

Emma Evans '26 Named Sweet Briar's 2026 Presidential Medalist

Emma Evans '26 receives Sweet Briar's highest student honor, recognizing academic excellence, leadership, and service to the College community.

SWEET BRIAR, VA, UNITED STATES, June 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- During Sweet Briar Student Life's 6th Annual Student Involvement Recognition Ceremony, in addition to recognizing the many students who contribute to campus life, Emma Evans '26 was announced as the 2026 Presidential Medalist.



Sweet Briar College awards Emma Evans '26 the Presidential Medal.

The most prestigious award given to a Sweet Briar student, the Presidential Medal is presented to a senior who has demonstrated exemplary intellectual achievement, in addition to distinction in some or all of the following areas: service to the community, contributions to the arts, enlargement of the College's global perspective, athletic fitness and achievement, and leadership and contributions to community discourse.

“

I think you will agree that in her future beyond Sweet Briar, Emma will continue to be a contributor, a role model, and a leader who makes a difference in our world.”

President Mary Pope Hutson
'83

Daughter of Heather Barlow and Terry Evans from Chesapeake, Va., Emma is a double major in environmental science and biology with a minor in chemistry, and is completing the Leadership in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems certificate. In 2025, in collaboration with Dr. Nick Kinney and Dikshya Pathak '25, Emma co-authored the article “Short tandem repeat variants are possibly associated with RNA secondary structure and gene expression,” which was published in

the academic journal PLOS One. For her Honors Summer Research Program project, which she later expanded into her Senior Honors Thesis, Emma conducted independent research and analyzed the microplastic content of Amherst County tap water. Last summer, she participated

in a study abroad studying marsupials with the School for Field Studies in Queensland, Australia. Emma is a Dean's Scholar, a member of several academic honor societies, and has studied multiple languages. After graduating, she will attend William & Mary to earn a master's degree in biology and conduct research on forest ecology.

As a campus leader, Emma completed the [ROSE Leadership program](#). She served as vice president for leadership development for the Inter Club Council, of which she is now president. She has been a [Willits Summer Food Systems Fellow](#) and a student assistant in the greenhouse, contributed to pollinator habitat development on campus, and served as an Outdoor Program student leader. Off campus, she has been involved in projects helping to rehabilitate wild horses and box turtles. Emma is a member of the [IHSA equestrian team](#), serves as the equestrian team fitness captain, and has been president of the College's En Garde Fencing Club. She also excels in the arts as a skilled musician who sings and plays several instruments and is a member of both the Sweet Tones and Sweet Dancers.

"Emma is a wonderful example of the Sweet Briar woman who does it all," said President Mary Pope Hutson '83 during her remarks about this year's medalist. "I think you will agree that in her future beyond Sweet Briar, Emma will continue to be a contributor, a role model, and a leader who makes a difference in our world."

Emma Evans' recognition as a Presidential Medalist reflects the kind of transformative growth students experience at Sweet Briar College. Through close faculty mentorship, leadership opportunities, research, and a supportive women-centered environment, students are empowered to excel academically while making a meaningful impact on campus and beyond. At Sweet Briar, leadership is not just encouraged it is cultivated every day. Prospective students ready to lead boldly are encouraged to visit sbc.edu/admissions or contact admissions@sbc.edu



Sweet Briar College: Where Bold Women Thrive, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is more than just a campus—it's a launchpad for fearless leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

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