

## JROTC Students Celebrate at the 11th Annual Col. Donald M. Wade Joint Services Military Ball

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High school students in the Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps — better known as JROTC — gathered Friday, December 13, 2019, for the 11th annual Col. Donald M. Wade Joint Services Military Ball held at North Point High School. The annual event celebrates the program that has a membership of more than 860 students attending one of the county's seven high schools. The ball is an opportunity for instructors to honor seniors who have participated in their respective schools JROTC.

Emma O'Rourke, a St. Charles High School sophomore, has been a member of her school's JROTC since she was a freshman. She is interested in enlisting in the U.S. Navy after graduation and likes the opportunities and skills JROTC gives her. "And it's fun," O'Rourke said. "It feels like a family. I have grown as a person. It has given me a lot of confidence."

Four branches of the U.S. Armed Forces are represented by the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) JROTC programs. Maurice J. McDonough and Thomas Stone high schools have U.S. Army programs; the U.S. Navy is represented by La Plata and Westlake high schools; St. Charles High School has a U.S. Marine Corps program; and the U.S. Air Force is represented by Henry E. Lackey and North Point high schools.

The ball is named in honor of the late Col. Donald Wade, who served as a member of the Board of Education of Charles County and was instrumental in bringing the JROTC program to CCPS. The Joint Services ball incorporates various military traditions including the presentation of colors, toasts and honoring Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action.

After dinner — which is prepared and served by students in North Point's culinary arts Career and Technical Education (CTE) program — more traditions are honored including having the youngest and oldest cadets cut a cake, and a king and queen of the ball randomly selected from the names of seniors submitted at the start of the evening.

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