

# Gilbert High to graduate its 100th class this week

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**G**ilbert High School's graduation this week will be historic.

The 100th graduating class will be receiving diplomas Tuesday, May 23.

The ceremony caps a series of commemorative events that began with homecoming last September, which the oldest living Gilbert High graduate, Geraldine "Jerry" Johnson Emmett, 102, attended.

"Tradition means a lot at Gilbert High School, for a whole lot of reasons," Principal Christopher Stroud said. "We have kids walking these halls whose great-grandparents went here."

Some alumni have even taught or continue to teach at the high school.

Only four seniors were in the school's first graduating class.

Gilbert High, which moved to its current location to 1101 E. Elliot Road in 1987, has one of the strongest records of academic achievement among high schools across Arizona.

"We know that there is a ripple in the community of a tremendous amount of

pride for what we do here," Stroud said.

While it has won a variety of state championships over the past century, the school's victory in the 6A Conference boys' soccer final marked the first state championship under Stroud. He has been principal for five years, and succeeded J. Charles Santa Cruz, who was principal for 22 years.

Stroud's sister graduated from Gilbert High. And once his children are of age, they will be attending too, he said.

Abby Howk, a junior who is active in and out of the classroom, said her teachers "throughout my past three years have been nothing but amazing."

"Although they like to challenge us sometimes, they really want us to succeed and will help us in any ways they can," she added.

This year the school, which has about 2,300 students, celebrated another landmark by earning an A+ School of Excellence Award from the Arizona Education Foundation.

"I am very excited, I am super proud of the students and the facility here," Stroud said.

The school also is changing with



(Special to the Tribune) Gilbert High School, which opened in 1918, moved to its current location, 1101 E. Elliot Road, in 1987.

of instead of me standing and talking, it's kids thinking and me guiding and directing," said English teacher Rachel Ciccarone.

An 11-year Gilbert High teacher, Ciccarone said students collaborate and use critical thinking skills within the classroom to better prepare them for the future.

At graduation, each student will receive a white cord to go with their black cap and gown in honor of centennial celebration. Their diplomas will carry a special seal commemorating the school's 100th anniversary as well.

The school also will invite alumni and special speakers, including Santa Cruz, Superintendent Christina Kishimoto and past superintendent Wally Delecki.

the times, relying less on rote and memorization.

"My teaching has changed, it's more

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### MESA

#### Young Marines of Mesa invite group's national award

The East Valley Young Marines of Mesa have been named the national youth organization's "National Unit of the Year."

The award was presented May 4 at the annual Adult Leadership Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. The East Valley Young Marines has 26 youth and 13 adult volunteers.

The Young Marines organization is divided into six divisions across the United States. Each Young Marine unit is led and guided by adult volunteers.

#### Charter school to build \$7 million campus in Mesa

AAEC Early College High Schools is building a \$7 million campus in Mesa next to Mesa Community College.

Students will occupy Mesa Community College classrooms while their new high school is built.

Total enrollment at the AAEC schools is about 1,680 students, with each campus enrolling between 200 and 480 students.

### CHANDLER

#### Chandler seeks people, groups to honor in Celebration Plaza

Chandler is accepting nominations for one or more honorees into Celebration Plaza, a monument honoring individuals and organizations who've made "significant and enduring" contributions to the community.

The nominating criteria and form is online at [chandleraz.gov/celebrationplaza](http://chandleraz.gov/celebrationplaza) and will be accepted through June 30. Forms are also available at all Chandler libraries, community centers, recreation facilities, Chandler Museum and City Hall.

Celebration Plaza is a permanent water feature and monument wall on the southwest corner of McQueen and Germann roads.

Information: 480-782-2877 or [nate.meyers@chandleraz.gov](mailto:nate.meyers@chandleraz.gov).

#### ICAN program in Chandler receives \$25,000 grant

ICAN: Positive Programs for Youth in Chandler was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from State Farm. The grant was part of the State Farm Neighborhood Assist program.

Youth attending ICAN programs range from ages 5 to 18.

### GILBERT

#### Residents can report problems with new app and website

Gilbert 311, a new app and website, gives residents a chance to help the city tackle issues, such as potholes and streetlight outages, throughout the town.

The new tool not only allows citizens to report problems but also to view, comment on and vote to fix problems submitted by their neighbors.

Citizens can even create their own "watch areas" to receive notifications about all of the issues reported in their community.

The Gilbert 311 mobile app is available for download in the App Store and Google Play. The website is at [gilbertaz.gov/311](http://gilbertaz.gov/311).

### EAST VALLEY

#### 14 area high school students earn National Merit Scholarships

National Merit Scholarships have been announced, and 14 students from the East Valley won the coveted awards.

Each will be awarded \$2,500.

The winners:

- Praveen Balaji of Chandler attends

Corona del Sol High and is considering physics.

- Annalise R. Bracher, Chandler, Phoenix Country Day School, biology;
- Bryce C. DiLallo, Gilbert, Gilbert Classical Academy, economics;
- Dhruv Iyer, Chandler, Hamilton High, entrepreneurship;
- Nicholas Johnson, Chandler High, electrical engineering;
- Leo T. LeSueur, Perry High, entrepreneurship;
- Yun Ling Lo, Perry High, chemical engineering;
- Charles B. Matthews, Gilbert Classical Academy, aerospace engineering;
- Nomith S. Murari, Corona del Sol High, finance;
- Shivam Sadacher, Basis, computer science.
- Raj Shah, Basis School, medicine;
- Danial A. Shadmany, Mesa, BASIS Chandler, medicine;
- Tanya P. Tran, Chandler Preparatory Academy, oncology;
- Justin Zhu, Hamilton High, computer science.