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For Immediate Release
July 28, 2025

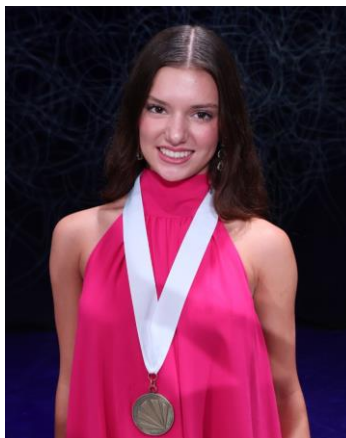
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Niceville High School Senior Named Distinguished Young Woman of Okaloosa County for the Class of 2026

Niceville High School senior Avary Ritenour has been named the Distinguished Young Woman of Okaloosa County for the Class of 2026. Avary stood out among 13 high school seniors from across the county, earning top honors in multiple categories and securing a total of \$3,750 in scholarships. Participants in the program were evaluated in five key categories: Scholastics (25%), Interview (25%), Talent (20%), Fitness (15%), and Self-Expression (15%). Avary won in four of the five categories: Scholastics, Talent, Self-Expression, and Fitness, and was named the overall winner.

Principal Charlie Marello praised her accomplishment, saying, “Avary is an exceptional young person who is very deserving of this honor. As well as being one of our top academic students, Avary is a leader amongst her classmates, and we are very proud of her!” Reflecting on her experience, Avary shared, “This experience pushed me way beyond my comfort zone, and I can honestly say I’ve grown so much because of it. For any rising seniors looking to challenge themselves and develop new skills, I’d highly recommend DYW—it’s an incredible opportunity!”

Throughout the upcoming year, Avary and her fellow Class of 2026 participants will represent the Distinguished Young Women program at community events, speaking engagements, and parades, while promoting the national “Be Your Best Self” initiative. This outreach program inspires self-esteem and excellence in youth through five guiding principles: Be Healthy, Be Involved, Be Studious, Be Ambitious, and Be Responsible. For more information about Distinguished Young Women of Okaloosa County, please get in touch with Brooklyn Peters at (850) 525-3144 or email okaloosa@DistinguishedYW.org.



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