

SENIORS MISS BEING TOGETHER

Seniors weren't ready to say goodbye

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Across America, high school seniors are grieving the lost end of the school year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The story is no different at Lawrence High, where state-wide school closures mean that for seniors, their last week at LHS was the first week of March.

"I'm really sad about the fact that we didn't know our last day was our last day," senior Keely English said in a virtual interview. "If I knew, I definitely would've cherished walking through the halls one last time and said a proper goodbye to all my teachers."

Senior Peyton Mallory feels similarly.

"If I knew beforehand that my last day at LHS was before spring break, I definitely would have thanked my teachers for guiding my way through high school, and make sure I got to say my last goodbyes to some of my friends that I may never get to see again," he said.

Mallory plans to go to college to play basketball. He says that the pandemic has not completely halted his process of being recruited, but has slowed it down.

"The coaches have really grasped this new recruiting process, so I've been getting texts and phone calls from some," Mallory said. "One actually walked around campus and videoed to give me a feel of what it looked like."

Senior Emmeline Schneider will miss end of the year activities for the Class of 2020, which she views as rite of passage.

"The end of senior year is the time when us seniors cherish the last few mo-

ments we have all together as a class, and sadly, we had our last moments together without even realizing it," Schneider said.

Schneider was an active part of orchestra and jazz band and plans to continue playing bass in college.

"I am going to miss my orchestra family the most because I know it will

not be possible to bring us all together in person," she said. "Orchestra meant a lot to me and was a huge part of my high school experience. I am really disappointed that I will not be able to take the solo I have been working really hard on for this whole school year to contest."

English will especially miss the teachers that have impacted her life the most at Lawrence High.

Lawrence High.

"I loved all my teachers this year, but two that stuck out a lot were Mr. [Matt] Ellis and Mrs. [Melissa] Johnson. They are just amazing teachers and always wanted me to do the best I could," English said. "I'm definitely going to remember them forever. They helped me grow and challenge myself and made my senior year something to look forward to."

Another loss especially important to seniors was the choir department's end-of-the-school-year performance of Showtime.

"[Showtime's] such a big part of who I am," English said. "I got close to so many people last year during Showtime, so not being able to do it this year is hard. I was really looking forward to singing the senior song."

The concert would have been an important send-off for senior Nicholai Jost-Epp as well.



"For me my experience at LHS has meant creating relationships through music," Jost-Epp said. "I did band and choir for all of high school and had so many meaningful relationships with friends that were formed through making music together. It's really unfortunate that seniors involved in music couldn't have any sort of closure with their last music concerts as high school students."

Coronavirus has added uncertainty to Jost-Epp's educational experiences after high school.

"Whether we will be able to have opportunities to do activities in college that actually require being on campus, like clubs or internships or extracurricular activities or hands-on experience in classes, is based on what happens in the future," Jost-Epp said. "For me person-

ally, if we knew how long we would have to do social distancing, I would be able to weigh these different factors when choosing a college, but of course no one knows."

Even though the loss of the last celebratory months of school and unprecedented uncertainty due to COVID-19 is challenging, seniors are trying to remain optimistic.

"I'm not sure how much of an actual summer we will be able to experience, which is really sad, because this is the last summer I'm together with all my friends," English said. "But I can't wait to make it as good as we can. College is going to bring a lot of new beginnings, and I'm excited to see where it will take me."

Even though the school year was cut short, the impact of the coronavirus in no

way dampens the Class of 2020's memories of Lawrence High.

"The last 3.75 years at LHS have truly meant the world to me," Mallory said. "Lawrence High culture has always run through my family so to be able to experience everything that really makes it a special place for myself was truly a blessing."

FIRE UP — Senior Max Northrop cheers on the boys basketball team during the Feb. 21 game against Free State game at Allen Fieldhouse. The game ended with a 50-42 victory. "We all know that this is what both teams work the whole year toward and being there to cheer them on — everyone wearing red and black is what makes LHS, LHS," Northrop said. The game was one of the last big events for LHS students to come together before school unexpectedly closed for the year a few weeks later. PHOTO BY CAM BOHMANN

SEE YA

Seniors wish goodbyes had been different

"I wish I could have said my goodbyes on the last night of Showtime. I would have loved doing the senior song in my college shirt."

—Macie Laurent

"One final walk through with all my friends and seeing all of the teachers just one last time."

—Tatum Wallace

"I wish I could have said goodbye and hugged my favorite teachers. And I wish I could have been able to just roam and had one more school day so that when I walked away I had closure to say goodbye to my school life."

—Ash Gaultney

"Throwing all my papers up in the air in the halls like they did in High School Musical."

—Lizzy Lemmon

"Driving through the parking lot in my rickety car with my friends cheering, laughing and having a good time."

—Chloe McNair

"I wish I could have given all my friends and favorite teachers a hug."

—Jude Bernard

"I wish I just would've had time. If we were in school these last few months, finishing up the year and I would've had time to prepare for graduation, then my feelings would be different right now. ...But without that, I will just miss it."

—Hailey Coon

"I was going to do a burn out in the parking lot and two-step my car. I will still try to do this some point."

—Tanner Walker

"Kissing Chesty the Lion."

—Jasper Mumford

"I wish I could have walked around the halls one last time and fully accept that it was the last time. Maybe even give the Chesty statue a hug goodbye."

—Sophia Naramore-Winfrey

"Being with my class and surrounded by the teachers and parents one last time. Being able to shake their hands and hug everyone who has shaped my view and who has touched my heart."

—Christian Johnson