



## Mac Rives Award (Presented by Kevin Simons): Aditi N.

It is now my honor to present The Mac Rives Award. I'm very excited to do this, but let's see if I get through this without tearing up. This is our most prestigious award and the recipient is selected by a majority vote from the entire faculty. This award is named for the man who was first hired to serve as Head of School, which was then called Shawnee Country Day School. Mr. Rives was tragically killed in a car accident the summer before the school first opened. The board members who knew him wanted his important contributions to the founding of the school to be remembered. The student selected will also be awarded a \$100 scholarship. The Rives scholar is chosen based on the following criteria:

1. Intellectual curiosity and a respect for excellence.
2. A love of nature and respect for all forms of life.
3. Enjoyment and appreciation of athletics and team sports.
4. Imagination.
5. A gentle humor and wit.
6. A loving, compassionate concern towards others.
7. A desire to make the world a better place.

"The Mind of a Scientist, the Heart of a Poet, and the Ways of a Gentle Person."

Before I announce this year's recipient, I want to highlight a few of their qualities which reflect the dreams that Mr. Rives had for this school; these dreams which are as true today as they were then. A one-thousand-mile journey starts with a single step. Mr. Rives took that single step and all of these students before us today are carrying on that journey.

First, this student possesses the mind of a scientist. This individual truly loves learning for the sake of knowledge and understanding. They have no selfish purpose; they have no ulterior motives. They just want to learn, because they enjoy it and because they are curious. I think too often, students and people in general, fall into the trap of completing things just because they know that it's required of them, particularly when it doesn't fall under one's immediate interests. That is not true for this person. This student takes enjoyment from everything they learn. You will often hear them say the words, "I am excited to learn about \_\_\_\_\_" (that's a direct quote). You can fill that blank in with any subject and it will be a true statement. There is nothing that reflects the mind of a scientist more than such a pure love of learning. Moreover, everything this individual learns is tempered and made stronger through their discipline. When they learn, they don't do so, superficially. They put in the practice to master the concept. I've always

said, "knowledge is a hammer. It's a tool you can use it to build a house or to tear one down." If we inherit power without having to work for it, we do not gain the restraint necessary to do good with it. Like a black belt who masters a martial art which could cause harm to someone, but through the years of practice required to gain such a power, the discipline not to use it poorly is also acquired. This student not only possesses the power of knowledge both present and future, but also the vision to use it for good. I know wholeheartedly that wherever this student goes and whatever career they choose, they will be met with success and happiness, because they have the power of knowledge and the discipline to use it wisely. They have the mind of a scientist.

Next, this student has the heart of a poet. What is knowledge without passion? This student not only seeks out knowledge, but actively applies the lessons they learn in their day-to-day life. Through their actions, they live their life with purpose. They are driven. I think many of us are guilty of saying they will do something for a cause and then never getting around to it (myself included). That is not true of this individual. They seek out injustices, they seek ways to improve the lives of others, and use their knowledge alongside their heart to make true the world they envision. All of this is done genuinely with no expectation of reciprocation. I want to focus on that word, "genuine," because it's truly a word I would use to define this person. Through their deeds, their passion, and their good will they embody the heart of our school and community. The heart of a poet.

Finally, a gentler soul I have never known. This student cares for all creatures of this planet. I mean that extremely literally. So much so, that this person watches their feet carefully to make sure they don't step on small creatures or disturb ant hills. From the smallest of insects to humans in need, they treat all life forms on this Earth with respect and kindness. They not only have an appreciation for nature, but actively seek to preserve the natural beauty of this planet. They care for those they love and they show compassion and generosity to those who need it. More than anyone I've met, this individual understands that we are all one. All part of the same planet, floating endlessly through the vastness of space with only each other, and that we must care for each other and this planet.

There is so much more I could say about this individual, but let me sum it all up. This student loves learning. If you know this person as I do, then you know how much they dread Summer and Winter break. They would rather be in school. They are happiest when they are learning something new and exciting. If you know this student as I do, then you will know how much she appreciates and cares for nature. I often see her picking up plastic and recycling on campus and no one ever tells them to do so. She truly loves and respects this planet. If you know this student like I do, then you know how much she cares for others. She loves her friends and family, speaking only kind words and lifting spirits with her humor. I have never heard her speak negatively of anyone. Truly, she has a big heart which is fitting since she's very intent on pursuing cardiology. She lives her life with passion and her actions speak a beautiful poem of the potential for the good in all humans. Her potential is boundless, her words and actions,

poetry. I find it all fitting, especially since her first name means boundless and her last name means poet. You are truly living up to it. It has been my privilege, my honor, and my joy to have been to your teacher. On behalf of myself, Mac Rives, this school, and the entire Topeka Collegiate community, I present this award to (big pause).... Aditi N., may you live long and prosper.