

Wendy's High School Heisman Announces 2017 National Winners

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NEW YORK, Dec. 11, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The most prestigious award in high school athletics has named Soleil Gaylord, a Mountain Runner from Colorado, and Jackson Destine, a Wrestler from Florida, as National Winners of Wendy's® High School Heisman® Scholarship. Chosen from high school seniors at more than 30,000 schools around the country, Soleil and Jackson will take home a \$10,000 college scholarship.



"The outstanding commitment, perseverance and compassion Soleil and Jackson possess is remarkable," said Todd Penegor, President and CEO of The Wendy's Company. "We're honored to welcome these two students into the Wendy's family and are so proud of all their achievements."

Female Winner

Soleil Gaylord, Telluride High School
Telluride, CO

Surmounting any obstacle, she faces is a way of life for Soleil Gaylord. At 6'1", her height presents challenges when it comes to running, but she has made "Tall Is Strong" her mantra. Soleil has won five state track and field titles, two state cross country titles, competed in the World Mountain Running Championships three times, became a World Champion snowshoe runner, and was named a Colorado Sportswoman of the year. She has also overcome selective mutism, and today she speaks out loud and clear in many capacities. Soleil is Student Body President, an Ambassador for American Trail Running, hosts her own radio show and regularly presents to her town government about a native species garden that she designed and maintains for the community.

Male Winner

Jackson Destine, Atlantic High School
Delray Beach, FL

Jackson Destine is proof that life's circumstances do not define a person; grit and determination do. Despite a challenging upbringing, Jackson finds ways to pursue a bright future. When a lack of discretionary income threatened his ability to keep playing sports, Jackson started his own candy business to raise money for the athletic fees. He has set fifteen school records in three sports while maintaining a 4.0 GPA and working twenty hours a week to help his grandmother with bills. Jackson also composes original raps with a powerful message: All teens have choices, even if they are growing up in tough environments. He wrote his school's official song and a song for Florida Governor Rick Scott's Math Nation program, and he has performed both in front of the school board and local media.

Wendy's and the Heisman Trophy Trust have honored more than 650,000 of the nation's most esteemed student-athletes

since the two partnered in 1994. Year after year, they celebrate those students who exemplify the common set of values they share, wherein going above and beyond is the norm. Wendy's Heisman aims to profile the stories of these outstanding students as a way to inspire the tomorrow's senior class. Overall, one hundred students will receive a total of \$150,000 in scholarships, with National Finalist each receiving \$5,000 and the National Winners receiving \$10,000.

The other eight Wendy's High School Heisman National Finalists are:

Name	Gender	High School	City	State
Audrey Ernst	Female	St. Charles North High School	St. Charles	Illinois
Karsten Householder	Male	Chaparral High School	Scottsdale	Arizona
Wells Johnstone	Female	Madison Academic Magnet High School	Jackson	Tennessee
Ian McGrory	Male	Queen Anne's County High School	Centreville	Maryland
Natalie MacEwan	Female	El Camino Real Charter High School	Woodland Hills	California
Brendan Siefker	Male	Ottoville High School	Ottoville	Ohio
Laura Murphy	Female	East Greenwich High School	East Greenwich	Rhode Island
Brandon Staple	Male	Longmont High School	Longmont	Colorado

For more information about the 2017 Wendy's High School Heisman and the National Winners and National Finalist, as well as to view photos, please visit www.WendysHeisman.com.

About Wendy's High School Heisman

Wendy's High School Heisman was created by Wendy's founder Dave Thomas in 1994. Dave Thomas dropped out of high school when he was 15 years old in order to work full-time and went on to become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in history. While this nontraditional path led to his prosperity, it always worried Dave that others would follow in his footsteps and expect to achieve similar fame and wealth by not finishing high school or attending college.

Faced with this dilemma, at 61 years old, Dave enrolled at Coconut Creek High School in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., and received his General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Inspired by this moment and with a desire to celebrate the outstanding achievements of youth in America, he launched the Wendy's High School Heisman program.

Twenty-three years later, Wendy's High School Heisman has honored more than 600,000 of the nation's most esteemed high school seniors who share Wendy's values of giving back to their communities, treating people with respect, continuing education and excelling on the athletic field.

Wendy's High School Heisman is a joint program between Wendy's and the Heisman Trophy Trust, host and custodians of the Heisman Memorial Trophy®.

About Wendy's

The Wendy's Company (NASDAQ: WEN) is the world's third largest quick-service hamburger restaurant chain. The Wendy's system includes more than 6,500 restaurants in 30 countries and U.S. territories. For more information, visit www.aboutwendys.com.

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