



NATALIE WEIDENBACH

VALEDICTORIAN DRESDEN

GPA: 4.0

Hometown: Martin

Previous schools: Westview
High School

Favorite subjects: Math and
Large Animal

Favorite teacher: Kim
Castleman

Plans after high school: I will
be attending the University
of Tennessee at Martin and
studying animal science.

REFLECTIONS

from the Class of 2020

The Class of 2020 was born during 9/11 and is graduating during COVID-19. These times have brought uncertainty into our lives; however, they have also brought us greater flexibility and resilience. Members of the Class of 2020 will not only be more thankful and grateful for the jobs they have and the activities they can participate in, but we will also never take what we have for granted.

We have seen how quickly our everyday lives can change. We have also seen how strongly the actions of others and the media affect us and the people around us. With this knowledge and firsthand experience, we know to not believe everything we see and not to be so easily influenced by the media. We will be more flexible when changes have to be made to our routines, and we will be able to bounce right back when catastrophe strikes.

This situation has enabled us to communicate through various media, which has opened up new ways of meeting and socializing. Even though we cannot travel or go to conventions, we know there are other options in order to get business done.

If anything, our generation is more determined than any other. We know life goes on when our situations change and that we must adapt in order to survive. In addition, self-sufficiency will be a huge part of our generation for years come. Growing our own produce and livestock will be the only way to guarantee that we have food when bad times come around. Nature will not fail us, and we should forever be thankful for our hardworking farmers that do not stop when the sun goes down. When everyone else is sitting around relaxing, our farmers are working hard to make sure we have food on our plates and clothes on our back.

Our generation's future is unknowable. We do not know if social distancing will become a new normal or if our lives will get back to the way they were. I fully believe our generation will cherish family time more than ever before, and sitting at the table with family for supper will come back around. Our generation will be able to talk to our kids and grandkids about the events that occurred during our senior year of high school that no one else was able to experience.

COVID-19 truly made for a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the Class of 2020.