

Trip to the blue oval

By: Sydney Burlage @burlage_sydney

Every year, the top high school track athletes in Iowa compete to be a part of the Drake Relays. This event takes place at the Drake track and field stadium and is a dream that many students strive to achieve. This year, 7 events from Marion qualified to make the trip to Des Moines and compete. Madison Prier, junior, qualified for the girls in the 400m hurdles. Prier said, "My favorite part was the environment and being surrounded by amazing athletes. I've never run at Drake Relays before, but always have wanted to." Along with Prier 6 athletes from the boys track team also made the trip. The other 6 events were Shane Erb, junior, in the 1600 and 3200; Alex Mota, sophomore, in the open 100; Sam Murphy, senior, in the open 100; Garret Wagner, in shot put; and the 4x100m relay of DaeQuan Johnson, senior, Sam Murphy, Lucas Unsen, all seniors, and Alex Mota, sophomore.

Like everything else this year, the meet had to make

some changes due to the strange circumstances in the last 12 months. The event, which normally runs over the span of 3 days, got shortened to just one day of competition for high school students. "We couldn't be in the arena unless we were running our race, and we didn't get to spend the night or anything," Prier said. While some of the fun aspects like cheering others on were sadly not possible, Prier is optimistic that State, also held at Drake, may have less strict requirements later in the season.

Not only is this accomplishment a big deal for the athletes, but the coaches too. Jason Debroski, boys' assistant coach, said, "I always love getting to see the guys in a different setting away from the track so that was a great part again this year. It is also great just getting to see your kids compete on the blue oval." Erb finished 17th and 13th in the 1600 and the 3200 respectively, Mota 20th and Murphy 32nd in the open 100, the 4x100 relay 23rd, and Wagner 2nd in shot put.

Drake is a place to showcase talent and make memories. It is also the first taste of how professional track meets are run for kids that plan to run at the collegiate level. With



Madison Prier, junior, runs the 400 meter hurdles at Drake Relays.

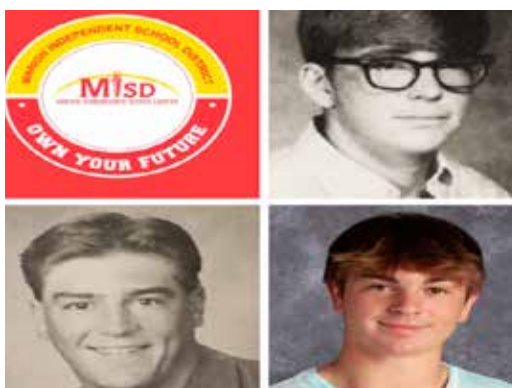
the huge meet being cancelled last year, all the athletes were happy to just have the opportunity to run against the best of the best from all over the state.

Marion generations

By: Jacob Shaffer @jacobshaffer_18

School traditions are usually things that students participate in to benefit the community or show some Marion pride. Such things like the Burning of the M at Homecoming or One Day in May. But, sometimes the students themselves are the traditions, being the most recent in a family legacy in this school and community. It speaks to the character of Marion someone who grew up here decided that this city was worth staying in and could even be a good place to raise a family. Stereotypically, most Midwest high school students dream of the day they're finally free from the ties that bind them to a place they don't even want to be in, dreaming instead of warmer climates in California or Texas. A city as charming as this one has a

way of convincing people to stay though. Jacob Wilkinson, '22, is one of the students at Marion whose family tree in the city goes back a few generations. Wilkinson has been here his entire life. High school is still a vapid narcissistic place, but some of the stress of reputation and cliques and drama of that sort is eliminated with an established fam-



The Wilkinson family school pictures, including Glen '73, Greg '96, and Jacob Wilkinson '22, in order.

ily ancestry within the school already. "It makes me feel good, it gives you a sense of relief that your parents have a reputation and you're not a stranger," Wilkinson said. Having family so close definitely puts the mind at ease, but it's still a very different school from when students graduated twenty or even ten years ago.

The buildings, staff, athletic complexes and traditions have all changed throughout the years, but the most significant change is most definitely the atmosphere. School has changed drastically, and even Wilkinson thinks his parents or grandparents wouldn't be able to fit in in

the modern age. "How people grow up today is totally different to how people grew up back then," Wilkinson said, "There's just too many differences like education, technology and social media." As the times change, so too must the city and its school. No matter how different the students become every year, the absolute focus has always been on learning and providing education; something that is done exceptionally well. It's probably thanks to the undisputed attention to learning that convinces so many young people to decide not to move and instead settle down here. After all, it's only natural to want your kids to have as good of an education as you.

At the end of the day, the greatest and most important tradition in this school is following the Marion Way: respect, responsibility, and integrity. It may seem childish, but those are the foundations of a successful society, and continuing that ensures that this city will keep growing and be the best place to live in all of Iowa.

