

By Diane Betzler May 25, 2011 [Link](#)

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- Desert Junior/Senior High School student Courtney Bishop is preparing to leave for Colorado Springs, Colo., after winning Congressman Kevin McCarthy's principal nomination to the United States Air Force Academy.

The local high school senior was not only the congressman's top pick, but she won an appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. as well, where she was nominated by Vice President Joseph Biden. Suddenly she was faced with the biggest decision of her young life.

After thinking long and hard and discussing her options with her parents, Terry and Susan Bishop, the 18-year-old decided to go with the Air Force.

"I felt it would be an honor to be a part of either college and knew the choice I was about to make was going to affect the rest of my life," Miss Bishop said.

The young lady applied to the service academies because she is a woman looking for challenges that will enrich her life and help prepare her to achieve her long-term career goals.

"I want to be commissioned as an officer in the military because it is an unsurpassable opportunity and privilege to serve our country and give back to all the men and women who have fought and in some cases given their lives for our freedom," she wrote in part, when applying to each academy.

"I like the Navy because I like the idea of water, air and ground, but I was raised around Air Force all my life and so I chose the Air Force Academy," she said, adding that both academies offer great opportunities.

Now that she has officially accepted Congressman McCarthy's nomination, she will be leaving for the academy June 22.

"The congressman called me personally and told me I got the principal nomination. I was so excited I started jumping and screaming and I don't remember the rest of the conversation," Miss Bishop said.

The local teen's parents are proud of their daughter's academic endeavors. Both parents work at Edwards, her father for NASA and her mother for Lockheed Martin Corp., which afforded the young student the opportunity to attend the local high school on base.

A California City resident, Miss Bishop has been a student at Desert Junior/Senior High School since her freshman year and says she chose to attend school here because of its reputation and the ROTC program.

"I thought it offered better opportunities," she said. Miss Bishop has been involved with the ROTC program for four years and now holds the rank of lieutenant colonel and is the group's commander.

"One of my strongest attributes is determination. I persevere until the goals that have been set are achieved."

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Dwayne Dempsey has been Miss Bishop's Air Force Junior ROTC instructor from the time she joined.

"In those four years she has been a model person, student, and above all, an outstanding cadet," he said.

Sergeant Dempsey was full of praise for the soon-to-be Air Force Academy Falcon.

"She is an individual that all want to emulate and one that is respected by her peers, teachers and administrators," he said.

Her Air Force JROTC instructor said Miss Bishop exemplifies the Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self and excellence in all you do.

"She will be an outstanding asset to the Air Force Academy and as a future Air Force officer," he said.

For someone so young, Miss Bishop already holds an impressive resume that displays many leadership qualities.

"My leadership experience includes mentoring 170 cadets as group commander of the Junior ROTC unit, Associated Student Body vice president, National Honor Society president, Bible Club leader and a two-sport varsity captain," she proudly states.

"Courtney has a quote posted in her room that stays 'You will miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take,'" her mother said.

The teen's parents both say their daughter realized early on that ultimately she wants to become a test pilot. Mr. and Mrs. Bishop agree that the best way to get there is through the service academies.

"She learned how selective the academies are and how difficult it is to get an appointment," her mother said.

"But she also knew if she didn't take a shot, there was no chance she could get in," her father added.

The senior Bishops said their daughter Courtney is extremely motivated and focused for a person her age.

"We realize how blessed Courtney is to receive this opportunity and her mom and I couldn't be more proud of her," Mr. Bishop said.

Congressman McCarthy said the 12 students he nominated from the 22nd Congressional District will attend one of the United States Service Academies in the fall. He said the Class of 2011 is the largest class of incoming cadets and midshipmen from the 22nd Congressional District so far.

He said he's proud to see so many young people from the community accepted into one of the United States service academies.

"I am confident these bright young men and women will excel in their respective academies and am glad they will be among those our nation relies on to help ensure our national security. It's inspiring to see so many from our community qualified and willing to serve their country," Congressman McCarthy said.

"Courtney Bishop reports to Plebe Summer in June, which is essentially the equivalent of regular military boot camp and school starts in September, the same as regular colleges," explained Kati McKeown, assistant to Congressman McCarthy.