

NJSIAA Scholar-Athlete Luncheon honors 387 students



May 30, 2023

Allyson Koerner has attracted plenty of attention for her pitching prowess this spring for the Clayton High School softball team.

The praise for her skill inside the pitching circle is much appreciated, but there's another part of her high school experience that's gotten less recognition - her outstanding academics.

That's what made one recent event extra-special for the senior, who was among the honorees at the 30th Annual NJSIAA Scholar Athlete Luncheon, which was held on May 21 at the Pines Manor in Edison.

Each NJSIAA member school could send one student to the event that drew a crowd of 1,100. There were 387 students honored, who were awarded \$500 scholarships thanks to the generosity of the association's corporate sponsors and other donors.

"We have a lot of great student-athletes at Clayton, and I feel really honored to be the one selected for my school," said Koerner, who will continue her softball career at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania. "It's a true honor to be recognized for my academics, and it's great to be surrounded by so many other people."

While the majority of the attendees were successful athletes, many in multiple sports, their presence at the luncheon was based on their academics. That point was brought home in opening remarks delivered by Colleen Maguire, the NJSIAA Executive Director.

Since its start in 1994, the NJSIAA Scholar Athlete program has honored over 9,000 New Jersey high school students and distributed over \$2.8 million in college scholarships.

Jackson Lockhart completed a standout football career at Dumont last fall, and will continue on at Monmouth University. He too was proud to be

recognized just for his play as a lineman, but as an honor student at the Bergen County school.

"This a great honor," he said. "I love to be able to represent my school on and off the field. I want people to know that I'm much more than just a football player. I take everything that I do in life seriously, and my class work is a very big part of that. It's great to see so many people who put in so much time and effort into everything they do - sports, school, and life in general - be recognized together at one event."

That point was echoed by Carly Klein, a track athlete from Bridgewater-Raritan High School, who is headed to the University of Delaware.

"I'm so happy to be honored," she said "I was taken by surprise when I was told. I think this event is great, especially since our academics are being recognized."

More than 60 sponsors and donors contributed the scholarships awarded at the luncheon. Among them were New Jersey State Coaches Association (130 scholarships), Wilson Sporting Goods (30 scholarships), New Jersey Advance Media (30 scholarships), Wakefern/ShopRite (30 scholarships), Rothman Orthopaedics (20 scholarships), Paragon Marketing Group (20 scholarships), New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association (20 scholarships) and American Dairy Association North East (10 scholarships).

