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### **Kolb, Williams Named Graf Award Recipients at Watertown High School**

For more than 60 years, the William I. Graf Award has recognized the top graduating male and female athletes at Watertown High School. On Wednesday, Kira Kolb was selected as the school's top female recipient, and Daesean Williams was chosen for the top male honor for this year's Graf awards.

The William I. Graf Award was created in 1954 by the Italian American Civic Association to honor Mr. Graf's leadership and civic engagement in the community. Mr. Graf was a multi-sport coach and athletic director at Watertown High School. Graf award honorees are expected to have participated in at least two or more varsity sports in their senior year and showcase exemplary individual characteristics in sportsmanship, discipline, fair play, training, ability and academics.

Kolb was a five-year varsity player on the soccer and lacrosse teams at Watertown. She helped guide the Cyclones to a Section 3 girls lacrosse championship and a New York State Final Four appearance in 2015. She was also chosen as a Frontier League All-Star in lacrosse and soccer. Kolb also participated on the varsity girls basketball team for two years. She will study visual communications and graphics at Mercyhurst College (Pa.), where she also earned a scholarship to play lacrosse.

Williams was an accomplished five-year varsity wrestler for the Cyclones. He notched first-place honors in Section 3 in his weight class and qualified for state competition earlier this year. He participated on the varsity track team for three years and played two years of varsity football. As a senior, Williams was an All-North and All-State performer as a running back for the football team. He plans to major in business at Hartwick College in Oneonta and play football for the Division III program.

More than 100 graduating high school seniors have received the Graf Award. Watertown High School's athletics staff selects the recipients each year, and the Italian American Civic Association presents the award. Following the death of Mr. Graf's son, William A. Graf, in 2013, the family decided to honor him by funding a financial award for recipients. William A. Graf, who also exemplified the traits of the award, attended Watertown High School and played several varsity sports coached by his father, William I.

Each recipient receives a financial award of \$500. The Northern New York Community Foundation was selected to help continue the Graf family legacy by administering the fund in perpetuity and raising awareness of the award for students striving to earn the honor.

The Northern New York Community Foundation makes grants to support the work of non-profit organizations and provides scholarships to individuals in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. The Foundation has been built and added to from gifts (both while living and through their legacy plans) by individuals and organizations committed to meeting the changing needs of Northern New York, as well as supporting specific charitable interests and passions.

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