



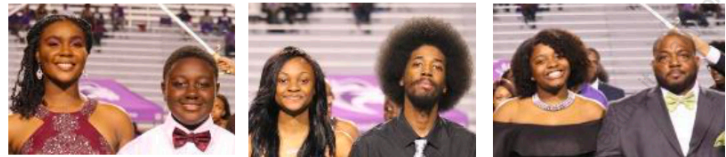
Student body President and Vice President Amani Jamison and Kamiya Johnson run around the floor, egging each grade on for the spirit stick. "At this point we are trying to hype up the crowd to see who really wants the spirit stick for the Homecoming pep rally. This was one of the most hectic but best pep rallies I have been part of," Jamison said.



Junior Joshua Bailey talks about performing at pep rallies. "My favorite part of pep rallies is the hype and energy from everybody," Bailey said.

A [Walk] to Remember

Homecoming Queen nominees share how they picked their escort



Senior Armani Wright chose "my brother because my dad isn't here and I wanted someone very special to share my last Homecoming with." **Senior Kamiya Washington** chose "my Uncle James because he is a strong male figure in my life and literally does anything for me." **Senior LoRen Suber** chose "my dad to walk me because he is a big part of my support system and I wanted him to experience this moment with me."

a heroic homecoming

Naimah Feliciano runs for homecoming court despite being wheelchair-bound

The minute her name was called at the Homecoming Pep Rally, senior Naimah Feliciano was met with thunderous applause as she wheeled her way through the gym.

"I was born with spina bifida, which means right at the bottom of my spinal cord, there's a hole," Feliciano said. "First it was a bubble, but it turned into a hole, and it caused me to crawl."

"I ended up getting a callus on my left foot that got really infected and started going to my bone. They had to cut it off because it was a life or death situation. For the right leg, I saw my skin starting to form the callus so I just told them to remove it."

Feliciano was nine at the time.

"I didn't really know what was going on with my body," Feliciano said. "At first it was hard. I was confused as to what a wheelchair was and how it worked. And then, after a while they had customized it to where I could take the footrests off or the armrests off. They gave me gloves to grip the wheels, [but] sometimes it's hard, especially when it's raining outside."

Everyday activities began to demand extra effort.

"I can still do a lot of things that I used to do, but sometimes going to places is hard. A lot of times, people don't have cars that my wheelchair can go into, and a lot of times there are steps going into the buildings," Feliciano said.

Despite physical challenges, Feliciano decided to run for Homecoming.

"I like to do things that people think I won't do. I saw the opportunity for that and was like 'hey.' My little sister — she's like

my best friend — she actually found out about it because she was going through my emails. She saw that they were having Homecoming and talked me into running," Feliciano said. "She basically was saying how I'm her role model and she looks up to me. She likes for me to do spontaneous things."

It wasn't easy for Feliciano as the competition began.

"I do believe it's a popularity contest more than anything. You have to know the kids, and talk to them to get them to like you enough to vote," Feliciano said. "I don't really have friends at this school so it was kind of hard to do it because I didn't know if I was going to get any votes or not."

Feliciano knew it was a matter of stepping out of her comfort zone.

"I think most people are scared to talk to me because they don't know how to approach me because of my wheelchair and I have no legs," Feliciano said. "They don't know if what they'll say is offensive, but I personally don't care. Ask what you have to ask."

As a shy, not very talkative person, Feliciano defeated her physical and emotional barriers by running for Homecoming Queen.

"You have to be confident in what you're doing," Feliciano said. "Be brave enough to actually go in front of all those people and get people to vote for you. Basically, just be yourself."



How you [shine]

"I'm someone you can approach. You can stop me in the hallway and I can just talk to you about anything."
// Carrington Blackwell, senior