

SCHOOL

Senior earns college degree, high school diploma

Gaither High School senior Nick Maceus, 17, will attend the University of Florida in the fall.

By **CHRISTINA SCOTT**
Staff Writer

When Nick Maceus was a little boy, his parents, Sony and Leomene, gave him books to read and math problems to solve for fun.

"I would spend summers at the library and whenever I got bored my parents encouraged me to read encyclopedias," said Maceus, 17. "I just grew up learning, so for me, it's something I enjoy."

As a result of his early experience with education, the Gaither High School student spent his senior year earning

both an associate's degree from Hillsborough Community College and his high school diploma.

"Both of his parents are very accomplished in their professions and I know he gets a lot of his drive from his family," said Bryan Keaton, a teacher at Gaither for alternative education. "He's just extremely intelligent."

For Maceus, the decision to do both was as he said, "just playing it smart."

"I had two options," said Maceus, "I could attend college as an early admissions freshman or I could co-enroll at Hillsborough Community College and not miss my senior year in high school."

So for the past year, Maceus has attended high school in the morning and col-

lege in the afternoons and evenings.

Without skipping a beat, Maceus also made time to attend his senior prom.

"Nick is very mature, academic and has a strong sense of curiosity," said Larry Rice, social studies department head at Gaither.

"Whenever I gave an assignment, I could always expect Nick to go beyond what the typical student would do," said Rice. "He has an inner-drive to achieve."

In addition, Maceus finished his two-year college degree in one year.

"In a nutshell, Nick is highly motivated and driven," said his college counselor, Barry Silber. "On a personal note, he seems to always have a good attitude and a smile on his

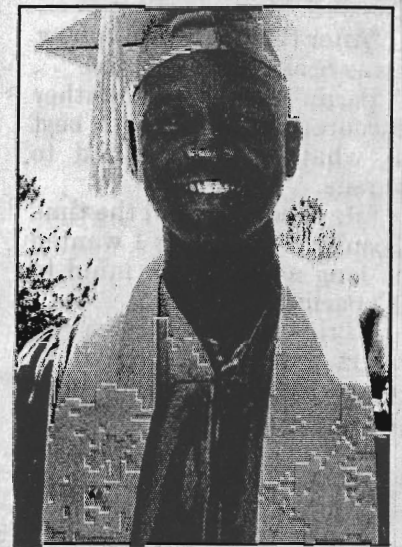
face."

For his efforts, Maceus was awarded a \$35,000 Gates Millennium Scholarship.

Funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the millennium scholarships are part of a 20-year plan to provide financial assistance to high-achieving minority students who are in severe financial need and otherwise would not be able to pursue higher education.

Maceus plans to use the money to pay for his tuition at the University of Florida, where he will be enrolled next fall as a junior majoring in computer information systems.

"After I get my bachelor's, I want to get my MBA and then go to law school," Maceus said. "Learning is what I love



Nick Maceus

to do. If I could be a professional student and spend the rest of my life learning new things, I'd be happy."