

No. 49 and No. 50: Shelter Agent Mark Birmingham's Group Picks Wendle, Schrumpf, As Scholarship Winners

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ALTON - Shelter Insurance agent Mark Birmingham recently completed an unbelievable feat - he announced his 49th and 50th scholarship-award winners for his business.

"It gives me great pleasure in announcing my two Scholarship Recipients, for 2022," he said. "The winners are Monica M. Wendle, from Marquette Catholic High School and Allie L. Schrupf, from Alton Senior Senior High School. What is the most significant news here other than the honored students is that they are my 49th and 50th students to be selected for the award!"

Monica is an outstanding student, athlete and person. She was honored recently with the prestigious Illinois State Scholar Award at her school. She was all-state in tennis and finished higher than any other area player. She plans to attend Lewis and Clark Community College and play on the tennis squad and also study education. Schrupf is also an Illinois State Scholar for Alton High School.

Allie will attend St. Louis University in the fall and her plans are to major in biology /pre-med with a goal of one day becoming a physician. She is a 2022 Silver Medallion recipient, an RBGA YAC Scholarship winner and a top student at AHS. She is also a member of the Marching 100, the Symphonic Orchestra the Wind Ensemble and much more.

Birmingham said the two girls who were selected are excellent students and choices, but he laughed, "I wonder how these students had time to study between being in tennis,

band community service, jobs with family and church activities. I think they are excellent choices. The two girls absolutely have great futures ahead of them."

Mark's office is located at 402 State St. in Alton.

"I have done two scholarships per year, at these schools, and I have been doing this, for the past 25 years," Birmingham said. "In my almost 40-year 'career' with Shelter Insurance, the giving of these two scholarships brings me the most joy, and satisfaction, that I ever get! This is my way, of 'giving back' to the community, from which I earn my living. A lot of things, good and bad, have happened, over this time period, but these gifts, which I give, bring me the most pleasure. I am going to try to keep the tradition going."

Birmingham said he would like to recognize the members of my selection committee, who have helped me make these selections.

"Don Huber has been with me, since the first day, that I began this endeavor. That was back in the school year of 1997-1998. I then recruited Steve Schwartz, (East End Improvement/ Associated Bank retiree) Dr. John Fischer, (retired dentist) and Mike Drake, (currently working at CNB Bank.) These four men, along with the guidance counselors, at the schools, have made my selections for me. Phillip Robins, Jim Glaeser, Mary Diane Mc Farlane, were a few of the names, from my past committees at AHS. At Marquette H.S. I remember Patty Crotty and Mary Rivera, and this year it was Jessica Vogel. Special thanks, I would like to give to these educators, and committee members, for helping to make the right selection of students."

Birmingham recalled his very first selection, was a young man, at AHS who seems to have done very well for himself, by the name of Todd Sivia. His mother was a classmate of mine, (AHS Class of '72) Marcia Sivia.

"Gregory Collins is another name that stands out for me, as an AHS grad," he said. "There were other students, who had parents, from my 'era', the Rev Paul Maggos comes to mind. I wish that I could have kept up with all of them, but I was just a small part' of their new careers. But it sure gives me a good feeling to know, that I did play a small role, in their educations, and future lives! All of my recipients, in their own ways, were very special, and as I say the 'Cream of the Crop!'"

Birmingham said the two girls, who were my selections for this school year, also fit into this category.

"There are now, 50 people out there, who got some help, from me and my selection committee. This makes me very proud, to be in the business that I am in, and with a company (Shelter Insurance) that I represent," he said.