



Front row (from left): Lafayette class of 2002 scholarship chair Jill McDonnell and the scholarship recipients: Jasmine Cross, Alex Johnson and Jessica Motz. Back row: Parents of the Lafayette students who are being remembered with scholarships in their names: Bob and Cindy Maessen, Kenneth and Cathy Gabel, Becky Trigg, as well as Lafayette class of 2002 member Rich Finneran.

Former Lafayette High class awards scholarships in memory of classmates

BY DIANE PLATTNER

A former graduating class from Lafayette High School in the Rockwood School District recently awarded three unique scholarships in memory of three of their fallen classmates.

On April 23, three Lafayette High School seniors at the Senior Awards Night were the first recipients of the Class of 2002 Memorial Scholarship. Members of the 2002 Lafayette graduating class created the scholarship last summer to honor three of their former Lafayette High classmates: Ryan Trigg, Eric Gabel and Bobby Maessen, who have since passed away. Trigg passed away in November of 2004; Gabel died in June of 2006 and Maessen died in February of 2007.

"As my class had sat side-by-side in school with these boys for years, their loss was still fresh to us, and we decided we had a unique opportunity for some good to come out of such tragedy," said Jill McDonnell, scholarship chair.

Fellow classmates were generous with donations that enabled the creation of three \$500 scholarships to be awarded to three graduating seniors, McDonnell said.

McDonnell and another representative from the class of 2002, along with two Lafayette High officials and members of the Trigg, Gabel and Maessen families, reviewed the applications. Trigg's recipient had to be involved with ROTC, Gabel's had to attend Rockwood schools K-12 and Maessen's recipient had to demonstrate Christian values through leadership, McDonnell said.

Trigg's recipient was Jasmine Cross, who serves as a cadet/captain in the junior ROTC; is involved with the Black Student

Union and Renaissance Student Steering Committee; and plans to attend the University of Missouri-Columbia to study biology.

Trigg's mother, Becky, said she is pleased that the scholarship will provide an opportunity that Cross might not have been otherwise able to achieve.

"It's also a wonderful way to keep Ryan's name and memory alive," Becky said.

Gabel's recipient was Jessica Motz, a first-generation college student, who has worked an average of 20 or more hours a week to help finance a college education. Motz, who plans to attend Kansas State to study interior architecture, has been involved in student council, Key Club, Class Advisory and softball.

Gabel's mother, Cathy, said her son also was trying to finance his education at the time of his death.

"It's important for any kid to know that there's money out there to help them get through this on their own," Cathy said.

Maessen's recipient was Alex Johnson, president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, who plans to attend Harding University in Searcy, Ark., and continue more mission trips.

Jennifer Clark, who knew both Johnson and Maessen and wrote one of Johnson's recommendation letters, said she believes Johnson can carry out Maessen's passion to reach people.

Donations to the scholarship fund can be sent to:

Class of 2002 Memorial Scholarships
Lafayette High School
c/o Beth Brasel
17050 Clayton Road
Wildwood, MO 63011