

# Local

The Paducah Sun | Saturday-Sunday, April 17-18, 2021 | paducahsun.com

## Copeland chosen to sing anthem at Reds' game

BY DAVID B. SNOW  
DSNOW@PADUCAHSUN.COM

Paducah Tilghman High School junior Gabrielle Copeland will be at Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati Tuesday for the Reds' game against the Arizona Diamondbacks.

She is not going to the game as a Reds fan, nor is she going as a D-backs fan. Copeland will be singing the national anthem before the game starts. It is a moment she has been working toward for most of her young life.

"I've been singing since I was 2," she said. "I've seen home videos of me in the living room with my parents, not even knowing the words to songs, just screaming melodies and notes that I hear."

Copeland said singing was something she would like to study in college, perhaps look to as a career.

"Ever since I was a little girl, my biggest dream in the whole entire world has been to be a superstar or a pop star," she said. "I still very much want that. I want it more than anything in the whole entire world."

"I think the most influential artist, the one I like to listen to the most, would probably be Beyoncé, Ariana Grande, Aretha Franklin — female artists are really influential on me, and I love their music and what they talk about and what they stand for."

Copeland takes part in two singing groups at Paducah Tilghman: the Concordia girls' a cappella group and the Another Shade of Blue coed a cappella group. She is the co-president of the state 4-H Performing Arts Troupe.

"I've sung in talent shows in elementary school and middle school," she said. "I've sung in a local talent



DAVID B. SNOW | The Sun

**PTHS junior Gabrielle Copeland will sing the national anthem Tuesday at Cincinnati's Great American Ball Park in front of a potential crowd of 12,700 people. This will also be her first time to sing the anthem alone publicly.**

show. I've done the national anthem at my middle school and with the high school groups, but this is the first time I've sung it by myself."

While she has sung publicly before, none of those performances compares to the potential 12,700 fans in the Cincinnati stands. While that is "only" 30% of the full capacity of 42,319 — to accommodate social distancing — that audience is still daunting.

"That will be the biggest crowd that I've ever sung in front of," Copeland said. "That's really exciting!"

How do you get to the Great American Ball Park? Well, it takes practice, practice, practice — and fill out the right forms.

"My mom, my dad and my brother went to a Memphis Grizzlies (basketball) game," Copeland said. "My dad just wouldn't stop talking

about this one girl — he couldn't remember her name — he said she was a Grammy-nominated artist and a beautiful singer, and he told me she sang the national anthem.

"I looked up 'Memphis Grizzlies national anthem' and it pops up: 'Cincinnati Reds MLB national anthem auditions.' I clicked on it, and it was a form where you make a video of you singing it and you send it to (the Reds organization) with your name, phone number and email, and they read over it."

Copeland recorded her anthem at the office of Brittany Osborne, a McCracken County Extension Office agent for 4-H youth development. Copeland sent the video on March 10 and got a reply on March 26.

"They said they would love to have me, and I said, 'Oh, my gosh!'" she said. "I was in shock, because I was like, 'Out of

everyone you could have picked, you picked me — a girl from Paducah, Kentucky!'"

Copeland said she was looking forward to getting out on the field and singing in Cincinnati.

"I cannot wait," she said. "I'm not nervous; I'm just excited. I love performing and I love singing in front of people, and I feel like this is a step closer to what I really want to do."

"My vocal teacher, Emily Black, and I have gone over the anthem a few times, and my choir director, Mr. (Matt) Hinz, wants me to sing it in class on Friday before I go so I can get used to singing in front of people."

Copeland said singing the national anthem blends the traditional song with individual style.

"You have to trust yourself," she said. "With some of it, you can add your own little flair in it,

but at the same time, you still want it to be a little traditional still. I try to keep that same feel and stay in that same general area, but add in a little bit of what's me and what I like."

"The climaxes toward the end and in the middle — I love those parts. I think it builds up and makes me feel very powerful."

Copeland is the daughter of Tony and Angela Copeland and is a member of Harrison Street Missionary Baptist Church. She also takes part in several PTHS groups and organizations, including the speech and debate team, the Sustainability Club, Student Council, 4-H Teen Club, 4-H Purchase Area Club, 4-H photography club and drama club. She was recently accepted to Youth LEAD and serves on the Paducah Bank Teen Ambassadors Alumni Board.