

Story by Ximena Gutierrez, Asst. Editor-in-Chief & Marisol Nicasio, Staff Reporter

## Class of 2024's Top 10 named

The Class of 2024's Academic Top 10 consisted of the Valedictorian, Miguel Gonzalez, who will be attending Cornell University and the Salutatorian, Mia Romo, who will be attending Governors State University. The other members of the Academic Top 10 included in alphabetical order: Ruben Canchola (Wabash College), Celeste Escobar Rosa (Penn State), Christopher Guzman (University of Michigan), Michael Hernandez (Valparaiso University), Andrea Martinez (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Masturah Raheemson (Chicago State University), Samiya Smith (South Suburban), and Alex Thomas (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). "Even when you think you have made it or have succeeded, there is always room to improve and get better. Stop when you're done, and even then you can strive to reach higher peaks," said Guzman, "I put in a lot of work and effort to be where I am today, and I would just like to thank all my teachers and especially my parents for pushing me to be who I am today." Martinez added "Being part of the Top Ten feels really rewarding because it's like I finally made it to where I wanted to be."



The Academic Top 10 of the Class of 2024  
Photo credit: Marisol Nicasio, Staff Photographer



The Class of 2024 celebrates one last time. Photo credit: Rogelio Romero, Staff Photographer

Story by Aidan Jordan, Editor-in-Chief

## TFN celebrates 100th commencement ceremony

### From Zoom to the stage, the last pandemic-era class graduates

Last night T.F. North hosted graduation for the Class of 2024. While this was the 100th commencement exercise, the Class of 2024 actually became the 98th graduating class in the school's history. The first two classes were part of Wentworth before Thornton Fractional High School opened in 1926. The evening began with "Pomp and Circumstance" played by the T. F. North band. The Vice President of the Senior Class Kaitlyn Williams-Jackson then started the program with the Pledge of Allegiance. T. F. North Men's Acapella Group followed with "It's So Hard To Say Goodbye To Yesterday." Class President Andrea Martinez then welcomed everyone to the ceremony. "We began our journey at home, behind a screen for hours while the world around us collapsed and the adults we looked to for answers were just as confused as us. That's what makes us different. We've experienced obstacles no one else has ever had. We did the unthinkable, and we will continue to do so," said Martinez. Afterward, Superintendent Robinzine and Principal Rucinski gave their remarks and recognized the Valedictorian Miguel Gonzalez and the Salutatorian Mia Romo.

In her Salutatorian speech, Romo said "Standing here today is scary. Leaving a place filled with love you've surrounded yourself with for four years is scary. My beloved class, you cannot let the fear of change keep you from joy that is ahead of you." In his Valedictorian speech Gonzalez added, "Standing up here today along with the presence of my fellow classmates and their accomplishments as well, serves as a testament that we will all bring change against stereotypes and norms by becoming successful individuals in the near future as we embark on our unique journey post-graduation." Soon after, the Class of 2024 were given their diplomas and celebrated one last time outside the Purple Gym. Many graduates reflected on their memories of T.F. North and others prepared for the future. "It feels good graduating after four years of hard work," said Kobe Thornton. "It felt like this went a little too fast. I wish I had more time, but I'm really happy to walk the stage because these four years have been a long four years. I learned a lot of lessons and experiences, and I'm ready to go in the real world and learn a lot more," added Elijah Nichols.

## Students Thank Staff

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& Jasmine Pastrana

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Interviews by Jasmine Pastrana & Emily Sanchez

# The Class of 2024 last goodbyes to the TFN Staff

“I would like to give a big thank you to Mr. Furmanek. It has been a pleasure being your student. You're always going to be the teacher that I can look back on and say how much you have done for me. I will never forget for always looking out for me and understanding the things I have been through along with Ms. Stramaglia. I will forever be grateful for you guys and will miss you guys, too,” said Ruby Garcia.

“Rita, I want to thank you for always being there for me when I was having hard days. You have such a sweet soul even though you try and hide it. I enjoyed the years we spent together and the laughs we shared. I am sad to be leaving you, but I know we'll both exceed in what we dream to be. Thank you for being my teacher, best friend,” said Chiante' Ridley.

“These past four years have been a journey that you all made possible. I wanted to start off with the amazing custodians and kitchen staff, you guys are appreciated even if you don't get thanked often. To the teachers, thank you for being a mentor to some and dealing with many of us. I wish you the best,” said Yulissa Villarreal.

“Ms. Isberg, I just want to say thank you for everything you've done for me since sophomore year. From having me as a student who never spoke up sophomore year and just did her work, to letting me sit in your class all junior year for lunch. I am forever grateful for all the advice you have given me and the lessons you taught me. I appreciate having a teacher have my back at all times. You were an amazing English teacher and a great person to rant to when something was going wrong. And all the advice I will carry with me throughout my journey in college and into the future. Thank you for everything teacher bestie,” said Vianka Guerra.

“Ms. Ramos, thank you so much for a great school year. You are one of those teachers I will never forget, you made AP Spanish Lit. a fun class (even though Don Quijote got us all confused). I wish you so much happiness and prosperity in your life. Que Dios te bendiga bestie, realmente te voy a extrañar,” said Celeste Escobar Rosa.

“Ms. Ramirez, I truly am thankful for you, your patience, your teaching, and the way you handle situations. I'm glad to have had you as my English teacher. Your love not only to the students but to the subject made this school year a lot easier. I appreciate your concern for the students' futures. You worry about others and their success, and I will remember that for the rest of my life,” said Isaias Hernandez.

“Mr. Anaclerio, thank you for being one of the most impactful teachers at T.F. North. I want to say thank you for being an understanding and kind teacher. Thank you for connecting and sharing your life with your students. I am glad that I have met you because you have inspired me to pursue a career in education,” said Chloe Nichols.

“Ms. Webber really understood me and knew where I was coming from and really helped me with my work when I needed it,” said Tremaine Floyd.

Ms. Matlock, thank you for being the best teacher ever, like ACTUALLY. I love how I can come to you about anything without feeling judged and still getting the best advice. You've made your classroom such a safe space for so many students including me. Having you for two years had to be one of the best things that has happened in my four years of high school. I'm going to miss you so much,” said Ashanti Mitchell.

“I want to thank Ms. Potter mostly because I feel like her class was a little harder for the most part, and she always let me turn in late assignments. So she's a real one for that,” said Andrea Lechuga.

“My favorite teacher is Coach McGee because she helped me throughout my senior year. She was always there for me. Even when I was down, she was always there. When my grades were down, she always told me to pick it back up. She was just always there,” said Jackie Hall.

“I want to thank Mr. Spakowski, the choir teacher, for just being the best teacher I have ever had. He has been here for three years- so my three years. And I wanna thank Ms. Stramaglia because without her I would not have passed English. I really appreciate her,” said Kiera Lloyd.

“Mr. Posley, he told me some real stuff,” said Jeremy Powell.

“I want to thank Mr. Mansour for helping me with math, making math easier, and overall being a really helpful person,” said Christopher Ortiz.

“Mr. Kawa was my English teacher this year. He was a very helpful teacher, and he was always in a good mood and really talkative,” said Stephanie Barrera.

“One of my favorite teachers is Ms. Vaughn. She is the best teacher, she motivated me to graduate, and that is the reason why I'm here today. If it wasn't for her to motivate me and tell me I can do it I wouldn't be here,” said Omarion Washington.

“I want to thank Ms. Schuldes because I was never interested in teaching, and she made me more interested in teaching, and I think it's a good profession that's kind of looked over,” said Samiya Smith.





Survey curated by Emily Sanchez & Jasmine Pastrana

What are your favorite memories of the seniors?

The Thorntonian Staff asked the TFN Faculty to share their favorite memories of the Class of 2024. Here are some of the responses:

Watching you all grow emotionally and socially from the Zoom classes until now!  
Mr. Viau

I will always remember the Class of 2024 as a very hardworking and mature group of students who did everything they possibly could to restore our band program after the COVID-19 Pandemic. Their efforts and accomplishments will never be forgotten!  
Mr. Pisello

To the Class of 2024, you hold a special place in my heart as my very first students at Thornton Fractional North High School. Your enthusiasm and eagerness to learn have made teaching you an absolute joy—I can't wait to see all the amazing things you'll achieve!  
Ms. Galvin

I remember trying to teach AP Human Geography for the 2nd time in my career and fully remote on Zoom to gracious students like Mia Romo and Samiya Smith. A BIG thank you to all those students in that class who are now seniors for being such a great group of students in a very difficult situation. You all rose to the occasion, and I appreciate the work you did! Best of luck in your future endeavors!  
Ms. Boersma

Class of 2024 when you were sophomores, I was diagnosed with cancer. I will never forget what an overwhelming sendoff you guys provided me. The cards, gifts, words of care, the prayers, and the pink-out day were beyond amazing! I felt so loved! I have enjoyed watching you all grow into the mature young adults you are now. You all made a really hard time for me much better! Never doubt how kind and amazing you all are!  
Ms. L. Cook

I enjoyed seeing the school spirit behind the football team this fall, it brought back memories of old for me. I also enjoyed watching Damari Dogan and Alvin Lankin grow up on the wrestling mat. Wrestling is a tough sport, and these guys really showed how tough they are by pushing through the tough times and getting better. It was fun to watch and be a part of.  
Mr. Rogers

Even though the Class of 2024's freshman year was remote and therefore full of uncertainty, this group was so fun and interesting. Every time one of them answered the door to their home to receive a library book that they had requested (or a stack of them: AHEM! Yazmin and Mia) was fun and rewarding. We were interacting in person with so few people that year, so these brief interactions helped make connections I will never forget. Each delivery was more than just dropping off a book; it was a real smile and I saw genuine joy, curiosity, and a small hint of normalcy. Now, as they stand on the brink of graduation, I am immensely proud of how this resilient group has grown. They've transformed from eager freshmen into accomplished graduates, embodying perseverance and a love for learning that will undoubtedly guide them in their future endeavors.  
Ms. DeSoto

A special congratulations to the graduating Class of 2024! You have all achieved so much, and I could not be more proud of you! My favorite memory this year was definitely senior signing day, watching so many of you proudly announce your future plans and just seeing all the joy and excitement was inspiring and so rewarding. Having had many of you in class freshman or sophomore year and seeing how far you have come brings me so much joy. A special shout out to my one and only senior (this year) Mekhi Mackey. It's hard to pick just one favorite moment because having you in class was such an honor and privilege, there were so many favorite moments. I wish you and the entire class of 2024 all the best of luck!  
Ms. Ball

The diversity of "after high school" plans between college and trade schools.  
Ms. Lukaszewski

My favorite memory is the birth of my son on February 5th. The little guy had to do a small stint in the NICU and the support and love I received from my teammates and students at T.F. North is something my wife and I will never forget.  
Mr. Cervantes

This is a special group of students because they were my first online class and we made real connections even if it was virtually. I hope they go off and become as awesome as they want to be!  
Mr. Posley

My first period English class this year was a treat! They were such a great group of young people that were so positive, full of personality, and did some amazing work at the last minute! Good luck next year!  
Mr. Kawa

This is the class that will stay with forever. The students are wonderful, respectful, and funny. I had so much fun with my first hour that it will leave impressions. My favorite moment is when we my seniors in 1st hour surprised me on my birthday.  
Mr. Mansour

The SUCCESS classroom has done an AMAZING help with the Meteors Cafe. Natalia, Myah , Stacey and Brandon we will miss you so much.  
Mrs. J. Latham

All the great conversation and laughter in the Nursing Office.  
Ms. Hale

A favorite memory was meeting the future Visual Art Club co-presidents, Samiya Smith and Rae Seals, on Zoom their freshman year.  
Ms. Weber

The growth and support of our S.U.C.C.E.S.S students.  
Ms. Anderson-Bell

I knew Yulissa Villarreal was going to be an amazing student when she was the only one in her class who was not afraid to turn on her camera when we were remote. It meant a lot to have a student who was always trying her best on ZOOM. I also will never forget the other seniors on the yearbook staff, especially Chiante' Ridley who is one of the most down-to-earth and genuine people in the school and is destined for great things. Lastly I will never forget how Ruby Garcia thought I was crazy for naming her the Editor-in-Chief of my first newspaper staff. I am very lucky she trusted me and believed in herself. Our paper was a success because of her leadership.  
Mr. Stephan

Left: Alex Thomas and Ms. Hood  
Middle: Anthony Lara and Ms. Navarette  
Right: Arianna Flores and Mr. Mansour  
Photo Credit: Thorntonian Staff





Photo credit: Thorntonian Staff

Congratualtions to the Class of 2024

