



TIGER TEA

Cooper Christ: A man with a plan... for everything.

Article, Braden Davis, Editor

At HHS, our students are as diverse as they are remarkable. Some are outgoing, others more reserved—but each one plays a vital role in shaping the spirit and pride of our town. *Tiger Pride* goes beyond athletics and academics; it's about the individuals who bring their unique strengths, perspectives, and personalities to our school community. Though they may not always be in the spotlight, these students embody what makes HHS truly special. This column is dedicated to recognizing and celebrating those often-overlooked voices, the ones who bleed orange and black in their own extraordinary ways.

For representing the Tiger Pride of HHS in countless ways, senior Cooper Christ is the featured student for September. Born and raised in the St. Louis area, Cooper didn't move to Herrin until he was 11. His parents, Aaron and Julie Christ, were originally from the Herrin area but decided to move back for a fresh start.

Cooper attended OLMC until eighth grade, and when he transitioned to HHS for his freshman year, he immediately took initiative and got involved. Amidst the chaos of those first few weeks, Cooper successfully ran for freshman Student Government president and also became a member of FBLA. "I wanted to make the most of high school, so I saw the opportunity to step up and be a leader", he said.

Through his four years at HHS, Cooper has retained his position as class president and also eventually became the executive council president. Student Government sponsor Ms. Rachel Bonifield explained that "the executive president is supposed to run meetings, and it is hard to find a senior who can fulfill the responsibilities, but Cooper has been able to do it very well." Bonifield described Cooper as motivated and driven, and pointed out that "he isn't afraid to ask for help, he is a doer." Additionally, Bonifield has Cooper in class, and anytime there is a break in classwork, he is always using that time to find ways to improve his skills and make them better than before.



Braden Davis

Cooper Christ (12) is presented with his certificate.

Cooper is also the president of the Herrin Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter. This past year, he even qualified for and attended the FBLA National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California. Mrs. Missy Webb spoke very highly of Cooper and acknowledged, "If there's one student that I can rely on for anything, it's Cooper. If he says he'll do something, he'll do it." Webb went on to describe Cooper as involved, reliable, creative, mature, and responsible. "At the end of last school year, when we had less than a month to prepare for the pickleball tournament, he created a promotional video, flew a drone, and did everything he said he would do and more."

The largest commitment that demonstrates Cooper's dedication is his role as editor-in-chief of the Tiger News Broadcast. Journalism teacher Sami Goetting sees his commitment every day in class and emphasizes that "He just loves what he is doing, and he loves his school/peers that much. He wants his school and everyone in it to have the best of what we are capable of achieving." She has found Cooper to be a wayfinder. "When he is given a task, he finds a way to make it happen. He may not always love what tasks he is given or know anything about them, but he finds a way to get it done", Goetting said.

When asked why he is involved in so many activities, Cooper responded, "I want to help the people around me achieve their goals, and this is a way I can do that."

Cooper's impact in the school is not just observed by teachers; students attest to his strong character, too. Ethan Tate (11), who was Cooper's tennis doubles partner last year, shared that they became close friends during the season. "Playing doubles last year brought us super close together as friends and teammates. He would often bring me up out of a slump when I was down. No matter the situation, he would always tell me we got the next one."

Maddie Martin (12) echoes similar points, elaborating, "He is very considerate, and he goes out of his way to make sure everyone's voice is heard." Cooper is the president of two clubs that Maddie is in, so the two have grown close together. "He will start a conversation with anyone, and that's part of the reason he makes such a good class president".

The example of dedication and strong character that Cooper exudes is one that all should strive toward. Even on the days when it's difficult, try to look at life the way Cooper does and challenge yourself to work hard and be a leader. Cooper Christ represents the traits of a Herrin Tiger every day. He truly has a bright future ahead. "Cooper will be successful in whatever he chooses to do after high school and college, because he won't quit. This is a characteristic I hope people see in him and want to mirror", Ms. Goetting concluded. In the words of Cooper himself, "Leadership is not about being perfect, it's about persistence and perspective".