Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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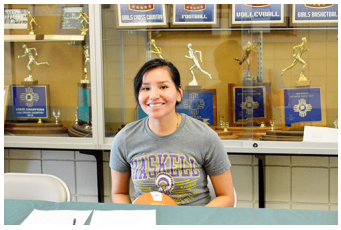

Former Gallup security guard, theatre worker now a 'Fighting Indian'

After experiencing a year in the work world to contemplate life and "to just think about what I wanted to do," Wingate High School graduate Keziah Pine is now poised to attend college come fall of 2017.

Pine, a former student council president at Wingate and standout volleyball player for the Lady Bears, signed a letter-of intent-June 5 to attend Haskell University in Lawrence, Kan. Pine, 19, signed the letter in the presence of her parents, Donald and Mary Pine, Wingate volleyball coach Karen Malone and Wingate assistant volleyball coach Melody West. The signing took place at Wingate High School.

"I'm very happy with my decision," Pine said. "I'm very familiar with the school. I'm familiar with the coaches and, obviously, there are some former Wingate players there already."

As a senior at Wingate High, Pine said she got looks from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore., and from Haskell. She said she's known Haskell volleyball coach Nanabah Allison-Brewer

since she was 14 years old, noting that taking some general education classes at the University of New Mexico-Gallup helped her keep an academic edge.

"I didn't just keep away from school," Pine said. "I was at UNM-Gallup."

Pine was a relentless leader and first team All-State volleyball player at Wingate for three straight years and teamed with Ashanti Antonio and Nizhoni Young in helping the Lady Bears get to state for four years. Pine and Antonio were middle hitters and two of the top players in the Four Corners during their senior years. Wingate's signature play was to keep Pine and the incredibly athletic Antonio at the net so that a setter (Young) could "hit" one of the two for a kill shot. Antonio and Young are members of Haskell's volleyball squad.

Malone was excited about Pine's signing. "She was a varsity starter and she went to state for three years," Malone said. "She was one of my more stronger players. I think she will do well at the college level because she's very smart, very athletic and very confident."

During the past years, Pine, who thought about joining the U.S. Marines, said she worked full-time as a security guard in Gallup, and also worked at an area movie theatre. She said she utilized the open gym dates at Wingate to stay in game shape. Pine played basketball and ran track at Wingate. She said she'll play only volleyball at Haskell.

"I knew I was going to go to college," Pine said. "Now I'm going and I'm very eager to get there."

A straight A student at Wingate, Pine said she visited Haskell over the past few months and ran into Antonio and Young while there. She said the two invited her to play in a tournament volleyball match. As for the three recapturing the outright dominance they displayed at Wingate?

"We can do it. Ashanti and Nizhoni are good players. We all felt very comfortable with each other when I was there," Pine said. "I leave in August and the first game is not too long after that."

Haskell is a federally-operated tribal university that offers associate and baccalaureate degree programs in a variety of disciplines. The school’s athletic teams play in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Haskell’s team colors are purple, gold and white. Pine hails from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota.

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