

Forever Vikings 2021!

By Basha Cohen

North High School celebrated its Senior Class of 2021 with an exuberant graduation and prom on May 27 and 28. The in-person graduation was held at Infinity Park in Glendale leading Harvard-bound Valedictorian, Rico Givens-Padilla, to quip “We’re not in North Denver anymore.” An observation that wasn’t lost on the Northside families who wondered why it couldn’t have been held on North’s field or somewhere closer to home.

The graduation was an elegant and traditional affair filled with tear-jerking pomp and circumstance. The State Champion North High School Color Guard presented arms with the national anthem performed by Joanna Coronado and Olive Curcio. Student addresses were

delivered by emcees, Allison Jones, Ashley Gurrolla, Valedictorian, Rico Givens-Padilla, Salutatorian, Samantha Wilkins, and Jennifer Garcia who represented the North Engagement Center. Principals Scott Wolf and Teresa Steele reflected on their achievements, and class Counselor Kathleen Hoffman, gave a sweet and heartfelt send-off to the class she has nurtured since 2017.

Wolf summed their words up as the tassels were turned, “Now, it is time for you to carry your Viking spirit with you wherever you go. Remember the words of Samantha, that ‘You have a choice.’ The words of Kathy, not Ms. Hoffman, that ‘You have to make promises and keep promises to yourself.’ The words of

Jennifer, that ‘This is a kickstart for your future.’ And the words of Rico that ‘You are ready for this world.’ Be you. Love yourself. And to spread love to others. Can you feel it in your veins? It’s time to graduate!”

Back on the Northside, the final Senior Prom shimmered proudly in the back courtyard of the school which was magically transformed into a glittery world called, “Under the City Lights.” With North’s billion dollar view of the Denver skyline as a backdrop, parent and teacher volunteers turned the space into a glam lounge with outdoor living rooms, fire pits, string lights, yard games and a wild arcade bus and food truck. The DJ rocked the dance floor under the glow of multi color lights and

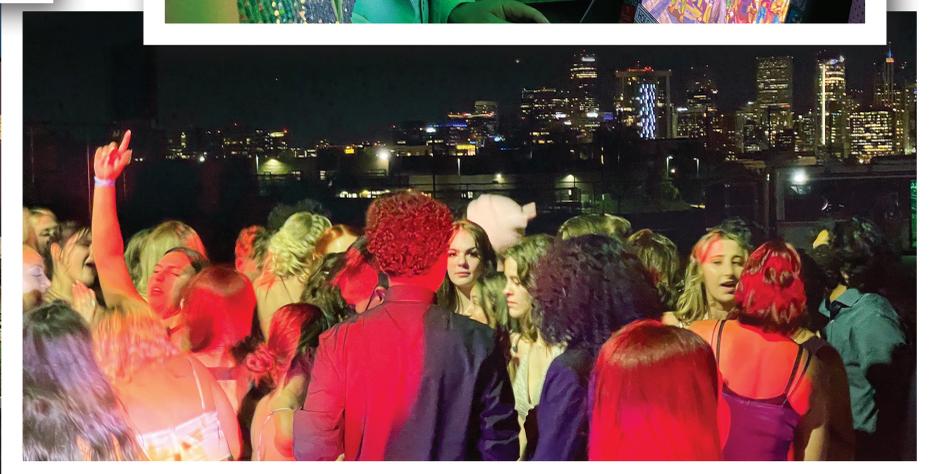
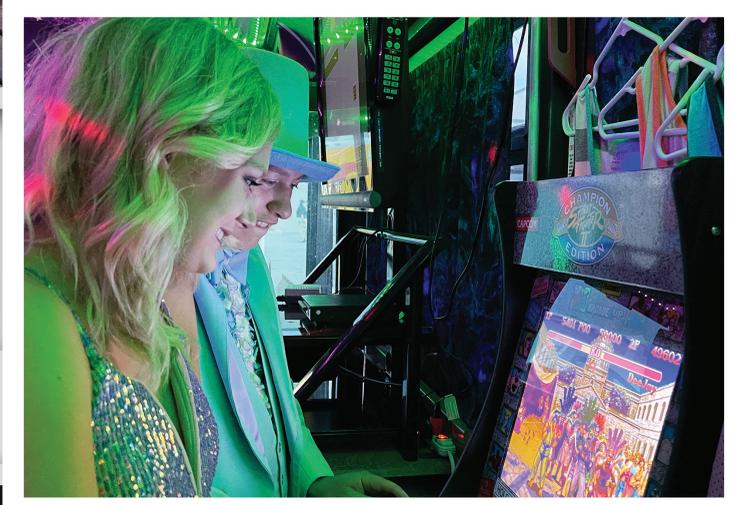
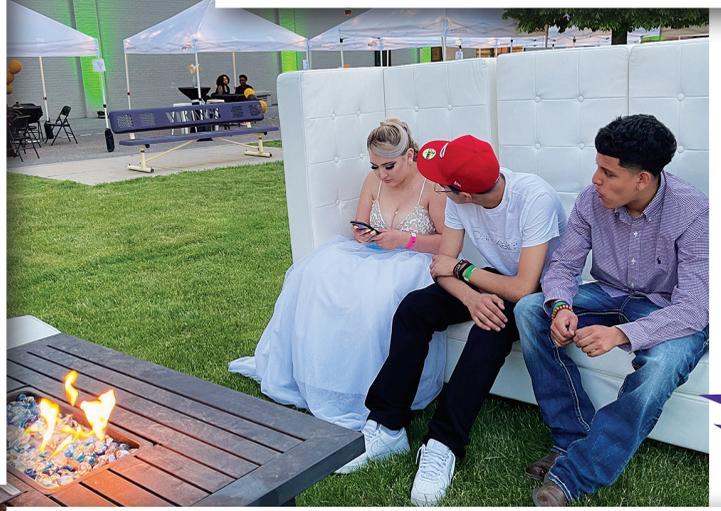
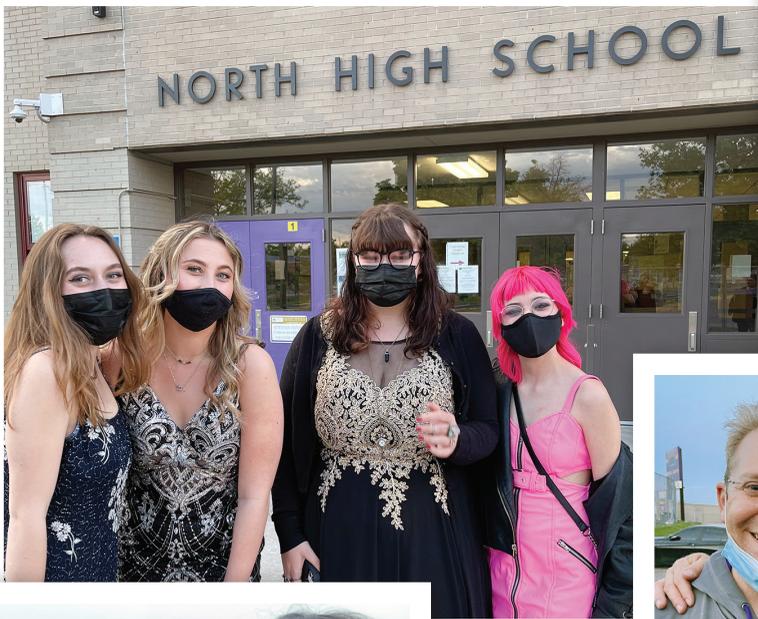
jumping-for-joy grads. The cafeteria was transformed into a balloon ballroom replete with gambling, photo booth and dessert bars. Kids came decked out in fashions ranging from 20s elegance to come-as-you-are-casual. Undoubtedly, the most show stopping entrance goes to Olive Curcio who was wrapped in glittering lights that reflected the ambience of the night. It was a bittersweet night for friends dancing away their last four years like stardust memories, and for parents of seniors...well, we can’t get into that;-) Congratulations, Class of 2021! You’ve made us proud. Forever Vikings!

To read Rico Givens-Padilla’s powerful Valedictorian speech go online to www.denvernorthstar.com



Photos by Grad Images, unless otherwise indicated

Top to bottom: Row 1: Graduates enter the sports arena. Rico Givens-Padilla (right) followed by Samantha Wilkins (right), Valedictorian and Salutatorian; NHS Principal Scott Wolf gives diploma to Saténa Maxx Charles-Luciani; North Engagement Center Principal, Teresa Steele with graduate Jose Barriga; Row 2: Andrew Delgado; Jaydy Gonzales-Guillen and Amya Younger; Rico Givens-Padilla Valedictorian Address. Rico earned a full-ride scholarship to Harvard; Kathleen Hoffman, NHS Counselor, mentored these graduates with love since their freshman year in 2017; Row 4: National Anthem performed by Joanna Coronado and Olive Curcio; Honored Senior Address by Jennifer Garcia Row 5: ROTC presents arms; Mario Bonilla; The Class of 2021 await their diplomas in the bleachers; Row 6: Shaina Walsh and her "Mor Mor" Agnete Cohen; Live stream of graduation captured the spirit of the virtual world the class lived through (Photo Michele Walsh via UK); Samantha Wilkins delivers Salutatorian Speech



Photos by Basha Cohen, unless otherwise indicated