

Naperville Central honors four top alumni

By Justin Kmitch



Whether it was a gentle nudge to help prepare them for the future or perhaps a slightly firmer push, Naperville Central High School seniors got it Friday during their annual Alumni Recognition Program.

The graduating class followed a 17-year tradition of honoring the service, excellence, persistence and character of those who walked the halls before them by honoring four top alumni. This year's honorees included a cancer-surviving philanthropist, an emergency physician who also happens to be a U.S. Army veteran who treated wounded soldiers on the front lines in Iraq, a jazz musician and marketing vice president of a Fortune 500 company.

[Dr. Sudip Bose](#), a 1992 graduate, is now an attending emergency medicine physician in Texas, an associate clinical professor of medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, an international lecturer and advocate for war veterans, and founder and CEO of multiple leading medical

education companies. He's also a motivational speaker.

While Bose has achieved many successes, including earning a bronze star for his 15-month deployment in Iraq, he told the seniors they didn't come without first enduring some epic failures, including a 26 percent on his first AP U.S. History quiz in Katy Linder's class. He spoke to the students as if he were looking back in time.

"In the distant foggy haze, I'm seeing the image of a skinny Indian kid who started high school weighing 67 pounds without a care in the world," Bose said, talking about the successes he earned in junior high track and field and in the classroom up until he enrolled in that history class. "Someone slap Sudip Bose of 1992 and wake him up. Give him this very important message: 'Failure is how you evolve.'"

Courtney Clark, a 1997 graduate, cancer survivor and founder of philanthropic organization [Austin Involved](#), stressed the need for students to have big dreams but also a Plan A and Plan B.

Clark told the students she was Broadway-bound the day she graduated from Central in 1997, but after learning dancing wasn't her strong suit, she picked up television production. In the midst of it all, she learned she had cancer; the cancer she believes saved her life.

"I reached my five-year cancer-free anniversary. That's a big deal for cancer survivors. That's about when your survival rate goes up and the chance of the cancer returning goes down," she said. "I now have these whole body scans to prove I'm cancer-free and then my phone rings again."

The scans showed a life-threatening brain aneurysm that required immediate emergency surgery.

"I've had to change plans several times on my path to following my dreams and many of you will have to do the same," Clark said. "You have to dream big but there is a lot of power in being able to get a new plan along the way. Have a dream and adapt. Be both."

The Class of 1979's Dave Linne is currently the senior vice president of content creation at ConAgra Foods in Naperville, the town he couldn't wait to run away from when he shed his cap and gown.

"This was a farm town, believe it or not, and I wanted out," he said.

Along the way, he discovered his love for writing short stories, which led to a career in advertising where he's written and won awards for ad campaigns for Hallmark, McDonald's, Kelloggs and many other leading companies. His numerous advertising awards include two Clios, four Effies, six Addys, six Chicago International Film Festival Awards, five New York Film Festival Awards and eight Cannes Lions, including the first awarded to a North America Latino agency.

"I realized that many of my storylines included memories and inspirations from right here, so it's important to remember where you came from," Linne said. "I got lucky and found what I love and I would encourage you to also find something you love and work hard at it. You'll be successful."

[Robert Mazurek](#), a 1983 graduate, also was honored but unable to attend Friday's ceremony. Mazurek is a jazz musician and artist who founded the Chicago Underground for improvisatory jazz and is the recipient of numerous awards including "Musician of the Year" from Musica Jazz Magazine in 2012.