

SSSD graduation ends an era, valedictorian looking ahead

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By Lynne Slack Shedlock

Staff Writer

Scranton State School for the Deaf senior Dionne Grabousky was so young when she entered the school, she doesn't even remember her earliest experiences there.

Now she's preparing to go the National Technical School for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y.

Miss Grabousky, 17, of Moscow, and 11 of her classmates graduated from SSSD during the school's 42nd commencement Thursday morning.

"The time went really quickly," said Miss Grabousky, the school's valedictorian. "I'm going to miss the school, but it's time to move on."

Miss Grabousky's father, Tom, attended the state school when he was a child. One of her two younger brothers, Tyler, is currently a student there.

Miss Grabousky entered the state school as a preschooler.

"I actually knew how to sign (before coming to the school)," she said. "I'm fluent in two languages. My mother (Linda) is hearing, so I communicate with her in one way and with my father in another."

Being at the school allowed her to fully participate in activities, Miss Grabousky said.

"Communication is the important key here, and I get involved with things I couldn't do at a public school," she said.

Although Miss Grabousky doesn't have a favorite subject, her academic excellence earned her membership in the National Honor Society, one of three members from the school.

Her favorite sport is volleyball and she was named the school's most valuable player this year. Miss Grabousky also plays basketball and track and field. Her deafness makes no difference when playing a hearing team, she said.

"The important thing is our team has to work hard," she said. "We have to focus on what we do, not what they do."

LIST OF GRADUATES

Steven R. Boyce, Jeffrey A. Brown Jr., Casandra M. Conde, Melissa Holly Goodman Gess, Elizabeth Stroud Goodman, Dionne L. Grabousky, Justin M. Hontz, Tara FrancesHowe, Michelle L. McCaffery, Dana Renae Reagan, Wayne John Yechimowica and Sheila Tollefson.

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