
Students Noah Smith and Kaylene Khosla, each earned a Boettcher Scholarship

BY JON POMPIA
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN
It’s one of the state’s oldest and most prestigious scholarships, designed to keep deserving, graduating high school seniors in state.
And this year, two students from South High School, Noah Smith and Kaylene Khosla, each earned a Boettcher Scholarship, which covers the cost of tuition and fees for four years at approved universities/ colleges. Recipients also receive a living stipend.
Smith, a part of Health Academy for four years, was accepted into the U.S. Air Force Academy as well as the Colorado School of Mines.
“I will be attending the Air Force Academy,” Noah said. “Ultimately, it will be a better path for me for my goal of medicine, and it is the opportunity of a lifetime.”
While the academy is tuition free, it does incur an eight-year military service commitment as a commissioned officer.
“I plan on majoring in biochemical engineering or biochemistry with an emphasis in premedicine,” Noah said. “And I hope to attend medical school following undergraduate studies. My goal is to ultimately work as a neurosurgeon.”
Inspired by studies at the Health Academy, Noah said, “Medicine has always been my passion, and having the opportunity to save someone’s life someday is my motivation. I believe that saving someone’s life is the highest act of service that one person can do for another.”
At South, Noah was active in numerous organizations, including Health Occupations Students of America, marching and symphonic band, German Club and German National Honor Society, Key Club and swimming.
Scholarship in hand, Kaylene has her sights set on the University of Denver, where she will major in political science.
“I plan to become the third-ever student to enter their dual-degree law program,” Kaylene said. “In this high-intensity program, I’ll complete my undergraduate studies in three years and then continue directly to DU’s law school for an additional three years.
“If all goes as planned, I’ll graduate with a law edegree when I’m 24.”
As far as a career, Kaylene said she would “love to end up involved with a nonprofit, either on their leadership or law team.”
Throughout her years at South, Kaylene was active in every aspect.
Her resume includes class treasurer, student body president, National Honor Society (secretary), Kiwanis Key Club, Girls Cabinet and the inaugural Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council.
“And I was one of two representatives from Colorado to attend Girls Nation in Washington, D.C.,” Kaylene added.
A member of the school’s re-launched speech and debate team, Kaylene earned a state qualification in Lincoln-Douglas Debate. This was complemented by qualifying for state four times as a cross-country runner.
Attesting to her versatility, Kaylene was this year’s homecoming queen and is a candidate for class valedictorian.
Although Kaylene said Pueblo City Schools (D60) is sometimes viewed in a less than flattering light by some, “What people aren’t aware of are the numerous teachers that make a Pueblo City Schools education so great.
“I truly believe that I have had some of the best teachers in their fields, especially in math, literature and history.”
Kaylene credited the “massive amount of outstanding opportunities D60 students have at attaining concurrent enrollment, AP or IB college credit” as helping her to actively compete with students from throughout the country.
jpompia@chieftain.com