

Moving on up

Each grade prepares to move up to a new year of high school

Ashley Calvani | Staff Writer

THE EIGHTH-GRADER

Each class at Mason High School must adapt each and every year to new transitions and stages of life. Some are on the brink of new beginnings, and some have come to endings. For eighth-grader Monica Touby, high school on the horizon is a substantial new beginning.

"Our teachers have started saying that the high schoolers aren't going to accept [some people's behavior] next year, and that [they] need to make sure they're more mature for next year," Touby said.

Touby said that hopefully that maturity will come soon, because she sees the lack of it carried over into drama and cliques that are so prevalent amongst her eighth-grade peers.

"I don't feel like I have a clique to be in," Touby said. "It seems like a lot of people have found their group though, and that is what people like me worry about [going into high school]. ...It is a big transition, especially socially. I'm excited for the freedom that you get in high school, though. I know there will be more freedom and options."

That freedom can be daunting when you're doing it alone, Touby said.

"I'm just nervous about finding where I fit."

THE FRESHMAN

Freshman Sam Hodge said that despite the anxiety about freshman year, it wasn't as bad as it was made out to be.

"When you actually get here, it's so much easier than you think it will be," Hodge said. "I was surprised at how easy of a transition it was."

The hardest part about the transition was the reality check that came with it, according to Hodge.

"[Not being on top of the school] was definitely a shock for a lot of people," Hodge said. "For the most part, though, I have seen everyone get the hang of high school and realize what they have to do to be successful."

Hodge said that continuing that success shouldn't be too hard because, although sophomore year includes tougher classes and more work, he feels prepared for the pick-up in pace and is excited to meet even more people.

"A lot of freshmen are in small friend-groups, and it's hard to split those groups and get them to join others," Hodge said. "I'm expecting that to change. When you get in [the high school] and you start to have classes with different people, you meet new people you never even saw before [that are] in your grade."

Although he realizes he still has a long way to go in high school, Hodge said he is ready and waiting for his sophomore schedule to come out.

"This year went by really fast," Hodge said. "I'm ready to see what's coming, ready to do big things."

THE SOPHOMORE

Sophomore Johnson Thomas said he has watched the sophomore class this year grow closer and take on a brighter mentality.

"No matter what our class has been through, we're always able to roll with the punches," Thomas said. "We are still able to stay positive, never forget, and take everything as a learning experience. Our [hardest times] were the times when we were the closest and the strongest."

Thomas said that for sophomores, becoming closer brought extra support as everyone was learning how to handle more responsibilities.

"The biggest thing I learned this year was that I can be there for my friends, but in the end I have to be there for myself as well," Thomas said. "You have to balance everything. I know that my friends are always going to be there for me, but my school work is the only thing I can't go back and change."

According to Thomas, [high school] will only get tougher based on what he has heard from upperclassmen this year

"I went from taking one AP this year to three next year," Thomas said. "I've heard that junior year is just a time when a lot of stuff gets packed on to you. ...I've also heard its fun though, because you have Prom, and everyone is starting to reach that age where you are mature about more things. Once I get there, that's when I'll find out what I'm capable of."

According to Thomas, the sophomores still have a lot to figure out.

"We're anxious about being able to find that balance between everything, but mostly about finding who [we] are in high school," Thomas said. "For everyone, high school is different. Hopefully, when I look back, I won't have any regrets."

THE JUNIOR

Junior Dani Dean said that the juniors this year are defined by a newfound individuality.

"Everyone has just really come into their own," Dean said. "We don't necessarily have defining moments, but individuals have become defined."

Dean said that this year she learned to be more positive, confident and to give others the benefit of the doubt.

"There has been so much to learn about college, AP classes and writing," Dean said. "Junior year, a lot is thrown at you...but because of that, you figure out what you're interests are and more about who you are as a person."

The funny thing about high school, Dean said, is that it is always sure that more change is yet to come.

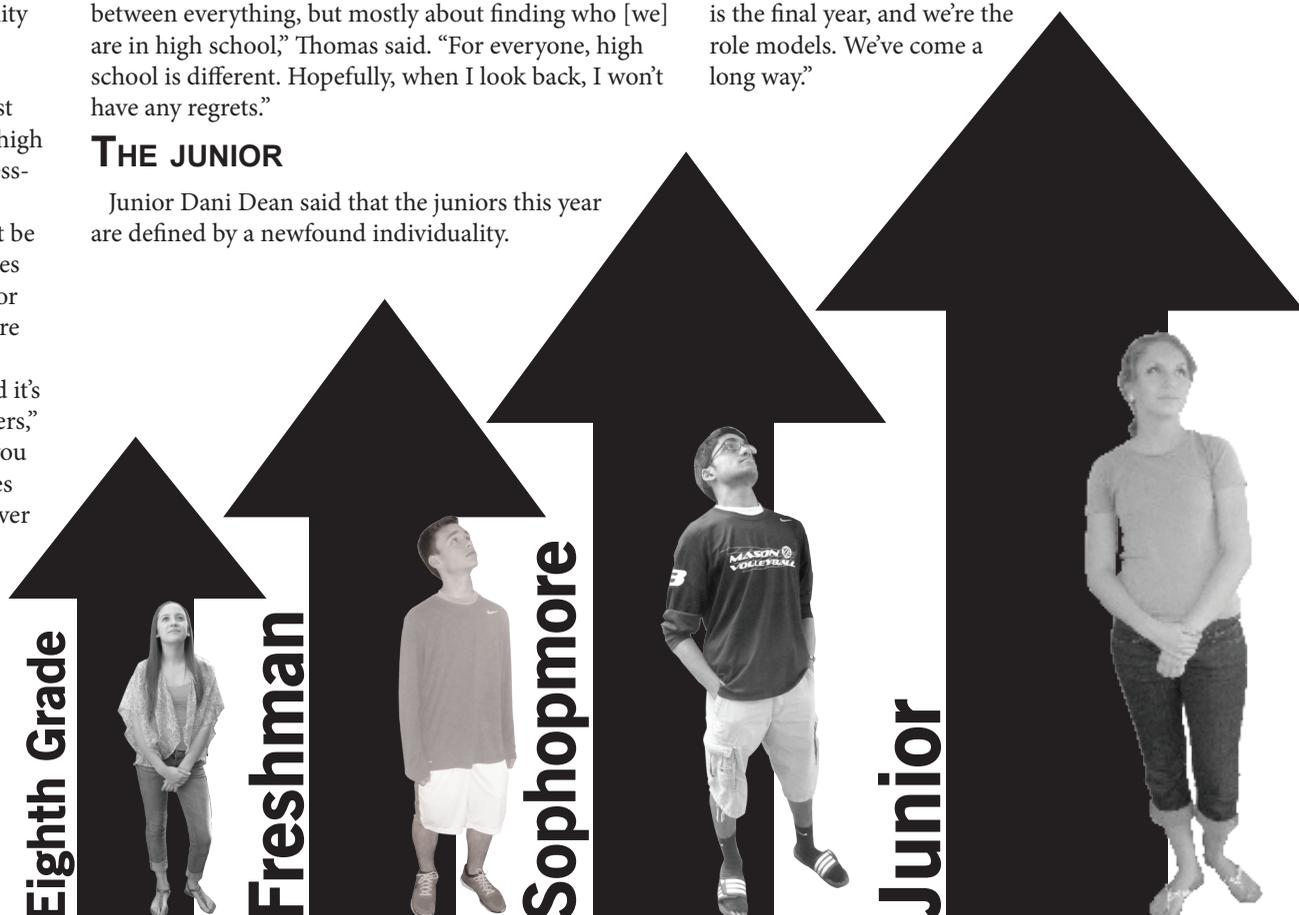
"I've heard that [senior year] is awesome," Dean said. "We get to be the leaders of the school. A lot of people say it's so easy compared to junior year, and that they don't do any work, but I'm still taking harder classes. It will be a lot less stressful, but still challenging. ...I still have to worry about college. Mostly, though, everyone says that senior year is bittersweet."

Despite the fact that a lot of people feel sentimental, Dean said she can't deny her excitement.

"I don't think I'm going to be that person who is crying [when it's over]," Dean said. "You see people crying on senior nights, but I'll probably be the one [cheering]. It's exciting to me."

It will be surreal, according to Dean, to not have anyone else above her.

"I'm worried about picking schools and scholarships, but I think we're all probably worried about stepping up and making [senior year] our own," Dean said. "There's no one else above us now. This is the final year, and we're the role models. We've come a long way."



photos by Ashley Calvani and
photo art by Jami Bechard