Chad Coomer-Commencement Preview

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VFTH

WKU’s 175th Commencement is this weekend and it’s the largest spring baccalaureate graduating class ever.

Amy Bingham profiles the accomplishments of one of the 1665 graduates in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU’s Office of Scholar Development helped Chad Coomer harness his love of research, science and helping people into some amazing scholarship opportunities. As he prepares to say goodbye to the hill, he’s really just getting started.

“What I would like to do is I would like to find a cure for HIV. It’s a big undertaking but that’s one of my goals.”

A lofty goal but one Chad Coomer may well reach. As a recipient of the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship, Coomer has spent the last few summers engaged in research at the National Cancer Institute.

“I was able to see how research at the bench can be translated to the patients bedside and from that I knew I wanted to be a physician scientist.”

It hasn’t always been about science for Coomer.

Up until his junior year of high school, he had plans to go to a conservatory and study music, but an AP biology class changed his mind.

“I got very addicted for lack of a better term to biological and chemical science and from there it just took off.”

He still has a love for music and spent the past four years playing violin with the Symphony at WKU.

“I went to China with the Symphony in 2013. That was not only a life changing experience but one of the best experiences I’ve had at WKU.”

Coomer says it was the chance to study abroad as well as the honors college that convinced him to come to Western.

But he never dreamed he would be named a Fulbright Scholar as well.

“Coming to Western where I thought I would graduate and go to Medical school and that’s the end of the story. “It’s actually transitioned from that to I’m gonna go to England and get a Masters degree through the Fulbright program. That’s something I never would have imagined.”

Coomer will pursue a phD at the National Institutes of Health Oxford Cambridge Scholars program after his year of study in London. Coomer is also this semester’s Ogden Foundation Scholar and will speak at the first of WKU’s three commencement ceremonies Saturday.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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