

# NEWS RELEASE

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MOTHER MCAULEY

Liberal Arts High School

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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## **Five McAuley Students Named National Merit Commended Scholars**

September 25, 2019 (Chicago, Ill.) – The National Merit Scholarship Corporation named five Mother McAuley seniors as National Merit Commended Students: Brigid Barkmeier (Oak Lawn), Sydney Conn (Oak Lawn), Megan Howley (Evergreen Park), Martina Maples (Mount Greenwood) and Mary Russell (Beverly/Morgan Park).

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.6 million students who entered the 2020 competition by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®).

“This recognition is well-deserved and a great reflection of the students’ commitment to advancing their own goals,” said Mrs. Meg Gardner, dean of upperclasswomen. “They are accomplished at balancing their academic work with their participation in sports, clubs and other outside activities, and I’m certain they’ll continue to set and exceed their own expectations as they move into college and beyond. Our entire school community is proud of these Mighty Macs.”

“Those being named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success,” commented a spokesperson for National Merit Scholarship Corporation. “These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation. We hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities and encourage them as they continue their pursuit of academic success.”

(more)

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Brigid Barkmeier is a member of the National Honors Society (NHS) and a Catherine McAuley Honors Scholar (CMHS), which is a program that recognizes superior academic achievement. She also has been a member of the state-qualifying Math Macs throughout her four years, earning first place in the individual geometry test her sophomore year. Brigid is a student ambassador, serves on the Student Council and is a member of the McAuley swim and water polo teams. She is a graduate of St. Catherine of Alexandria grade school. As a freshman she earned the Sr. Agatha O'Brien Memorial Scholarship, which recognizes students who score in the top five percent on the High School Placement Test.

Sydney Conn is a CMHS and a member of NHS, French Club, Math Macs, Autonomous Car Club, Unity Community, Book Club and Eco Macs. As a musician, she plays viola for the McAuley Symphony Strings and String Ensemble, notably as first chair. During her junior year Sydney traveled to West Virginia as part of the McAuley Appalachian Mission Project. She previously competed on the McAuley swim, water polo and soccer teams, respectively. Sydney earned the Sr. Agatha O'Brien Memorial Scholarship her freshman year. She is a graduate of St. Linus grade school.

Megan Howley is a member of NHS and is a CMHS. She maintains a 4.0 G.P.A. and earned a gold medal on the National Spanish Exam. She has been a member of the Mighty Mac cross country and track teams for four years. Megan is a graduate of Most Holy Redeemer grade school.

Martina Maples is a member of NHS and is a CMHS. She has been a cheerleader for Brother Rice for four years, most recently serving as captain of the squad for her junior and senior year. As a rising junior she participated in the DePaul University Actuary Program. She has been recognized as a Mac with Merit for her diligent work ethic and contributions to the McAuley community. Martina received the Sr. Agatha O'Brien Memorial Scholarship her freshman year. She is a graduate of Queen of Martyrs grade school.

Mary Russell is a CMHS and a member of the NHS, National Art Honors Society, National English Honors Society, Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica and Respect Life Club. As Math Mac, she has competed in the Illinois State math competition all three years. She is a graduate of St. Walter grade school, where she is a volunteer coach for the volleyball and dance teams, respectively. Her freshmen year Mary earned the Sr. Agatha O'Brien Memorial Scholarship.

### ***About the National Merit Competition***

About 1.6 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2018 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state. The number of Semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

### ***About Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School***

Founded in 1956 by the Sisters of Mercy, Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School currently educates more than 900 young women in grades 9 through 12 and is the largest all-girls high school in the country. McAuley promotes a single-gender education platform that encourages young women to grow in faith, envision their future and discover their talents through a challenging and motivating academic and co-curricular program. Mother McAuley's tradition of excellence has made it a top choice for all-girls private education in the Chicago area. The school boasts 28,000 alumnae.

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***Photo: (pictured from left to right) Martina Maples, Megan Howley, Mary Russell, Brigid Barkmeier and Sydney Conn***