



Yellowjacket Heroes – Erick Boone – Class of 2014



Educators make a difference in the lives of students. Consider the story of Erick Boone, 2014 CHS graduate.

During his junior year Erick's High School Principal, the late Beth Heide, sensed that Erick might have an interest in international relations. She helped him secure a spot in the Youth Leadership Program of Central Europe (YLPCE), an exchange program involving Central Europeans and Americans. Thanks to YLPCE, Erick had the opportunity to travel to Serbia and Hungary for professional development and cultural immersion. That trip planted a seed with Erick that started him on a path that would ultimately lead him to the Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship with the Department of State, a full-ride scholarship to the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and an eventual job as a diplomat representing the United States. Quite a journey for a young man from a small school in South Kansas City!

Like most of us, Erick's journey did not follow a straight line. While still at Center, he participated in a program called Generation Rap sponsored by the radio station Hot 103 Jamz. Mentors from that experience led him to apply for and receive a scholarship to Howard University, a historically black college in Washington DC. Having served as the Editor-in-Chief of the news team at the Missouri Youth In Government convention (thanks to the mentoring of another Center teacher, Andy Hanch), Erick gravitated towards journalism initially. As his view of the world broadened through relationships at Howard and through a study abroad program at Institut Catholique de Paris, his focus shifted and he switched to a program in Legal Communications. Erick continued to build relationships, including an internship with Congressional Representative Emmanuel Cleaver II from Kansas City, which primed him for a later fellowship at the US Helsinki Commission of which Representative Cleaver is a Commissioner. The Commission is an independent research arm of the US Congress and his fellowship there allowed him to focus on issues in Central Europe and research human rights issues, particularly those dealing with the Roma people, an ethnic group living in various parts of Europe. The Helsinki experience cemented Erick's desire to work in international relations. He has a particular desire to create experiences that will help to inspire other young people the way that Dr. Heide inspired him at Center.

With his admission to Harvard, Erick will continue his journey into international affairs and begin his career in the Foreign Service upon graduation. He does not yet know where he will serve, but it will undoubtedly continue his path of service to his country and his ability to inspire others to follow their dreams.

Thanks to Erick for being one of many reasons that we are proud of our graduates. Best of luck to him as he continues his career.