** News Release**

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**Heritage Bank & Trust Honors Youth Advisory Board Students With a Virtual Graduation**

***(April 22, 2020) —*** Heritage Bank & Trust honored the eighteen high school seniors that participated in their Youth Advisory Board on Wednesday, April 15 via Zoom. The bank also had Columbia State Community College student Danny Grooms as a board member this year as well. Grooms has been a Bank employee for over two years.

 This is Heritage Bank & Trust’s third year to have a Youth Advisory Board. The board was created in October of 2017 as a partnership with Maury County Public Schools, Agathos Classical School, Columbia Academy, and Zion Christian Academy.

This 2019-2020 Youth Advisory Board students are Jesenia Silva and Will Patterson (Columbia Central High School), Sam Boyd (Zion Christian Academy), Jay Marks and Katherine Pugh (Hampshire Unit School), Leah Vitrano and Clark Hill (Mount Pleasant High School), Marah Bates and Holden Cornett (Culleoka Unit School), Briar Mabry and E.J. Hill (Santa Fe High School), Sophie Parrett and Olivia Wolfe (Columbia Academy), and Ella Seago and Asher Black (Agathos Classical School).

Students were given the opportunity to apply for the Youth Advisory Board last fall and students from each school were chosen to participate in the program. The Bank held meetings every month, with the first meeting being held in September. Each high school in Maury County was represented on our board.

“This was a great partnership with the schools in our community,” says President and CEO Jim Robinson. “Giving back to the communities we serve is an important part of our mission and we are proud to have offered this opportunity for students in Maury County. Technology is continually advancing the way we do business and better serve our customers. We were excited and proud to host this graduation ceremony virtually for the students. ”

Each month, the students learned something new. Topics included careers in banking, information about community banks, what it means to be on a business or nonprofit board, college savings tips and more.

Heritage Bank & Trust also offered a $500 scholarship to one student. The students were given the opportunity to write an essay about what they learned while serving on the Youth Advisory Board. Sophie Parrett, a senior at Columbia Academy, won the scholarship contest. Parrett has plans to attend Harding University this fall.

“Interacting with this group was a great way for us to understand the wants and needs of a younger generation,” says Marketing Director Claire Hill. “We shared knowledge with the students, but we gained so much information about their banking habits from interacting with them throughout the year. We were especially thrilled that every single high school in Maury County was represented.”

The bank also set up job shadowing opportunities for the students. Columbia Central High School student Jesenia Silva job shadowed last fall.

Chief Risk Officer Shelli Golden, Human Resources Director Letha Chandler and Marketing Director Claire Hill led the program planning throughout the year.

Rising seniors are encouraged to apply for the Youth Advisory Board in the fall. Applications will be available with school guidance counselors and high school business teachers this August.

Special guests Dr. Marczak, Mayor Molder and Richard Law attended the meeting as special guests. Parents of the students as well as teachers Jan Thomason of Santa Fe High School, Tammy Hunter of Columbia Central High School, and Collette Estep of Columbia Academy joined the virtual graduation as well.

Heritage Bank & Trust is a community bank with locations in Columbia, Mount Pleasant and Lawrenceburg. As of March 2020, Heritage Bank & Trust had total assets nearing $184 million.

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