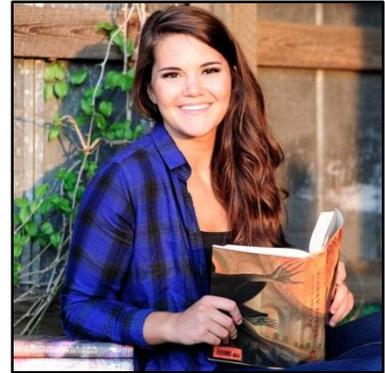


Lori Able

Lori Able graduated from Saluda High School in 2016 as a Co-Valedictorian. She was an active member of Student Council, serving as the 2015-2016 Student Body Vice-President. She now attends Clemson University and is majoring in Packaging Science.

We were excited to catch up with her recently and to hear about the success she is now enjoying as a college freshman. Specifically, we asked her questions about what lessons she has learned since being in college and which high school experiences helped her the most. Here's what she told us...



Q1: Lori, which specific teacher(s)/class(es) prepared you the most for college? And how so?

Lori: Mrs. Kelly Minick, Mrs. Lynn Perry and Mr. Dean Roesner all helped to prepare me for college the most. Mrs. Kelly Minick taught me for three years in Creative Writing 2, AP English Literature, and LEAD21. She pushed me to think deeper and to write at a collegiate level. AP English Literature was the first class I ever had to really challenge me in high school, and this class made us question the literature, strengthening our ability to think for ourselves and to think on a deeper level. I'm also able to quickly and successfully answer multiple choice questions and write in-depth essays within a short timeframe. Mrs. Perry taught me for two years (Pre Calculus and Calculus). Calculus was, for sure, the hardest class I took in high school. She taught it on a collegiate level, and I can never thank her enough. Being in Calculus at Clemson, I am so thankful for the rigor she presented me with while in high school because I am not overwhelmed by it now that I am taking many difficult courses all at once. I had Mr. Roesner for less conventional classes, such as Journalism and LEAD21, but those classes taught me leadership and creativity. While sometimes those skills seem less important in academia, they are important life lessons you need to land that internship, to impress your professors, and can make the difference between being good and being great.

Q2: What was the best decision you made as a high school student?

Lori: BEING INVOLVED! College is a huge adjustment, and I haven't been able to be as involved as I would have liked this semester. But being involved in high school helps you beyond those four years. It helps you to create bonds with other people who did similar things as you in high school and also helps you to strengthen your leadership abilities. It helps develop your interests in things and increases the quality of your high school career.

Q3: What regrets do you have? What do you wish you had done differently while in high school?

Lori: I regret not taking Biology with Mr. Paul Johnson. My senior year, I took Chemistry 2 Honors, and that class has served me well in my General Chemistry class at Clemson. However, I did not take Biology 2 and have found my college Biology class to be more challenging than my other courses due to the fact I hadn't taken a Biology course since 10th grade. Take the hard classes while you're in high school! I promise it'll make your life much easier later on!

Q4: Are there any specific classes/programs you wish SHS had offered?

Lori: AP classes would have been extremely beneficial. Dual enrollment was very helpful at getting some of my less important classes out of the way; however, in college I have noticed that many of my fellow classmates loaded up with AP classes in high school. Even if you don't obtain the credit, the knowledge and exposure you gain is just as valuable. So many college students sit in classes where they have already seen the material in their high school AP classes, and while they may not have received credit for college, they have a more in depth understanding of the lessons and make great grades. Honestly, at some point, you have to focus less on how to get ahead in high school and focus on how to get ahead in life. Taking hard classes benefits you more than taking the easy GPA boost. I didn't always see that when I was in high school.

Q5: What advice would you give to a 9th grader?

Lori: This is your chance to start over. You aren't in middle school anymore, and none of your grades really follow you from before. If you weren't the most dedicated student before, this is your time to start putting in effort. Take advantage of a clean slate and make something of yourself. Be involved, put yourself out there and enjoy being in a school where you can really have a family, because you'll miss it when you're gone. I often think about my Saluda High School family and how glad I am that I had their support for those four years.

Q6: What advice would you give to a 12th grader?

Lori: Apply to multiple schools and be open-minded about where you want to go. Clemson and Carolina are great schools, but they aren't the only great colleges out there. Public schools are great! Private schools are great! Out of state schools are great! In state schools are great! They each have their tradeoffs; for example, private schools are expensive. However, you'll find that they give many scholarships, so don't let money deter you at first glance. You have so many options if you put in the effort to find them! Apply for as many scholarships as you can and work hard! You're almost there, so do yourself a favor and finish strong!

Q7: What advice would you give to the parent of a high schooler?

Lori: High school is a time where a lot of changes are going to occur. Your child will be taking more advanced classes, learning how to drive, learning to make decisions for themselves, and really soul searching to figure out what their next step will be beyond high school. Be patient and be supportive. Let them go to the Friday night football games but also encourage them to do well on their Monday morning test. The best thing my parents ever did for me was to instill determination and responsibility. My mom often "nagged" me about doing this and doing that, but in the end, I can't thank her enough.

Q8: How did AP prepare you for college?

Lori: The only AP class I was offered during my time at the high school was AP English Literature. I loved that class so much, and it was one of my favorite courses, while also being one of my more difficult courses. AP English not only strengthened my literary mind, but it taught me to be a deep thinker and strangely enough increased my SAT score by over 100 points! It teaches you to quickly analyze questions and to do so without just breezing through and actually thinking about what is being asked. AP is so important. Seriously, take the AP classes. I've never met anyone who said, "Wow I regret taking that AP class."