



## Live Like Lightning

*5A Swimmer of the Year Charlotte Burnham strikes each race, day, and moment with love, leadership, and passion.*

By Hayden Oh '25

photo by Audrey Hanna '26

In her short two years at Regis Jesuit, senior Charlotte Burnham's name has become exceptionally well-known around campus and across the state for her astounding accomplishments as a varsity swimmer.

After transferring from Mullen her junior year and winning the state 100-yard breaststroke title during her first season at Regis, Charlotte has taken the Colorado high school swim league by storm. This year coaches around the state honored her with the title of 5A swimmer of the year based on her contributions as a leader and competitor.

"It's a really great feeling," said Burnham when asked about her latest title. "I'm just incredibly grateful for my team who re-sparked my passion for swimming this year, and I feel like they pushed me to work really hard. It's just hard with such a demanding and taxing sport—it gets

pretty monotonous. But just having like 12 weeks being with the Regis team fixed all my woes."

Burnham, who has been swimming since she was seven years old and has been a part of several teams, credits the unique and close-knit environment of the Regis swim team for her high school success and ongoing motivation.

"I just describe [the team] as an extremely welcoming and supportive environment. It just feels like a really big hug. I know that I can fall on them when I have my challenges, but they're also there to lift me up during my triumphs," Burnham explained.

This year, the Regis team had an incredible season, placing second in the CHSAA Class 5A Swimming Championship, trailing competitor Cherry Creek by a mere three points.

"I could not imagine a better team to fall back into [following the

championship]. I feel like we were all super low, but we were pulling each other up in that moment of defeat," described Burnham.

Despite barely falling short of the state championship title, the girls had a remarkable season together under Burnham's leadership as team captain.

"Our coach Nick Frasersmith even said we were some of the closest girls on a team he's coached in a really long time, and to be part of that is such an honor. The season just went by so quickly because I felt like every day we were just getting to know each other more and have more laughs, and it just really made practice something to look forward to," said Burnham.

As swimming is an immensely physically and mentally demanding sport, the friendships formed between swimmers play a cardinal role in their motivation and support system. For Burnham, these relationships have manifested through her Regis teammates and her late friend Sydney Meegan.

Meegan has served as a source of continuous motivation in Burnham's swim career and personal life since she tragically passed away in 2022. Burnham wears a lightning bolt, Meegan's favorite symbol, on a necklace every day and has a matching tattoo to honor her legacy.

"After finals, at the state championship last year, two of the captains gifted me with matching lightning bolt earrings, and it was just a moment for

me where I realized that they loved me for who I was more than a swimmer, and that they were willing to be there with me. Like an expression that says that they will carry my crosses and not run away from the things that were kind-of scary. Instead, they embrace them," recalled Burnham.

Though saddened that she has completed her final season at Regis, Burnham is hopeful that the sisterhood fostered on the team will continue on.

"I just hope that they can continue to show such incredible resilience and strength as they did this year. I feel like the way to do that is through the connections that they make and leaning on each other and through the early mornings and the hard practices; I wish them nothing but continued success. I know that they're the most deserving group of girls, but I know that the way to do that is truly just through embracing the sisterhood," explained Burnham.

Next year, Burnham will take the next step of her life and swimming career at the University of California, Berkeley where she will carry her crosses and sisterhood similarly to how she has carried Sydney's legacy through each race, each day, and the tattoo on her body.

Burnham said, "It was just such an honor to be a part of this team, and it makes me really sad to leave. I wish that I had more time here, but the two years that I did have made such a profound impact on me, and I'm just eternally grateful."