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Studying = Notre Dame scholarship

By Patrick Crowley • pcrowley@nky.com • July 14, 2009

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EDGEWOOD - When Annie Wehry was in fifth grade, she came home one day from St. Pius X grade school, her report card as usual filled with A's, and asked her dad how college is paid for.

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"The question was a little out of the blue," said her dad, Mark Wehry, a computer systems analyst. "But I told her keep up the good grades and you can go wherever you want. She said, 'Well, that's what I'm going to do.'"

Now 18 and valedictorian of the 2009 graduating class at Notre Dame Academy in Park Hills, Annie is fulfilling a dream by attending the University of Notre Dame in the fall.

She applied for Notre Dame on what she thought was a lark. Notre Dame's \$50,000 annual tuition was simply out of reach for the family.

"I applied, but I didn't even visit the campus," Annie said. "I didn't want to see what I didn't think I could have."

But outstanding grades, an ACT score of 34, a resume of extracurricular activities and community service and a perseverance forged by disappointment and determination resulted in a scholarship to the acclaimed school in South Bend, Ind.

"When life gets hard," Annie said in her valedictorian address, "just think back on that time you stayed up until 4 o'clock in the morning for three consecutive nights trying to finish the infamous research paper that you surely procrastinated on."

"That is motivation, determination and drive at its best and is absolutely necessary in order to move past the setbacks of life," she said. "Appreciate your mistakes, because they can teach you more effectively than any professor."

The smartest kids in school always make it look easy, but it rarely is. I could write this column about any of the students at Northern Kentucky public and private high schools who graduated at the top of their class. Their names are different but the stories are often the same.

Goals set early in life; supportive parents; strong teachers; an appreciation of success and hard work inside and outside the classroom; staying home to study when the other kids were partying, playing video games or hanging out; striving in the face of adversity, disappointment and failure; a thirst to succeed, a hunger to overachieve.



Annie Wehry poses in front of the Golden Dome at the University of Notre Dame

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