

## Ever present

**Subheadline:** Buford valedictorian never missed day of school

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## Content

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Recent graduate Savannah Lyles, 18, was valedictorian of both Buford High School and the University of South Carolina Lancaster, where she received her associate of science degree in April.

Savannah's dedication to school paid off, as she graduated from high school with a 5.647 GPA and was a National Merit Scholar (top 1% score nationally on the PSAT). She was also named a Carolina Top Scholar by the USC Honors College.

Savannah also had perfect attendance from kindergarten through her graduation on May 25.

Her mom, Cindy Lyles, said that even when Savannah would get sick, it would always be on the weekend and she would recover in time for school Monday.

When she started sixth grade, she said, "I'm gonna finish my year with a 100 average in every class, and I was like, 'Savannah that's not possible, you're going to make some mistake along the way'," Cindy said.

But Savannah did just that, finishing with across-the-board perfect grades in middle school.

"To have that good of grades, and perfect attendance as well, I'm not really sure how she accomplished all that," Cindy said, with a laugh.

Valedictorian status runs in the family, as her older sister Chesney Lyles was Buford High's valedictorian in 2013. Cindy said Savannah looked up to her older sister in school, and was inspired by her love for learning.

Cindy said Savannah's love for reading also helped her excel, and she would often take Savannah and Chesney to the library.

“Even when they have free time, they’re reading,” Cindy said.

According to Savannah, the secret to academic success is time management — something she balanced well, getting her high school diploma and associate degree, while working a nearly full-time job at Walmart since she was 16. Cindy said Savannah worked five days a week until 10 p.m., 38 hours a week.

“Put your energy into what you’re passionate about, and the results will speak for themselves,” Savannah said. “Ignore trivial measures of success, which are subjective anyway.”

Savannah is attending Columbia University in New York this fall to major in computer science. She was also accepted to multiple top universities, including MIT, Princeton, Northwestern and Carnegie Mellon.

Cindy said she is extremely nervous for Savannah to move far away, as she is a self-proclaimed overprotective parent, but Savannah is excited about the new chapter in her life.

“I told her going from Buford to New York City’s going to be quite the change,” Cindy said.

“I just couldn’t be any more proud,” Cindy said. “Considering all that she has accomplished, I think any parent would be extremely proud of all she’s done. It’s almost unbelievable (to see) all that she has accomplished, but she’s worked hard.”

## **Child images**

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**LANNWS-06-10-23 LYLES GRAD 1**







**LANNWS-06-10-23 LYLES GRAD 2**





