

High School Woman of Excellence & Recipient of the LLWC Foundation Scholarship:

Elise Marie LaFleur

St. Thomas Moore Catholic High School – Abbeville



Elise's passion for involvement began at a very young age as she was elected an officer in her school's 4-H Club each year in middle school. As soon as Elise began high school, she earned the respect of her peers by being elected freshmen class representative on the student council. She also joined the Ambassadors Team, Campus Ministry, the Speech & Debate Team, and the Beta Club where she remained a member her entire four years of high school. Elise also served on the Louisiana State 4-H Citizenship Board as a camp coordinator and spearheaded a citizenship camp for a group of over seventy-five middle schoolers.

Elise also discovered in her freshmen year her favorite pastime for the rest of her high school career – speech and debate. Competing in extemporaneous speaking during the entirety of her first year of high school at speech and debate tournaments all over Louisiana, Elise was thrilled when she qualified in May of 2013 for the National Catholic Forensic League Tournament. During the rest of her high school years, Elise also qualified for national competition at the National Speech and Debate Association National Tournament, the Glenbrook Tournament, and the Harvard National Forensics Tournament in both extemporaneous speaking and congressional debate.

Using the skills she learned in speech and debate, Elise found multiple ways to give back to her community. One of these avenues was the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council in Lafayette. Through monthly meetings with the mayor starting her junior year, Elise was able to comment on issues of importance to youth in Lafayette Parish to the mayor with other likeminded peers. Beginning her senior year, Elise was a member of the Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council. This opportunity furthered her

interest in solving issues for youth, but this time on a statewide scale. In her local community, Elise found a way to give back through being on the marketing committee for a charity music festival that St. Thomas More's junior class puts on each year called "Hopefest." Elise made numerous phone calls, knocked on doors, and networked to help raise money for Options, the special needs program at St. Thomas More and Healing House, a safe place for children who are grieving a major loss in their life due to death. Through these experiences, Elise's interest in social justice and political awareness only continued to grow.

Despite being a part of these activities and many others, Elise maintained a 3.8 GPA throughout her high school career, in addition to being selected as a St. Thomas More Top Cat award recipient two times. Elise was also highlighted as a Breakfast of Champions recipient, a State Foreign Languages Festival honoree, an Louisiana High School Speech League Impromptu Speaking runner-up state champion, a Writes of Spring (Poetry) Award recipient, a State Rally Girls Vocal Solo (High Voices) superior rating recipient, St. Thomas More's La. Girls State delegate, and a Tulane Book Award recipient. In her senior year, Elise earned a National Beta Club Scholarship, and was honored with a place on the Louisiana All State Congressional Debate Team.

Elise will be attending the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 2016 where she plans to double-major in Politics and Media Studies with aspirations of working on Capitol Hill in the near future.