

May, 2019

207's Best: Extra Curricular

Maine South is pleased to recognize Caleigh Pistorius as one of 207's Best in the area of Extra Curricular.

Caleigh Pistorius is one of the most decorated athletes in the history of Maine South. When Caleigh was only a few days old, she was brought into a gymnastics gym and has been competing ever since. She grew up with two loving parents who were also great coaches. In athletics, she has always had great relationships with her teammates and coaches, both at school and in club gymnastics. Her relationship with her parents is very close as well because both of her parents are athletes and supportive of her student-athlete lifestyle. Her mother is a gymnastics coach and has always been able to give advice and offer suggestions. Her father is always cheering her on and has grown his knowledge of gymnastics because he's seen her compete so many times. Freshman year she was out for the majority of the season but she still qualified for state, finishing twelfth overall. She qualified for state finals in vault, beam, and floor during sophomore year and won the state title in balance beam. Junior year, the team made it to state as a team for the first time in school history. She made it to finals in vault, bars, and floor and placed fifth in bars. Senior year, the team made it state again, finishing third overall and she placed fourth in vault, and placed second all-around in both her junior and senior year. Caleigh is also a dedicated student in other areas of Maine South. She was in DECA freshman year, she's a member of Italian club, NHS, and volunteers for the differently-abled at MWSRA in their athletic program where she is an athletic coach on Saturday mornings. She is devoted to her academic studies as well, taking coursework such as AP Psych, APUSH, AP Calc A/B and AP Italian. Finally, she is a member of the state champion C-Team as a member of unit six.

Caleigh's Intro to Business teacher, Mrs Amy Kladis, says, "Caleigh is a true example of a student athlete. The amount of time it takes to perform at the elite level for gymnastics is unknown to most, but it is A LOT! Caleigh knows that her first priority is her academics, though. On top of hours of daily practice, she then puts in equal effort making sure that she is prepared for school. She is a wonderful role model to young gymnasts and her peers and is a great ambassador of Maine South at her competitions."

Mr. David Inserra, her Junior Leaders teacher, says, "Caleigh's work ethic, mental toughness and tenacity have gotten her to the top of her sport. Her dedication to Maine South gymnastics has had a ripple effect on our entire gymnastics program and, in a way, our entire sports program. Caleigh is a role model for others. Her competitive spirit has raised the bar for all that follow."

Caleigh's Crime Science teacher and Gymnastics Coach, Mrs. Heidi Bowbin, says, "I can honestly say that Caleigh is by far, the most talented and motivated gymnast I have ever coached at Maine South High School. Her work ethic is remarkable and her ability to deliver under pressure is like no other. She was chosen as team captain by her teammates both her junior year and senior year because she is a true leader in every sense of the word. She is a four year Varsity letter winner in Girls Gymnastics at Maine South and currently holds the Maine South School Records for Vault 9.825, Uneven Parallel Bars 9.525, Balance Beam 9.45, Floor Exercise 9.65, and all-around 38.15. Caleigh was the IHSA Balance Beam State Champion in 2017, her sophomore year, and placed second in the IHSA State All-Around

competition both in 2018 and 2019. Caleigh truly encapsulates what it means to be a successful student, athlete and person. In the challenging setting of balancing both academics and athletics, Caleigh distinguished herself as one of the most dedicated student athletes I have encountered during my career. The evidence of her hard work can be seen in her high grades in the courses she has taken and her distinction as one of the top female All Around Gymnasts in the State of Illinois.”

Mrs. Sona Torosian, Caleigh’s Senior Leaders teacher, says “Caleigh expects nothing but greatness from others which she also demands of herself. She does not settle or make excuses, instead, she pushes forward with determination. She pushes herself to be the best in all that she confronts, both academically and athletically. She has overcome many obstacles and she continues to rise to the occasion and be on the medalist platform. After an injury that could have ended most athletes career, Caleigh pushed forward, worked hard, made adjustments, lead her team back down state and once again ranked in the top of the State of Illinois for girls gymnastics. It is a big accomplishment to make it down state as an athlete once in your high school career, but to make it to the top level all four years is so incredible, actually breathtaking. Caleigh is the definition of perseverance and hard work. She is an outstanding individual and student-athlete and deserves every bit of the recognition that goes with this award. She has helped put Maine South Girls gymnastics on the map and a team to be reckoned with. She has forever made her mark on her sport. Caleigh has been an outstanding leader for her team and a great role model. Congratulations to Caleigh and she is definitely 207s best.”

Mrs. Cristina Modica, Caleigh’s Italian teacher, says “Caleigh Pistorius is a most genuine and determined young lady. She has been my student in the Italian Program for two years and I am so lucky to have had her in class. She is an earnest and hard working learner. She is ready to face any challenge presented to her in Italian, head-on. She is also a compassionate and kind young lady helping her fellow students become as passionate about Italian culture and language as she is. I am very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with Caleigh as her teacher.”

Caleigh’s English 1 and Advanced Composition teacher, Mr. Kevin Stock, says “I first taught Caleigh as a freshman English student at Maine South. I can’t say she has "grown and matured" into a great student, because Caleigh was above and beyond all of her classmates in intellect, maturity, wit, and confidence as a 15 year old. Her lively curiosity makes her dissatisfied with superficial explanations. That curiosity frequently led our seminars down avenues and into areas that, otherwise, would have remained unexplored. Caleigh participates daily in discussion with insightful comments on evidence, thesis, rhetorical analysis, and style. When I see her hand raised, I look forward to hearing from her because I know she will add an educational complexity to the class discussion. Her writing demonstrates her maturity, reflects her strong intellect, and exhibits a stylistic technique not often found in a high school senior, or college student for that matter. Caleigh's attitude toward her fellow students also reflects her heartfelt compassion for others. This openness to all people was also evident in our class workshops on one another’s writing and opinion analysis. In addition to her compassion, her sense of humor makes her an asset to any group. Added to all of this is a top state athlete, a family woman, and an asset to our community.”

Mrs. Stephanie Inserra, Caleigh’s Fashion 1 teacher, says “Caleigh is wonderful! Outside of the classroom and the extra curricular activities that she is involved in, Caleigh is a role model to my young daughter, Ellie, who is 7. Caleigh donated her balance beam and some of her old gymnastic suits to Ellie to help encourage her to continue with gymnastics.”

Caleigh’s American Government: We the People teacher and Constitution Team Coach, Mr. Andrew Trenkle, says “Caleigh is exactly what every teacher and coach hopes to have in their program. She is genuine, enthusiastic, and always goes “all in”. Specifically on Constitution Team, you can always count on her to ask just the right question, challenge conventional wisdom, and embrace competing. The team would not be the same without her!”

Caleigh will attend the University of Dayton in the honors college and major in criminal justice with a minor in Italian and she wants to be a criminal justice attorney. We wish her best of luck in her future and know that she will represent the community of Maine South with honor and pride! We're proud of you, Caleigh!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ben Collins".

Dr. Ben Collins
Principal
Maine South High School