betsy Bass
Brian Davidson
Craig Gerson
Cherly Ho
Atul Salvekar
Courtney Shackelford
Jason Ullner

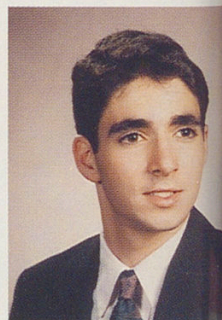
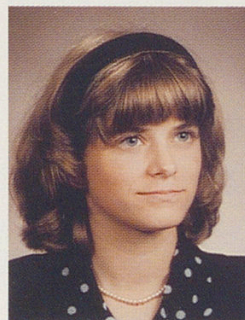
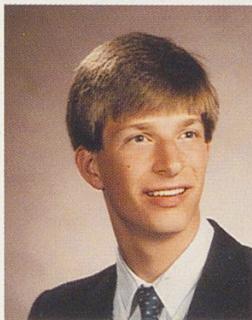
Semi-finalist

Bareena Silverman

Commended

Douglas Biggs
Evan Deutsch
Leigh Anne Fibbe
Catherine Fienning
Josh Fraley
Piera Giroux
Robert Humphries
Elizabeth James
Jeffrey Kohls
Bryan Krantz
Susan Street
Traci Tate
Sarah Toraason
Stacy Walter

Eric George
Craig Gerson
Keri Gies
Piera Giroux
Adam Goldman



Seniors

