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Sam Winters McCabe, Tommy Tucker, Nick Richardson, Juli Hancock, Julia Payne, Ashley Rothermel, Ryan Pham, Melina Toibero, Camryn Stanley, Ashlea Strott and William Borja, teacher, at the Meeting House Gallery exhibit.

# A photographer and musician recognized

Hammond High graduate and Reservoir senior guided by teachers

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In 1985, the National Parent Association established Teacher Appreciation Week as the first full week of May, with the first Tuesday recognized as National Teachers Day. Many businesses offer teachers discounts as do restaurants, during this time and often parent associa-

tions plan special events and activities for their schools' teachers throughout the week.

Recently, two residents were recognized for their talents — one as a musician, the other as a photographer. Both credited their teachers as inspiring them in their fields.

In December 2017, Jason Schoenfeld, a student at New York University studying

music composition and film scoring, received the Vic Mizzy Scholarship award, which honors Mizzy, a film and television composer known for his music in "The Addams Family" and "Green Acres."

The 2012 Hammond High School graduate said the award was "really validating" as he realized he was on the right path.

"It was a year of completely jumping ship and getting recognized," said Schoenfeld, who graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in math only to realize it was not what he wanted to pursue.

"I was very good at that stuff and in the highest levels of math classes," the 23-year-old said. "I liked it and it came naturally to me, but by the time it was getting closer to graduation, it was not what I wanted to do."

Music, he discovered, had always been his passion since he started taking piano in third grade. At Patuxent Valley Middle School, he became part of the band's percussion section.

"My middle school band director, Rich Twigg, got me to like band music," Schoenfeld said. "He was a big part of how I got to like concert music. He inspired me."

"Jason was a real pleasure. He had a permanent smile and his enthusiasm was infectious," Twigg, now a teacher at Fulton Elementary School, wrote in an



Jason Schoenfeld, Scott Goriup, Tyler Bartram and Michael Beckett after performing together as Gumbo Jam at a Relay for Life event in 2012.

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email. “He made every day a little easier, which is certainly nice when you teach middle school.”

While a student at Hammond, Schoenfeld performed with Scott Goriup, an adjunct professor at Howard Community College who created the Gumbo Jam Band — a group of four musicians — that met weekly on Sundays at HCC.

“It was pretty significant to me as a musician,” Schoenfeld said, of the group.

“There was a void there. Everyone was practicing in their basements. I wanted to do something,” said Goriup, of why he started Gumbo. “Howard Community College is an amazing facility waiting to be tapped into and taken advantage of. I had the opportunity to do it and so I did.”

Goriup is still at the college every Sunday, performing with numerous bands, including Gumbo Jumbo, a newer version of Gumbo Jam.

He admits, however, that the original Gumbo was special.

“It was a really wonderful experience. Quite a moment in time,” Goriup said. “Sometimes the magic happens, and you get these kids that are quite amazing. They were so good. I had to really practice with those kids. It was a learning experience for me, too.”

Schoenfeld started writing music dur-



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Lynn Mizzy Jonas, Mizzy’s daughter, presented the award to Schoenfeld at the ASCAP Honors Event.

ing his time with Gumbo.

“I didn’t really know what I was doing,” Schoenfeld said.

He kept at it, however, composing songs throughout college at Maryland

and doing different musical things on the side. When he decided to pursue a career in music, his family supported him.

“They saw how much music was important to me through most of my life,” Schoenfeld said. “I think of myself as a composer. I dabble in everything else.”

Tommy Tucker, 18, started taking photography classes as a freshman at Reservoir High School. His grandfather had been a photojournalist, and through classes at Reservoir, Tucker learned how to use the variety of cameras his grandfather had collected.

Two of his photographs were selected to be in two publications, “Photographer’s Forum Best of High School and College Photography 2018” features his “Save Medicare” photo from a Washington, D.C. protest and “Photographer’s Forum Best of Photography 2017” features “Richard,” a homeless Baltimore man.

Tucker recently won the “Director’s Choice Award — Photo” for outstanding achievement in the visual arts at Howard County’s 28th Annual Portfolio Development and Senior Show, with “Save Medicare.”

“He has such a good visual eye,” said William Borja, Tucker’s photography teacher at Reservoir High School. “He has that photographer’s anticipation. He



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Tommy Tucker with his winning photo, “Save Medicare.”

knows a shot will happen and is ready for it.”

Borja’s main goal in teaching his students, he said, is to build confidence in their work.

“I train them to filter out the bad and recognize the good and why it is good,” Borja said. “They are here [in my class] ... they already have an eye for art. They’re just honing it.”

He gives his photography students a “taste of everything,” he said, from using tintype cameras used in the 1880s during the Civil War to pinhole cameras and the more recent Polaroids and 35 mm film cameras.

“They might not shoot film after high school, but I start with it,” Borja said. “If you shoot film, you can do anything.”

“I prefer film,” Tucker said. “Mr. Borja is a great teacher. I had him three years and worked with black and white photography, developing, color and all sorts of old cameras.”

With digital cameras, a photographer can retake a photo several times to get it right, which has its advantages, Tucker admitted. Film is less forgiving.

“You have to get it right in one try,” Tucker said. “It is more of a surprise.”

Borja arranged two exhibits for his photography students, a show at the Columbia Art Center in March and a show at the Meeting House Gallery in April. Both shows were well received, he said.

Tucker and his fellow classmates in Photography 3, Borja said, are a tight group.

“The students say it is like a second family,” Borja said. “It will be a really tough time once they graduate.”