

A LITTLE MORE ALUMNI SING



Colin Mitchell

Former director Mr. Steve Garms conducts the concert choir with more than 20 choir alumni for the national anthem before the homecoming game. Ms. Cindy Johnston organized the group of former choir members in honor of the choir's 100th anniversary.

“Mr. (Steve) Garms left before my freshman year of high school, but it was really cool to see the choir alumni come back and perform with us to the national anthem, especially since the former choir director was conducting.”

-Claire Sanders, 12

KING & QUEEN

Preston Smith & April Swartz-Larson

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Dayana Maldonado & Aaron Russell

BEAU & SWEETHEART

Austin Ludwig & Makenzie Hughes

ATHLETICS

Byron Robinson & Evelyann Woodruff

FINE ARTS

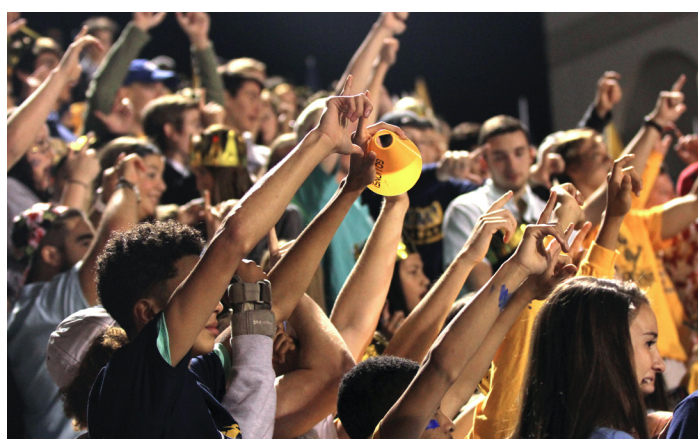
Mason Lane & Nina Orozco

CLUBS

Giovanni Sabala & Kendra Bailey



HOMECOMING ROYALTY



Ulises Velez

MAKES ME WANT TO SHOUT

After the Lions scored a field goal to lead the game into overtime, junior C.J. Givens hold up Ls to support the team. The Lions beat Denison in overtime 35-28. “I remember being in the student section and the game going into overtime,” C.J. said. “When we won the game everyone went out of their mind.”

FLY THE FLAG

In formation, Color Guard seniors Chad Malone, Robert Sanchez, junior Ryan Bagby and sophomore Rory King march toward the center of the field to present the colors during the national anthem. The JROTC color guard marched for all home games for all three MISD campuses. “I took someone's place during the third week of school by beating them in a color guard competition,” Chad said. “It's pretty competitive and involves a lot of memorization of different formations.”



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In celebration, April Swartz-Larson raises her rock signs after her name was announced as homecoming queen. April was the first openly gay student to win the title. “I did the rock sign, because I've always gone to that as my default pose for selfies and anxious social contact,” April said. “Honestly though, the suit was the best part. I love getting dressed up, but I don't like to wear dresses because gender is a spectrum.”

NOT YOUR AVERAGE ROYALTY

Openly gay student wins homecoming queen title

When people think of the stereotypical homecoming queen, she isn't wearing a black and purple tuxedo.

April Swartz-Larson was the first openly gay homecoming queen at McKinney High. The winner was announced during halftime at the game against Denison.

Her best friend Emilee Swim encouraged others to nominate her.

“At first it was as a joke. But then, I was like wow that would actually be super cool if a lesbian won homecoming queen,” Swim said. “She deserves it and she's an awesome human being. She wants to win really bad.”

Emilee got the word out to vote for April via Twitter.

“I tweeted that everyone should nominate April as homecoming queen and it got a lot of retweets and favorites,” Swim said. “The next day I showed up and Alexa Gronfein had made flyers.”

April didn't expect everyone to react in such a positive way and actually vote.

“I knew I had friends like Emilee and Alexa that were into it,” April said. “But that was really surprising how everyone got into it.”

It wasn't a surprise to principal Dr. Logan Faris when he found out that April was nominated.

“I think that our student body is very respectful and welcoming,” principal Dr. Logan Faris said. “The students that are on the court meet every criteria that we have laid out.”

At the end of the day, it was just a popularity vote.

“The fact that a person has a certain belief set or anything of that fashion shouldn't impact the student's vote,” Dr. Faris said. “They don't run for these offices, it's not something that you have a platform like, ‘I believe this and this is why you should vote for me,’ it's all friendships.”

There was controversy about a gay pride banner for the Pride Club, which isn't an official club, being torn down but April doesn't take it personally.

“That wasn't directed at me at all,” April said. “It was for the Pride Club, which I didn't even know we had, but there's been no negative reaction about me running.”

Her family and friends have been supportive.

“My parents have never been more proud of me my entire life,” April said. “Especially my dad.”

She hoped that one day it won't be abnormal for someone who is gay to win homecoming king or queen.

“It's a big deal on the outside,” April said. “But I think a lot of people who voted for me didn't even think about it as me being gay.”

by Nicole Stuessy