

Hitting the books really pays off

Fitchburg High senior earns scholarship to prestigious Union College

Sentinel & Enterprise

Sentinel & Enterprise

Updated:2017-12-19 05:01:45.367362

By Chad Garner

FITCHBURG -- Landon Tucker's dream is now a reality.

Tucker, a Fitchburg High School senior and Honors Academy student, is beaming with pride after recently being selected as a Posse Scholar and receiving a four-year scholarship to Union College in Schenectady, N.Y.

"It's definitely exciting," said Tucker, who is ranked second academically in his class. "Throughout the whole process they were always showing videos of people getting it. They were excited, cheering and crying and things like that.

"I definitely felt a lot of emotions. I called my dad right after and teared up a little bit. It was definitely exciting that all the hard work paid off."

Over 1,000 students from the state were considered for the Boston Posse Scholar, and Tucker was one of only 10 to be selected.

"It's crazy to think about, there's so many people in Massachusetts and you don't realize that I'm in the top percentage of students," Tucker said. "... It's amazing to find out. (Fitchburg High School Assistant Principal) Mr. (Albert) Mercado informed me that my overall college profile is ranked 91st percentile in the country. I had never expected that."

The full-tuition, four-year scholarship is worth over \$200,000.

Mercado nominated Tucker for the scholarship.

"The primary thing that impresses me the most about Landon is his character," Mercado said. "He is honest, reliable and trustworthy. He is not afraid to go outside of his comfort zone and is always willing to help others in need. He takes the time to acknowledge his peers and carries himself in a humble manner each day."

Mercado added that he's really pushed Tucker throughout his four years at FHS.

"Landon has done everything that I've asked him to do since he came in as a freshman," Mercado said. "As soon as he met one expectation, I'm like, great, here's your next one.' I didn't give him a chance to breathe."

Tucker, 17, boasts a 4.58 grade-point average. He plans to study mechanical engineering in college.

"I had been looking at Union for a while and when I found out that Union was a Posse School, that was the perfect opportunity," Tucker said. "It's a small school; it's a student body of only about 2,500 students. When I visited it was a beautiful campus. It's in upstate New York, so it's kind of secluded and it's quiet. It's a good school to focus on academics. The engineering program is 12th in the nation."

What is Tucker's career plan?

"My overall goal at the end of this would be to open my own engineering firm," he said.

The senior is not only an outstanding student, but he's also heavily involved in extracurricular activities.

He joined the Interact Club, which is affiliated with the Rotary Club, freshman year and is currently the president of that group. This year, Tucker officially founded his own nonprofit organization, the Current Events Club.

"It's meant for bridging the gap from the students to the community," Tucker said.

Tucker is also active in athletics. He's the team captain in outdoor track, and a four-year member and two-year captain on the boys' varsity soccer team. As a junior, Tucker was named the Mid-Wach E Most Valuable Player after scoring 12 goals and adding 15 assists. A fourth concussion, however, forced Tucker to miss his entire senior varsity soccer season.

"I think I've always had my mind set -- I think I've gotten that from my parents -- to be hard working, give it your best and not give up," Tucker said. "I've always been the type of student to not be intimidated, to lock myself in my room and do my homework for eight hours. (My parents) don't see me. I just go up into my room and do my homework until I go to bed pretty much every day."

FHS senior and friend, Sage Bray, said that Tucker is always working toward his goals.

"He's just always nonstop and on the grind," Bray said. "And it shows."

Tucker also has logged 700 hours of community service.

"I hope to be a leader and an influencer of change in this world," Tucker said.

Tucker's overall support system, including his parents, Randy and Karen, has been second-to-none, he said.

"Definitely endless support, not only from my parents but other family members and Mr. Mercado, who has continued to push me," Tucker said. "I think everyone saw my potential even before I even did. They saw something more in me that I hadn't seen yet, and I'm very grateful for them to be able to push me. I was always ready to take on that task and keep moving forward."

Tucker also made sure to credit Fitchburg Public Schools for giving him the necessary tools to excel over the years.

"I don't think that I would be in the seat that I'm in today if it hadn't been for the Fitchburg Public Schools and Fitchburg High School," Tucker said. "I had the opportunity to school choice, but when I found out about the Honors Academy and I met Mr. Mercado, there was no doubt that I was going to go to Fitchburg High School. I saw the opportunity was there."

The awards have been rolling in for Tucker in 2017.

He was named a Coca-Cola Scholar semifinalist, John and Abigail Adams Award, Rochester University Eastman Kodak Award and National School Winner for the Wendy's Heisman Award. He's the first male at Fitchburg High to earn the Heisman Award.

"I think he's one of the greatest kids on earth," said proud father, Randy. "I've always told Landon that if you give 100 percent, you can never be disappointed with whatever your results are. He's always given 100 percent. We're very, very proud. We're very grateful for Mr. Mercado and Fitchburg Public Schools."

Story submitted by Chad Garner, the district's public relations writer.

Close Window

Send To Printer