

## Living in Virtue, Alumni Aubrey Lister



(Front to back) Izzy Birsinger, Emma Holcomb, Aubrey Lister, Sarah Charles, Amelia McCain

Aristoi's virtues include honesty, wisdom, justice, courage, temperance, respect, humility, charity, and magnanimity. Teachers provide examples for students throughout their time at Aristoi, including *Communitas*. Students read articles and books with characters that embody the virtues.

Virtuous examples abound in Aristoi's growing alumni community, too, especially, when you meet alumni like Aubrey Lister, Class of 2022. The Aristoi virtues come to mind when you

speak with her and hear her story. Lister demonstrates what it means to put virtues into practice and how these important principles can guide your decisions after Aristoi and impact your life.

Ms. Lister isn't shy about sharing her goals for the future or what it will take to get there. She has a plan, detailed, carefully crafted, and well-thought-out. She knows where she is going, what she is doing, and how she is going to get there. She is determined to help others in such a way that her 12-year plan will get her there.

Lister transferred to Aristoi in her junior year, looking for a good school that was closer to home. She and her family had been driving from Cypress to Bellaire daily to attend her previous school and it took a toll on her family. With Lister soon driving, her parents wanted a shorter, safer drive.

Jumping into a new school is never easy, and Lister was determined not to like Aristoi. That plan fell apart rather quickly. Lister explains, "I didn't really want to like Aristoi at first because I was still stuck on my previous school. The second person I met at Aristoi was Izzy Birsinger. She stood out because she introduced herself to me. She was so

nice. After that, I thought, ‘OK, maybe this school won’t be so bad.’ But then, I fell in love with it. The friends I made at Aristoi are still my closest friends, even now.”

Aristoi’s teachers made the transition easier, too, as they helped and provided a bit of extra guidance as Lister adjusted to the classical education model. There were a variety of teachers and administrators that helped throughout her time here: Ms. Cosgray (Art teacher), Mrs. Laich (Art teacher), Mr. Watson (former Head of Upper School), Mrs. Locheed (current Headmaster, former Humane Letters III teacher), Ms. Mitzithras (Latin teacher), and Mrs. Cummins (Guidance Counselor).

“I liked the classical part. It was more challenging and I enjoyed it,” she says. A big reader, Lister enjoyed most of the reading and the discussions.

There was that one book, however, grins Lister, “*The Great Gatsby*. I could not get behind that book. That was tough. Mrs. Locheed made the class great. You could tell that she cared for the class,” Lister continues, “She was an awesome teacher. She was funny, but she kept the class moving along. I haven’t had any professors like Mrs. Locheed in terms of toughness, but her toughness and the course, in general, are helping me now. Teachers and professors can either make or break the class.”

Lister, finishing up the year at Prairie View A&M University, admits that her transition to college life was a little difficult at the start. “I’ve adjusted pretty well, now. Prairie View is a very beautiful campus. Both of my parents went there and my cousin just graduated this past winter. So, it’s a big family school,” she continues, “It’s bigger than what I was used to. Aristoi is small. Getting used to the bigger environment, not being with my parents all the time, having to encourage myself to go to all the classes, do the homework, all that stuff. That was tough.”



Picking new friends is a big adjustment, as well. Lister says, “Picking friends -- that can have such an influence on how you do.”

A member of the Class of 2020, Lister had to figure out how to manage the COVID pandemic, online school, and do everything differently than before. After graduating from Aristoi, COVID altered her plans a bit. She had to be flexible and take into account what the next best thing for her was. She says, “I did Lone Star (one year). That was a big decision that summer because I wasn’t comfortable going off to school with COVID being what it was. There weren’t any vaccines at that time. So, I took a couple of classes at Lone Star, which transferred over.”

Lister is already enrolled in a Dental Assistant program for the summer. Not shy about the workload, Lister details the program, “It takes 12 weeks, a 40-hour externship, and shadowing at a dental office. Then, every Saturday, we have in-person labs and class. We also have schoolwork online. We were CPR certified last week, so that was cool. ”

The dental assistant program isn't required, but Lister believes it's a prudent choice. “I'm doing the dental assistant program first. I'm not a biology major and I wanted the extra experience when I apply to dental school. I want the experience to go on my resume, to give me a leg up.”

Lister's career path looks like this: dental school, med school, residency. She will be a dentist, a doctor, then a surgeon. Her dream is to attend Texas A&M Dental School in Dallas. It will take 12 to 15 years to become an oral maxillofacial surgeon.

“I had braces from middle school to the very beginning of high school. I hated smiling. I was embarrassed to smile. I had a huge gap and weird spacing in my mouth. That changed my confidence and how I interacted with other people,” she explains.

“People's perspective of you changes just because of your oral health and how your teeth look.” Lister did some research to prove it. “There were some videos of women, one with a nice smile, the other with crazy teeth. The people interviewed didn't think too highly of the woman with the poor oral health. It goes to show that oral health can have a big impact on your life. People who have a better smile are more likely to get the better job or to go out on a date. It really does change your life.”

Lister's confidence is much higher after her own stint in braces. Understanding the impact of braces and good oral hygiene has changed her life. She now wants to help others gain the confidence they need and deserve. She says, “I want to be a part of sharing that and helping change that with other people. Being in the dental assistant program now is pretty cool. The other ladies in the program with me feel the same way. They feel that fixing their teeth boosted their confidence, and how they feel about themselves. They want to help other people. It's nice to be around other people who feel the same way as you do.”

Favorite Aristoi memories include: Field Day, the Katy Rice Parade (we were champions!), and Homecoming. Lister fondly remembers, “Lunch Break every day was great with my group of friends. There was always a debate or conversation, or a card game. I loved it because there weren't any phones allowed so you actually were talking to people rather than online and on social media.”

The Renaissance Festival with the Art group also topped her list, “That was really fun, seeing all the costumes. Von (Hart), the costume she put together was great. And seeing the plays Ms. Judeh was working on.”

To current and prospective students and families, Lister implores, “Don’t judge the school based on its outward appearance. The people and academics challenge you and help you be a better student. The school challenges you to think more and listen to a wider range of perspectives. Give it a chance.”

And to parents, Lister recommends, “Make sure your kids are doing their homework and reading. And, staying up to date with it. That will impact how they do on the test. You actually have to know the stuff and write it out. It’s not multiple choice.”

Lister is currently looking for a job and later in the summer will take some online classes to add more credits to her transcript.