



Emma Cumberledge is a 2016 graduate of Freedom Area High School where she participated in the “Big Red” Marching Band in the Flagline and was Captain her senior year. She was Student Director for the school play, *The King & I*, during her senior year assisting Play Director, Debra Williamson and participated in six Freedom Drama Musicals. Emma was Student Director for the Performing Arts Class during her senior year assisting teacher, Heather Giammaria. She was awarded the Rising Star Award in her freshman and sophomore years for the Performing Arts Class. Emma was also voted Homecoming Queen.

Emma graduated from Point Park University’s Conservatory of Performing Arts with a Bachelor of Arts in Theater Arts with a concentration in Directing. She received the Artistic

Achievement Scholarship during all four years of college. Emma directed the student run 24 hour Play Festival in 2017 and performed in Raymond Laine Memorial One Acts Festival in Spring 2018 in *Allister Cromley’s Fairweather Belle* adapted by Klara Hricik. She was Assistant Stage Manager to Gemma Mitchell for Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* at Pittsburgh Musical Theater in Spring 2018, and she was an Education Intern for Pittsburgh CLO in Summer 2018. Emma was accepted into Point Park’s Advanced Directing Program and directed the following: Raymond Laine Memorial One Acts Festival for *BREAD* by Margaret Hunt in Fall 2018 and *YoungLove/OldLove* by Tommy Bo Hansana in Spring 2019. She was a Summer Camp Intern for Pittsburgh Musical Theater in Summer 2019 and was the Assistant Director to Brady Patsy for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In Fall 2019, she was Assistant Director to Reginald L. Douglas for Ngozi Anyanwu’s *Good Grief* at the Pittsburgh Playhouse.

Emma has been teaching Intermediate Acting at Pittsburgh CLO Academy since Fall 2020 and was a Summer Camp Counselor for the Pittsburgh CLO Academy in 2021. She was the Admissions Associate at Pittsburgh CLO Academy from August 2021-February 2022 and is currently Patron Services Associate at

Pittsburgh CLO. Emma is also currently the Stage Manager for *Elite Showband's* Pittsburgh branch, which is an events band that started in Pittsburgh, and has now grown to service both Pittsburgh and Palm Springs.

Emma is really thankful to have had so many artistic and creative opportunities at Freedom. "I know that most smaller schools don't offer things like a Performing Arts class, or have a thriving Drama Club, or have a great Marching Band like Freedom," says Emma. She was supported by her peers and teachers at Freedom to discover who she is, what she likes and to try new things. Gia and Deb were really the reason Emma is doing theater professionally, and they nurtured the confidence for her to audition for the Conservatory program. Emma says, "From the start, they put a lot of faith in me and gave me so many opportunities as an actor and as a director that helped me to grow into the person I am today. I am forever grateful to the two of them for their love and support."

One of Emma's favorite parts of growing up at Freedom was the sense of community and the care the teachers have for their students. She loved that she graduated with a lot of the same kids she went to preschool with. She loved that even if she didn't know a person, they were kind to her because of knowing her older brother. She loved that her sister, a current 7th grader at Freedom, has some of the same incredible teachers that she had. There are good and bad things about small towns, but it feels special to know generations have gone through Freedom. Emma says, "I always felt I had the support of my teachers to be my best self both in and out of the classroom. While I always learned academically, I learned so much about life from talking with teachers like Gia, Fitz or Schultzie. The teachers at Freedom are really special, and the love that they showed me I try to carry on to my students in every class."