



# Graduation Keepsake

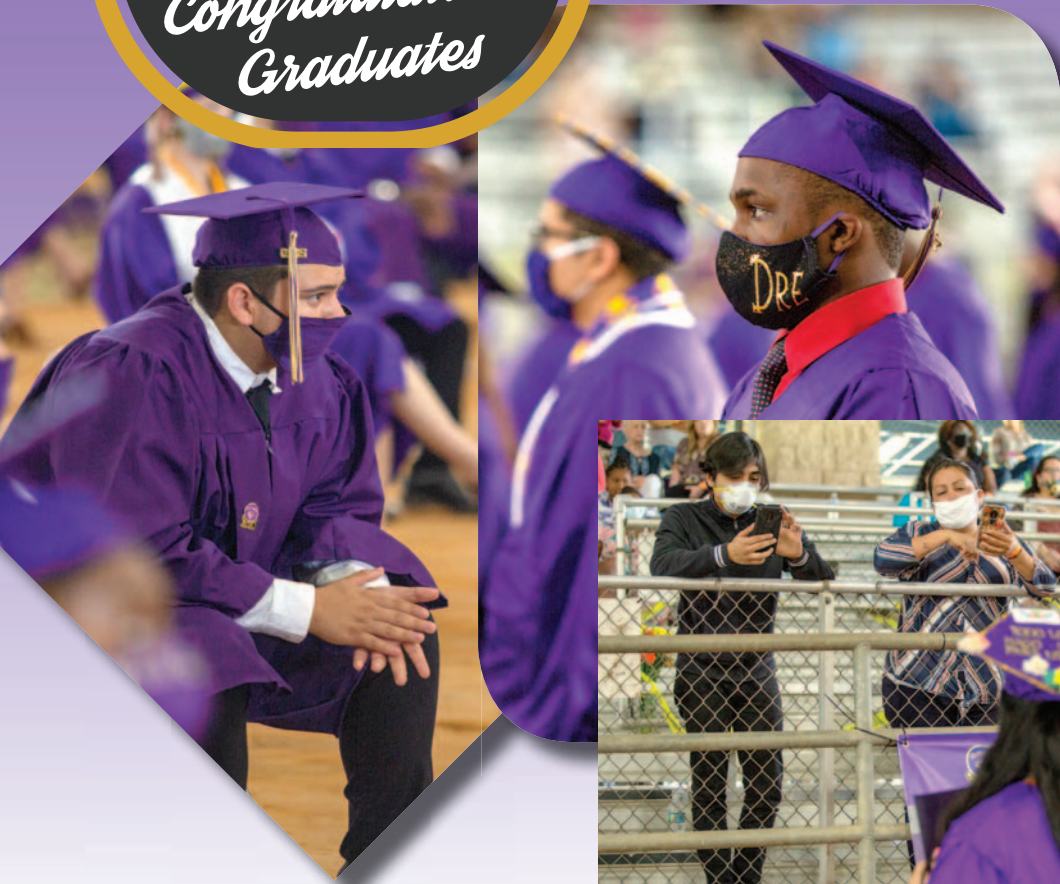
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Okeechobee  
High School



## OHS 2020 seniors marked 100th graduating class

By Richard Marion  
Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — When 2020 Okeechobee High School seniors walked across the stage at the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center on May 30 and pick up their diplomas, they were the 100th graduating class to earn that honor.

The first high school class to graduate in Okeechobee was in 1920 and was considerably smaller than the Class of 2020. There were only four in the 1920 graduating class: Beryl Loworn, Alma Camp, Willie Dubois and Dorothy Darrow. The principal at the time was W.R. Terrel, the younger brother a former judge on the Florida Supreme Court, Glenn Terrell.

One hundred years later, the Class of 2020 followed in the footsteps of those first four, in more ways than one. In 1920, Okeechobee graduates were coming into a world reeling from the Spanish Flu pandemic. Now, 2020 graduates find themselves enter a world rocked by a pandemic also, one that drastically altered the last half of their senior year.

"This Class of 2020 was destined to make history as the 100th graduating class of Okeechobee High School," said OHS Principal Lauren Myers. "Little did they know that the significance of this particular ceremony would be this monumental. In this 100th year and in the midst of incredible difficulties of all kinds, we are seeing a true partnership of support between the school system, the family unit and our surrounding community. Okeechobee has come together to adopt seniors, some they have never even met, and shower them with gifts and well wishes. There has been an outpouring of love and positive encouragement, alongside their traditional cheerleaders."

Former OHS Principal and current Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services Dylan Tedders says he is proud of the Class of 2020 members' perseverance.

"They will go down as one of the toughest classes to walk across the stage," Mr. Tedders said. "They dealt with loss, isolation, and remained focused on the importance of the finish."

Mr. Tedders graduated from OHS in 1991, as part the 71st class. He was able to come back to the school as a coach in 2001, before moving on to become assistant principal and principal.

"I feel OHS was, and is, a big part of my history and my life," Mr. Tedders explained. "I always

believed my responsibility was to leave it better than I found it. By what I've witnessed this year and with the leadership of Principal Lauren Myers and her staff, I know OHS is in good hands."

In honor of this being the 100th graduating class, the Historical Society, Our Village and the Grad Nite committee purchased commemorative lapel pins for each senior.

Mrs. Myers is hopeful that the outpouring of support that the community has shown to 2020 graduates will be something that continues and grows for future graduating Brahmans for the next 100 years at OHS.

"Kids need to know that they have adults in their corner," Mrs Myers stated. "Students need to hear advice and encouragement to persevere from more than just the familiar voices of their families and teachers. Everyone could use accountability partners who push them to be the best version of themselves and to finish each race that they start."

Research shows that mentoring works," continued Mrs. Myers. "We see that trend in IRSC's successful Take Stock scholarship program. The mentoring begins during the freshman year and continues through to graduation. Think about the positive outcome and futures that could be affected if we were to invest time and support over the course of the entire four years of high school. How many more students would we get to this moment right here?"



On behalf of the  
Okeechobee Historical Society,  
Our Village Okeechobee,  
and  
The Grad Nite Committee,  
we want to congratulate you on your  
accomplishment and recognize you for  
being a member of the  
100th Graduating Class of  
Okeechobee High School.  
Please wear this pin proudly on your  
graduation robe.



Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/Magi Cable  
The Okeechobee Historical Society, Our Village and the Grad Nite committee created commemorative lapel pins (shown above) for each 2020 senior to wear on their gown.

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/Magi Cable  
The picture to the left shows the building that first served as the school for grades 8-12 in 1916 in Okeechobee. That former school is now the administration building for the district.



# COVID-19 crisis changed everything for Class of 2020

By **Katrina Elsen**  
Lake Okeechobee News

In the fall of 2019, area high school seniors started the year with the normal hopes and expectations for their senior year, with the full school calendar of sports, club and social activities normally associated with the final year of high school.

The school year started as expected. Students enjoyed the fall semester with Friday night football games, other sports, crowning the homecoming royalty, band competitions, rodeo, spending time with friends and all of the other activities that fill a high school senior's calendar.

In January, those who pay attention to international news started hearing about an outbreak of a new (novel) coronavirus. On Jan. 11, China reported the first known death, a 62-year-old man in Wuhan.

On Jan. 20, the World Health Organization reported cases outside China. The following day, the United States announced the first confirmed case in Washington state.

On Jan. 30, WHO declared a global public health emergency with more than 9,000 cases reported worldwide. Travel restrictions were put in

place. Cruise ship passengers found themselves quarantined.

On Feb. 11, WHO officially named the virus COVID-19.

As concerns about the spread of the virus grew, communities debated the best course of action in regard to public events. The traditional handshake greeting was discouraged. Increased hand washing was encouraged.

February fairs and festivals continued as planned in South Florida. The Okeechobee Music Festival went on as scheduled over the first weekend in March, with extra hand washing stations and health notices.

Stores sold out of hand sanitizer and toilet paper.

By the second week in March, Florida communities made some hard decisions to cancel public events, since the virus appeared to spread at mass gatherings. The Okeechobee County Fair was canceled the day before it was scheduled to open. The Okeechobee Youth Livestock Show moved online.

Some schools started spring break a week early. Others extended spring break to two weeks.

When they left for spring break, students did not know they had left the classrooms for the remainder of the

school year.

School officials spent the extended spring break coming up with plans for "distance learning." Schools provided students with computer tablets. Teachers scrambled to put together lessons for online classes. Parents found themselves supervising their children's lessons.

At first, both the schools and local officials did not know how long the "social isolation" period would last. They hoped to return to school in April, and then in May, and finally declared students would not return until the fall semester ... at the earliest.

Traditional "senior year" activities such as prom, honors awards night and grad night were canceled or moved online. The local communities tried to make things a little more special for the graduates by putting up signs and organizing "adopt a senior" programs.

With this special keepsake section, the *Lake Okeechobee News* congratulates the Class of 2020 on a successful completion of an unusual and challenging senior year, one never to be forgotten.



Lake Okeechobee News/Richard Marion  
**Kamini Smith, voted Mr. OHS by his peers, wears the mandatory mask for COVID-19 safety precautions.**

**OHS**  
**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Congrats to  
Cera and the  
Quarantined  
class of 2020



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Cera Elliott

*Congrats*  
Class of  
**2020**

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all the best!

Mickey, Lori, Lillie, and Lexi Bandi

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*Skye Bourgault, Valedictorian*

*Nathan Crews*

*Malika Morgan, Salutatorian*

*Shaun Perrod*

*Damian Stephens*

*Trevor Teele*

# Okeechobee Christian Academy plans to hold live graduation

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — Okeechobee Christian Academy began as Grace Christian School, a ministry of the Grace Brethren Church of Okeechobee, Florida, in August of 1976. The student body totaled 18, with three grades and two teachers.

In 2007 the Grace Brethren Church recognized the need to expand the scope of this ministry by offering a top-quality, holistic Christian education for the Greater Okeechobee area. In order to

accomplish this transformation the Grace Brethren invited other churches to partner with them in this new venture.

The school's name was changed to Okeechobee Christian Academy to reflect this new community-wide character and inter-denominational composition.

The school now offers programs from kindergarten through 12th grade, with some students participating in dual enrollment at Indian River State College. They have 20 teachers on staff, with

middle school and high school students switching classes throughout the day.

They offer Music, Critical Thinking, and Spanish along with Abeka, Bob Jones Press, and Purposeful Design curriculum.

Okeechobee Christian Academy exists to support parents and the church in the common goal of "raising up a child in the way he/she should go." Their mission is to equip the minds and nurture the hearts of young people, preparing them to be Christian leaders who love Christ with their whole

heart, soul, mind and strength and who seek to be a transforming influence in their world.

Okeechobee Christian Academy is accredited with AdvanceED and has been since 2015.

Although it was a difficult final year for their seniors, staff and teachers pulled together to make it the best year possible for the students. Principal Melissa King said they plan to hold a live, in person graduation ceremony as soon as things open up a bit more, but they do not have a date set for the event yet.

## 2020 Honor Graduates

### Summa Cum Laude:

*Alize Merchant, Aubrey Pearce, Florinda Cea, Kendall Harrison*

### Magna Cum Laude:

*Ashley Snyder, Brady Markham, Brandon Mitchell, Cera Elliott, Esrat Sahan, Itzel Garcia, Kirsten Pagaduan*

### Cum Laude:

*Antonio Vega-Hernandez, Artemio Virto, Jr., Edwin Reyes, Elizabeth Casas, Hailery Korpi, Julie Garcia-Arias, Solomon Albright, Stephanie Ortega*

Congratulations, Hailery! # the Class of 2020!




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With life's Social Disruptions, Social Adversities and Social Pandemic, this year's Senior Class has left the indelible mark of conquering it all!

Congratulations to the 100<sup>th</sup> Graduating Class of Okeechobee High School, the Class of 2020!



Whether by mail or at the polls, your vote is your voice

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# Congratulations! Class of 2020

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- Step 1: Graduate from OHS
- Step 2: Move forward with confidence and rise above life's challenges
- Step 3: Repeat Step 2 (as needed)



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Happy Graduation, Class of 2020!  
Go Brahmans!

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# Okeechobee High School



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*Araceli Aguilon Ruiz*



*Alexander Aguirre*



*Maria Aguirre*



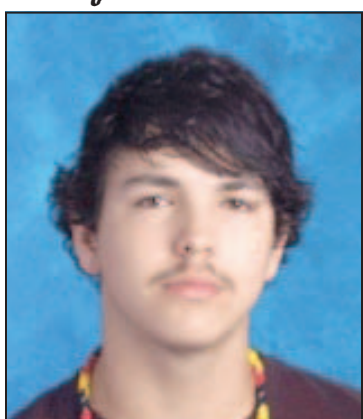
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*Solomon Albright*



*Sharon Albury*



*Jacob Aldridge*



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*Adonis Alonso*



*Isabella Amador*



*Stephen Annis*



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*Agustin Antunez*



*Adamaris Arambula Pizarro*



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*Waylynn Bennett*



*Braxton Berryman*



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*Michael Betts*



*Mark Bigford*



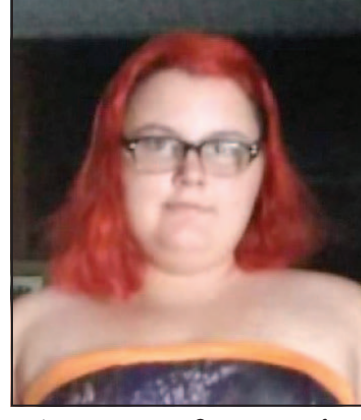
*Jason Birdwell*



*Jordan Blackburn*



*Braeden Blow*



*Searina Boatright*



*Samantha Bockoras*



*Tiffany Bohannon*



*Alexandria Boon*



*Ashley Bowers*



*Jordin Bradley*



*Kaydra Bradley*



*Rebecca Brashears*



*In Memory of Gabriel Brewer*



*Jonathan Brewer*



*Katilyn Broadrick*



*Brienna Brockman*



*Jenna Brown*



*Katie Brydebell*



*Caleb Bullington*



*Jacqueline Burdick*



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*Elizabeth Casas*



*Max Castillo*



*Noemi Castro*



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Luis Colon



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**Proverbs 3:5 & 6**

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*Congratulations, Katie!*






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*I love you, Nana*

*Congratulations Class of 2020!*



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Gatlin Hilderbrand



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**Happy Graduation!** *Class of* **2020**

Wishing you a wonderful graduation day and all the success in the world! You all certainly deserve it. Congratulations on your important accomplishment!

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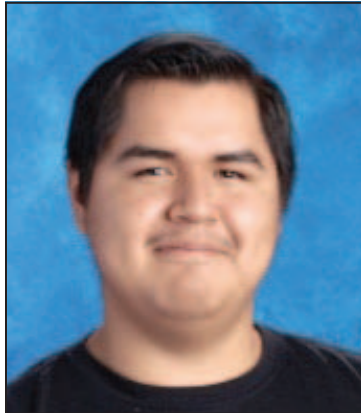
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Taimikia Jones



R. Olivia Joynes



Norberto Suarez



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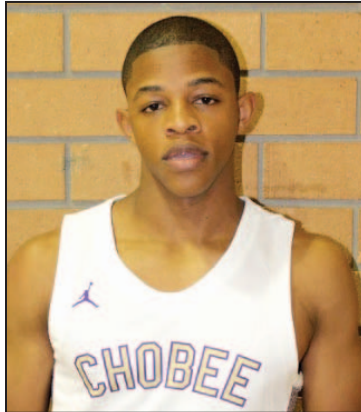
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**Congratulations**



The Mixon Team wishes all the 2020 Graduates Congratulations and best wishes for a prosperous future Reach for the stars and achieve your dreams!

**Class of 2020!**

Congratulations, Class of 2020!



Best wishes for an incredible future!



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*Grace Lippman*



*Ian Little*



*Hannah Littrell*



*Alexis Llanas*



*Oscar Longoria*



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*Nelson  
Lopez-Romero*



*Delisha Lubin*



*Gloria Luviano*



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*Hailey Macrae*



*Silas Madrigal*



*Cheska Magdadaro*



*Scott Allen Major*



*Lindsey Majors, Jr*



*Elly Mann*



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# *Congratulations!*

## *Class of 2020*

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Always remember YOU get to decide the legacy you leave.



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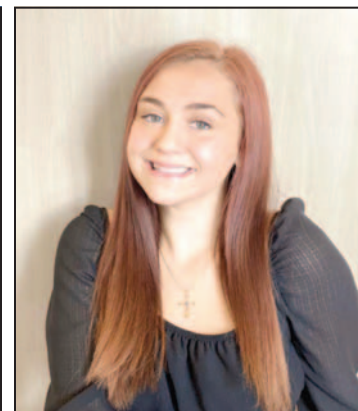
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Alyssa McCorts



Austin McCoy



Angelea McCullers



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Dalian McGowen



Kristan McIn



Allison Meara



Savannah Medina



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Mya Melton



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Amber Mitchell



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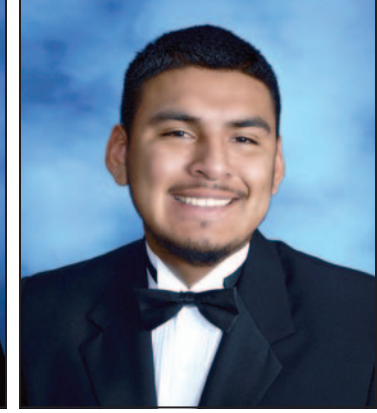
Andrea Olvera



Lucia Olvera



Stephanie Ortega



Ozzy Osceola



Tippen Padgett



Kirsten Pagaduan



Zachary Pattison



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Diana Marcela Rivera

# You Did It! Congratulations, Class of

# 2020



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Justin Ray

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Graduating high school is a major accomplishment you have achieved, so CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2020!

Sharon Robertson Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

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Class of 1963 Belle Glade High School

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Jerry is looking for experienced AC technicians to join his team. Please forward your resume to:

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- ✓ AC Maintenance
- ✓ Certified A/C Technicians
- ✓ Air Conditioning Replacement



Echols Plumbing & AC 863-763-6461





*Katherine Sands*



*Jasmin Santana*



*Quiana Scales*



*Matthew Schachtele*



*Jayme Scurry*



*Gloria Seca*



*Austin Leroy  
Shepherd*



*Armina Alexis  
Sheppard*



*Colby Shockley*



*Brenda Sixto*



*Harli Stone*



*Caillon Smith*



*Demetri Smith*



*Julia Christina  
Smith*



*Kamani Smith*



*Lafasia Smith*



*Ashley Snyder*



*Francisco Solis, Jr.*



*Amanda Sparkman*



*Molly Spearow*



*Trey Marshall  
St. Pierre*



*Jeremiah Stalans*



*Chase Storey*



*Cynder Stovall*

# CONGRATULATIONS OKEECHOBEE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2020!

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- Bachelor's degrees in high-growth careers
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Haley Stripling



Bailery Stuhr



Jason Gage Sutherland



Destiny Swanson



Daniel Tagle



Joan Taylor



In Memory of LaDora Taylor



Zackery Kaleb-Tharpe



Dante Thomas



Kaleb Thomas



Mallorie Thomas



Tyler James Thomas



Abigail Thornton



Julian Tinajero



Deanna Tindall



Veronica Trejo



Amy Trent



Tyler Tucker



Haley Underhill



Alex Valdes



Brenda Valdez-Salazar



Gisselle Valle




Erick Vallejo




Rhiannon Vandiver

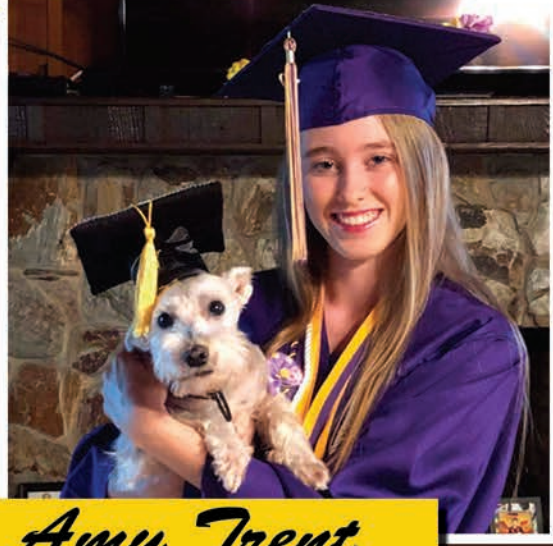
# Congratulations



**Jenna Brown**




**Tyler Thomas**




**Amy Trent**

**AND TO THE ENTIRE OHS GRADUATED CLASS OF 2020**




**2020**

# Congratulations




## Class Of 2020


**Go Brahmans!!!**



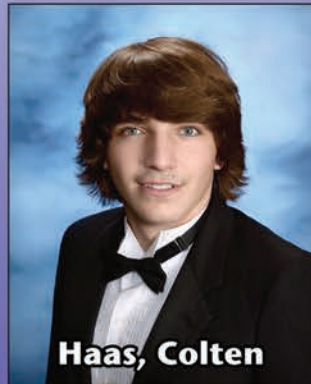
Johnson, Logan



Smith, Kamani




Perry, Brianna



Haas, Colten

**Congratulations OHS Graduates Class of 2020! You did it!!**



Barney, Willow

Honoring the Class of 2020 Los Cocos and your Okeechobee Community  
Wish you all the very best



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Mexican Restaurant



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Fajitas Steak Chicken & Shrimp  
Tacos - Tostadas - Enchiladas  
Burritos - Quesadillas - Nachos



Antonio Vega Hernandez



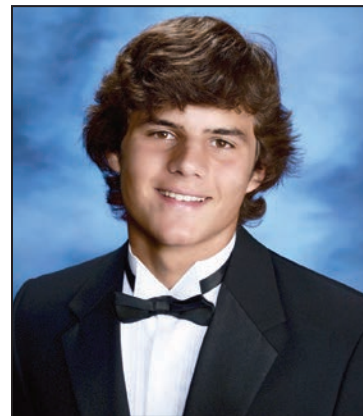
April Vega



Daniel Vega



Jose Hugo Vela-Lerma



Cole Verano



Elexis Villalpando



De'nitrik Ja'nylan Whittaker



Trina Wiggins



Nevaeh Wildman



Kaitlyn Williams



Cody Wojcieszak



Roxy Wyatt



Billy Yates



Morgan Yates



Oscar Yates



Scott Yates



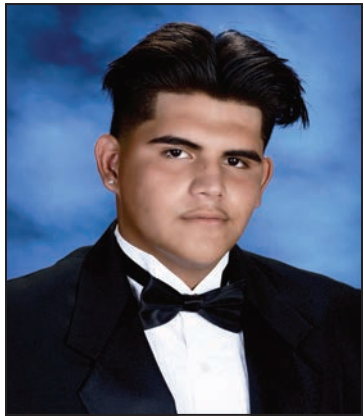
Kolby Yerkes



Kolby Yingling



Araya Youngblood Enrique



Zarate-Chavez



Megan Ziobrowski

*Students Not Pictured*

Wendoly Hernandez  
Luz Gerhard Huff

Wilbert Bulmaro Lopez  
Tatiana Merilus



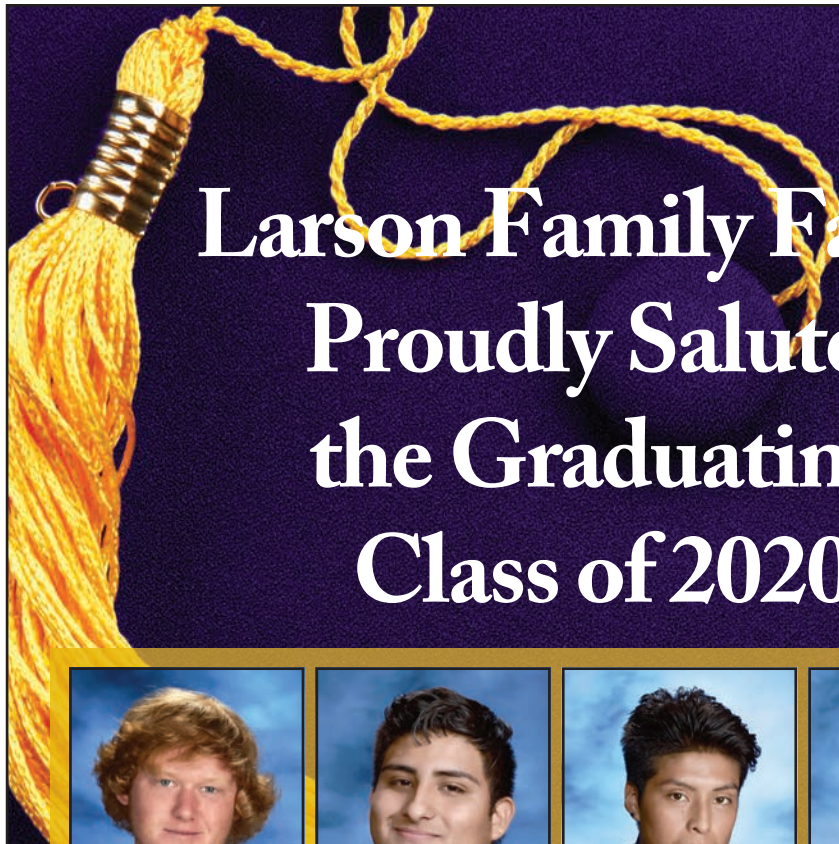
*To our Graduate,*



Logan, we are so proud of you! Remember, always, dream big and reach for the stars! You can do anything you put your mind to, nothing is impossible! Stand firm in your beliefs and go after your dreams! Love and live life to its fullest!

We Love You So Much, Dad, Mom, Justin and Caysen

**Larson Family Farms Proudly Salutes the Graduating Class of 2020**



Chase Arnold	Giovanni Espinoza	Nelson Lopez Romero	Daniel Meza
Stephanie Ortega Cuautle	Antonio Vega Hernandez	Cole Verano	

**Milk. Love What's Real**

JMLarson Larson Dairy Family Tree



# Congratulations, Amanda, and the class of 2020!



*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

*Jeremiah 29*

To the 100th graduating class of Okeechobee High School...

## Congratulations

The challenges of this year have prepared you for the ups and downs that come with life. You have faced them with grace and excellence, which I am confident will be defining traits of your generation.

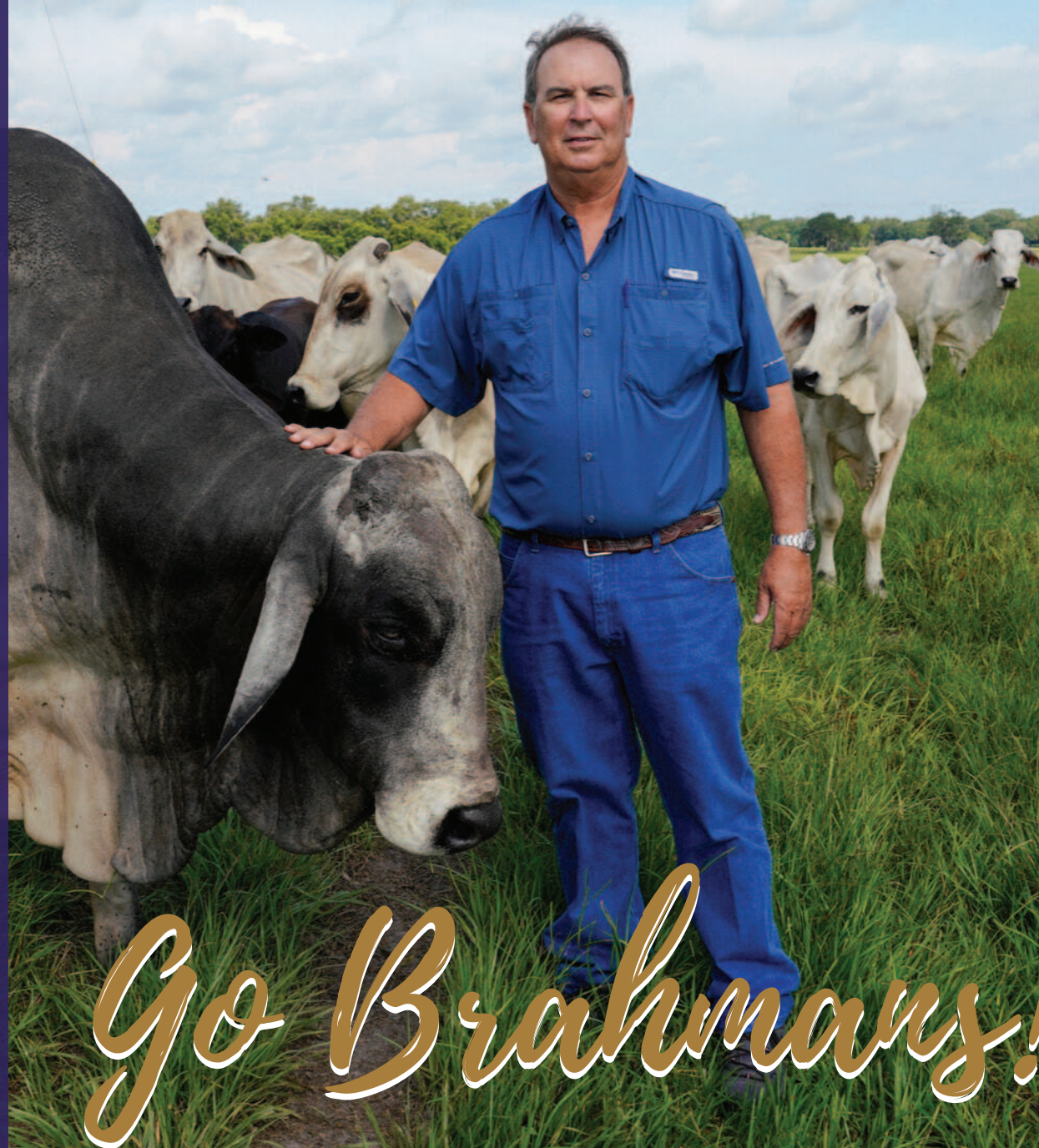
CONGRATS CLASS OF

# 2020

YOU DID IT!

## Ned HANCOCK

Republican for State House



## Go Brahmans!

# ***Congratulations to the graduating class of 2020! We are so proud of you all!***



**Colby,**

*We are so very proud of you and can't wait to see what your future holds! Always try your hardest and you'll succeed!*



**Luis,**

*Your future is wide open, go do amazing things! We are so very proud of you.*



**Kaitlyn,**

*Everything you need to succeed is within you, embrace it! We are so very proud of you!*



Locally owned, operated, licensed and insured for over 15 years.

**Demolition of**

- ★ Mobile Homes   ★ Building   ★ Houses
- ★ Sheds   ★ Barns   ★ Pools
- ★ Decks   ★ Concrete Removal
- ★ Landscaping   ★ Complete Tree Works
- ★ Bobcat Services
- ★ Land Clearing   ★ Demolition Clean Up
- ★ Debris Removal & Hauling

Demo License Number OCSL3234

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- ★ Tree trimming
- ★ Stump grinding
- ★ Stump removal
- ★ Land Clearing
- ★ Tree pruning
- ★ Annual tree & bush maintenance
- ★ Tree planting
- ★ Mulch



**Please call Danielle today for your Free estimate!**

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# Congratulations, OHS Graduates!

These  
OHS Class  
of 2020  
graduates were  
inadvertantly  
left out of the  
Graduation  
Keepsake  
published on  
June 17.

*Lake*  
Okeechobee  
News

offers a sincere  
apology for  
the oversight  
and wishes  
the graduates  
a prosperous  
future.



*Sheyla Villatoro*



*Adilenne Virto*



*Artemio Virto Jr.*



*Zara Vozzella*



*Dazhia I'kia  
Washington*



*Simone Washington*



*Veyron Washington*



*Brook Watford*



*Michael Leslie  
Watson, Jr.*



*Brittany  
Weatherford*



*Brooke Whaley*



*Makaya Whitehead*