At the top of her class on two fronts

Katy Norcross will graduate with a 4.0 GPA from Camas High and Clark College

By Danielle Frost
Post-Record staff

When Katy Norcross graduates next week, she’ll be earning both a diploma from Camas High School and an associate of arts degree from Clark College.

Not only that, but she’ll do it having maintained a 4.0 GPA at both schools.

Norcross is one of six co-valedictorians at CHS and one of four Running Start graduates in Clark County to earn all As.

“Attending Clark was one of the best decisions in my life,” she said. “It was a real challenge, but I’ve always been a hard worker and I just had to put the time in. Earning my AA degree at the same time as my high school diploma is like getting two more years out of my life.”

This past semester, she took a full load of college courses, plus two classes at CHS.

“I lost a lot of sleep, but it was worth it to me,” she said. “The classes were a lot harder but I loved being in a more mature setting and meeting new people. The whole atmosphere was very different.”

In addition to her classes at Clark and CHS, Norcross kept busy acting in the various high school plays and musicals, and coaching and playing recreational soccer.

“I work hard and am kind of a perfectionist, so I was able to manage my time well,” she said. “I basically took my homework everywhere with me. It’s amazing how much extra time you have to do things.”

After graduation and a little down time, Norcross will head off to the University of Montana, where she has earned a $10,000 per year scholarship. She was also offered scholarships at other colleges, but is partial to Montana after spending every summer of her life there. She’ll major in fine arts, with an emphasis in musical theatre.

“I really want to be on stage,” Norcross said. “I started singing and acting at age 3 and I like performing and entertaining. I thought about changing it, but I like to perform.”

A few times, she found it difficult to balance her time between classes, acting and soccer.

“I got frustrated but kept thinking about that two-year degree,” she said. “I believed if I put the effort in, then I would get it back.”

Greg MacGowan, her CHS literature teacher, describes her as an “outstanding student in an outstanding class.”

“What stands out in my mind is her uninhibited and enthusiastic participation in our class discussions, as well as her ability to express her ideas in such an eloquent fashion,” he said.

MacGowan added that her acting abilities impress him as well.

“Our drama department (directed by Rob Kaneberg) is as good as it gets and this turned out to be a very

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Washougal valedictorian is bound for UW

Shane Phillips has interest in music, community service, trees and bushes, and updating the drainage systems.

In 2009, Phillips was accepted into the Western International Band Clinic Honor Band, a prestigious group for outstanding musicians.
Salutatorian has fond memories of her time at Camas High

By Ben Campbell
Post-Record intern

Camas High School drum major and future University of Idaho Vandal Jocelyn Brannan has to credit a number of accomplishments that prepare her for the future:

An active member in band since the fifth grade, Brannan has made her way to drum major for her junior and senior years.

“My favorite part of high school was band. It’s like we’re a big family,” Brannan said. “We are family-oriented from all the long road trips we have taken throughout the years.”

One of her favorite instructors is band teacher Richard Mancini.

“Jocelyn has been a superb student for four years and has been an outstanding drum major and leader in the band for the past two years,” he said. “She lives her beliefs and sets a great example for others to follow and emulate. We will miss her next year!”

She was actively involved in the chorus of all four CHS musicals, playing flute for "Oklahoma," "The Sound of Music," "Fiddler on the Roof," and "Sweeney Todd.

Brannan has been a member of the National Honor Society for two years, sings alto as part of the Vocal Ensemble Select, and has been an active Key Club member for four years.

I have been honored to work with Jocelyn for four years in Key Club,” said Rosemary Knapp, CHS’s Key Club advisor. “She has been one of our most dedicated class of 2010 members. She always has a smile and an open heart for volunteering. Jocelyn has also been one of only two members we’ve had who attended our District Convention all four years of her high school career. We will miss her dedication and participation.

Brannan will attend the University of Idaho in the fall, and plans on majoring in architecture, which has been a longtime passion.

“We had to build a house for a project in seventh grade, figuring out cost and angles,” she said. “I learned a lot, and it inspired me to continue with architecture.”

Phillips

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addition to joining the Air Force ROTC.
Math and chemistry were the most enjoyable subjects at Washougal High School for Phillips, and his chemistry teacher, Bruce Stanton, was one of his influences and favorite teachers.

“Shane is the type of student who really pays attention to learning, rather than just trying to get a good grade,” said Stanton. “It really paid off for him when he took the AP chemistry exam.”

Throughout high school, he took six AP classes, the most challenging being biology.

The hardest part of becoming valedictorian, according to Phillips, was keeping his grades up during soccer season, or when he was involved in the orchestra for various school performances.

Balancing time between his different band groups, Boy Scouts, soccer, and studying was a challenge, but he managed to succeed in every area in which he participated.

Shane said his biggest influences throughout his high school experience were his parents, Kirt and Lynn Phillips, who made it possible for him to succeed.

Norcross

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positive avenue for Katy and her exceptional qualities,” he said. “She conveyed a range of expression and emotion that compelled the attention of the audience. I am so proud of her accomplishments and very excited about her prospects in the future.”

Norcross said that becoming valedictorian was a goal she had since middle school.

“I always wanted it,” she said. “In seventh or eighth grade, I started getting more serious about it, and thought I’m smart enough, I work hard enough and I can do it.”

Although Norcross has spent a significant amount of time during the past two years at Clark College, she does have some favorite memories from CHS.

“I loved participating in the plays and musicals,” she said. “You have such a sense of camaraderie with people. It’s a rewarding feeling, and that’s the best part.”

Her advice for other high school students who are considering earning dual degrees is to "go for it."

"It’s possible," Norcross said. "You can do it. Don’t think just because it’s difficult you shouldn’t try, because anything that’s worth it isn’t going to be easy."