

A bunch with bright futures



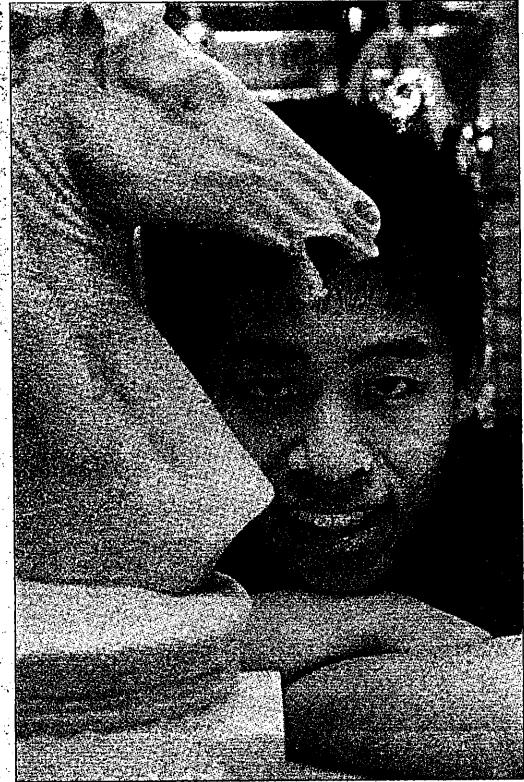
BEFORE SHE WAS FAMOUS

Jessica Simpson is now a famous singer and movie star (thanks to *Dukes of Hazzard*). But in the mid-1990s, she was head cheerleader at Richardson North Junior High School and later homecoming queen twice at Pearce High School in Richardson, even though she left for stardom before graduating.

Peter Yeh's already earned a full-ride scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas, Jazmyn Green looks like she's getting one, too, because of her basketball skills. David Escamilla is honoring his Latino heritage by teaching Hispanic kids how to debate. Emilee Nelson has emerged as a national star in high school acting competitions. And Ryane Askew is in a professional jazz combo when she's not leading Arlington Martin High School's marching band to glory.

These are our Five to Watch for the coming year among Dallas-area high schools. They'll all make news before next May — and beyond. But we wanted to be the first to bring them to your attention.

Zach Krohn



AMY CONN-GUTIERREZ/Special Contributor

Peter Yeh has won seven state chess championships.

PETER YEH

Age: 16

Year: Junior

School: Berkner High School in Richardson

Why we're watching: In March, Peter won the 2005 Texas State Scholastic High School Chess Championship and was awarded a full ride to the University of Texas at Dallas (which recruits for its championship chess squad as aggressively as other schools go after football stars).

Peter's also been named the Texas State Scholastic chess champion for seven years in a row.

This year: Peter is preparing for the many chess tournaments that he will compete in. His goal: to attain Chess Master status. "If he works hard, Peter can easily get to Master status this year," says his father, Bruce Yeh.

College plans: He's still thinking it over, although it's nice to have the big UTD scholarship to fall back on.

Hobbies: In his free time, Peter says, he likes to do what "normal" kids do: "I really like computer games."

Influences: Along with his parents, Peter attributes much of his success to his older brother, Albert. "He is the one who first got me into chess," Peter said. "He taught me a lot of what I know now."

Incidentally: Peter competed in the 2005 Tae Kwon Do Junior Olympic Championships in San Antonio, winning silver and gold medals. He is also a four-time UIL All-Region violinist.

RYANE ASKEW

Age: 17

Year: Senior

School: Martin High School in Arlington

Why we're watching: For the second year in a row, Ryane will be head drum major for the 300-member Martin marching band. Under Ryane's leadership, Martin, a marching band powerhouse, will try to dominate area and state competitions (like it usually does). "The band is going to do big things this year," Ryane says. "I can feel it."

This year: Ryane's goal is to become a better musician. She plays both clarinet and jazz piano, and was All-Area in both instruments last year. She's counting on a repeat performance. "I am really excited for the competitions," she says.

College plans: She hasn't decided yet.

Front-runners are the University of Texas at Austin, Texas Christian

University and Texas A&M. She wants to major in a business-related field. "I want a job that I will be happy with for the rest of my life," Ryane says. "But I always want to be involved with music."

Influences: Ryane's musical role models are McCoy Tyner and Norah Jones. "I actually had jazz lessons from two of Norah Jones' teachers," Ryane says. "It was really cool."

Incidentally: She and three musician friends play regularly at Tony's Pizza in Arlington on Saturday nights, with Ryane on piano. They call their jazz combo JPO.



DARNELL RENEE/Special Contributor

Arlington Martin senior Ryane Askew, who was All-Area in clarinet and jazz piano last year, is eager for this year's competitions.