

# Chaelon Simpson '22



**B**ishop Dunne graduate, Chaelon Simpson '22, is the embodiment of the term selfless leader, always considering the effect of his actions, as he thoughtfully powers his way to the brightest of futures. A leader, an activist, both on campus and in the community, Chaelon considers each day another opportunity to give back, through positive, constructive actions.

A dedicated son, grandson and brother, Chaelon helps care for his younger sister Chailey, who has atypical Rett syndrome, a rare genetic neurological disorder that leads to impairments affecting nearly every aspect of her life. He cares for his sister at home, taking on responsibility for her personal and medical needs. During quarantine in 2020, Chaelon also took on responsibility for his grandfather who had moved in with his family. He understands family comes first.

Chairman of the Bishop Dunne Math department, Gary Pinkerton remarks, "Chaelon has developed into a strong leader. Everything he does promotes a more caring individual. He thrives on new experiences and lives to assist others."

Chaelon began his career at Bishop Dunne as a seventh-grade student, anxious about a new school with new friends and experiences. "I felt more welcome than I had at any previous school. I remember the kindness extended to me by upperclassmen on the first day of school, when I was lost and struggling to find the lunchroom. The years I've spent at Bishop Dunne have been the most formative years of my life.

The memories and bonds I've made with teachers have not only made me feel safe, but also empowered. In middle school I learned compassion, sympathy, and companionship – skills which continued helping me in high school. As a high school student, I witnessed other new students experience the same nervousness I had, and I knew exactly how to befriend and help them acclimate to Dunne."

"If you think of a student who is 'the face' of Bishop Dunne, Chaelon will come to mind," said Miranda G. Gilliam, English Department Chair. "Chaelon has a calling and a passion to lead and be a role model for his peers and residents in his community. He perseveres because he is not afraid to use his voice, ask questions, and contribute to the ongoing, and sometimes, uncomfortable discussions he encounters in his life."

His work as Student Government president helps set the tone for all student school activities. He is president of Dunne's African American Awareness group which puts together an amazing program each winter to help educate our school community and highlight the important contributions of African Americans. Further, Chaelon served as the lead for the Student Ambassador program, meeting with prospective families to give tours of our campus.

Concurrently, Chaelon is serving as president of NAACP Youth Council, a national organization that works to inform youth of the problems affecting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. His responsibilities include leading monthly meetings, representing the council to other organizations and even leading a motorcade to combat voter suppression. "It's so important to become engaged in your community, and I'm grateful that I'm able to actively make a difference, rather than watching from the sidelines in inaction." His induction speech was featured in the July 11, 2021, *Dallas Examiner*.

He credits Bishop Dunne with helping him to overcome his fear of public speaking. "The school has always promoted peer-to-peer education, allowing students to work with other students to solve challenges. In group settings, I had to make my opinions known. The biggest example of this was my participation in the one-act play, where I played Gunter in *Auschwitz Lullaby*. It was a huge departure from my comfort zone, but the experience and confidence I gained made it one of my best decisions.

The advantages in education I have been provided during my time at Dunne are immeasurable. During my six years, I've been constantly challenged and introduced to new concepts and experiences that have expanded my world view." Mr. Pinkerton,