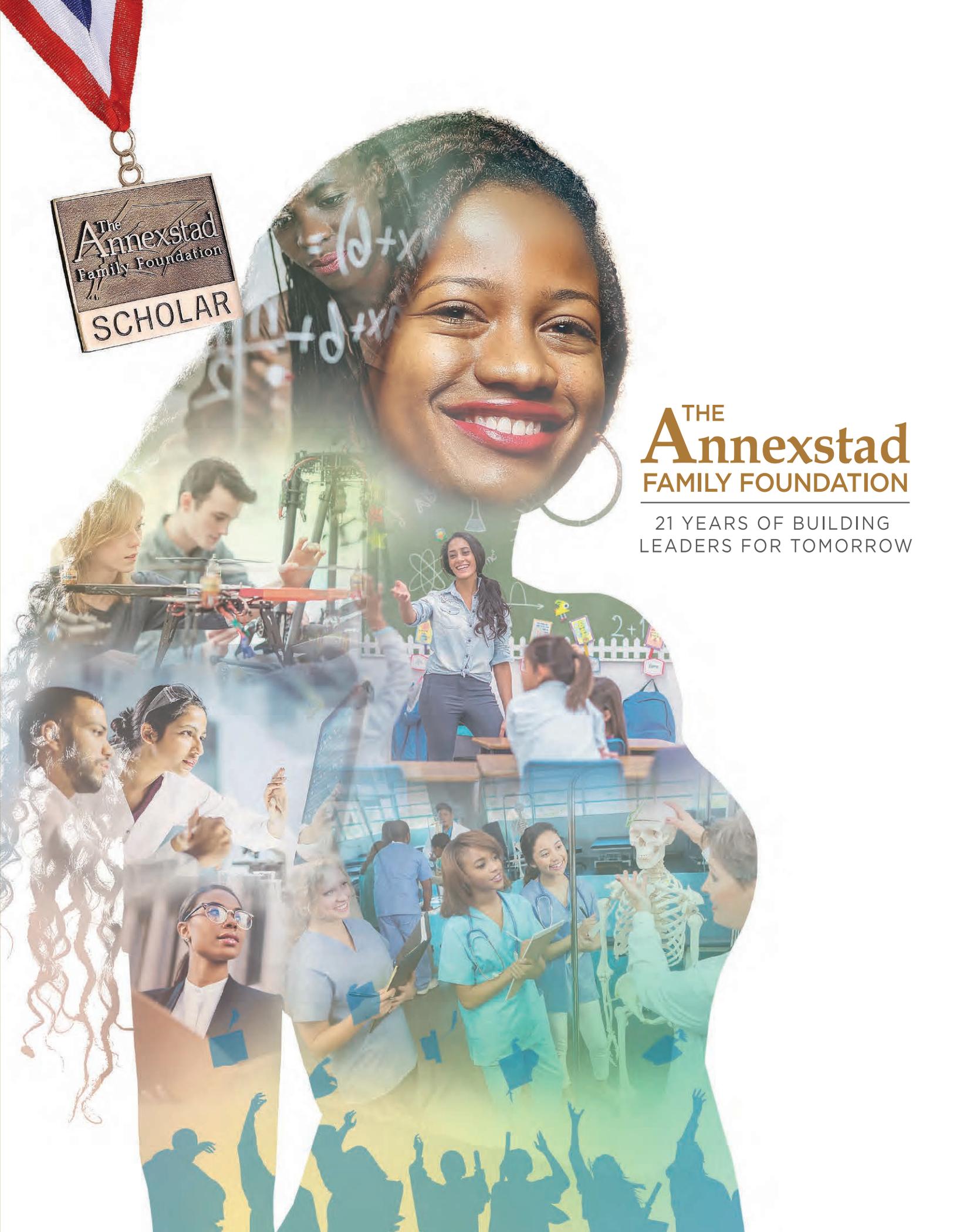


# THE Annexstad FAMILY FOUNDATION

21 YEARS OF BUILDING  
LEADERS FOR TOMORROW



# THE Annexstad FAMILY FOUNDATION

21 YEARS OF BUILDING  
LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

During the past two years, we have rediscovered the power of resiliency. Our Scholars, Graduates and Alumni had to be creative about how they worked, studied and connected. Some of our Scholars changed coasts to go to college, worked on the frontlines while taking classes, tapped into new ways to build connections and worked jobs or internships virtually. We were required to be resourceful, innovative and most of all patient. All of us were glued to our screens soaking up any way possible to have human interaction all while trying to stay safe.

The Annexstad Family Foundation operated differently too. Drawing on the relationships we have forged over the past 21 years, we immediately transitioned our programming to a virtual format, offering a wide variety of informative webinars (some of which you will see adapted as articles within these pages) and virtually networking by school to develop a new remote community to support our Scholars. Our team was astute and engaged, and Cathy and I are so proud of the work and the tenacity we see within our Scholars, Graduates, Alumni and our Administrative team.

### **Now more than ever, Annexstad Scholars are leading resilient lives.**

All have faced nearly unsurmountable obstacles yet, instead of giving up, they have persevered. Harnessing their intellect, talent, personal gifts and unwavering drive, they have proudly accepted the baton of higher education. Their fight to succeed will change their lives' trajectory, just as our own lives were transformed by our friends and family after the loss of a parent at an early age. Our mothers, Alice and Marie, had the courage to work hard, raise a family and instill values that would serve us for a lifetime.

Our most vital relationships define our path. Throughout our early lives, Cathy and I had family and friends looking out for us. One community leader even tapped me on the shoulder and offered me a job. That tap turned into a 48-year career where I grew a company built on relationships. And as proud as I am of my career accomplishments, I know our connections with our Foundation, our network of universities and all 1,107 of our Scholars will impact the future in a most significant way and our mission will live on forever.

In 2000, when we started The Annexstad Family Foundation, we wanted to develop an organization that focused on helping bring the dream of higher education to first-generation students. It was our way to pay it forward. What's more, we believe that in order to find fulfillment in life you must support others. We work closely with our trusted University partners to ensure our Scholars know they are not in this alone. Our Foundation staff works with the advisors and various administrative resources to make certain our Scholars thrive. Teaching our Scholars how to build relationship skills now will help them navigate the waters every time they are required to reinvent themselves in new situations — even those as extreme as our past two years.



If our Scholars have shown us one thing throughout these recent times it is this: **every one of them are blessed with knowledge, energy and passion.**

Knowledge leads to insight, innovation and problem solving. Knowledge improves people's lives. Knowledge possesses the wherewithal to do the right thing at precisely the right time it is needed. In this hyper-connected world today, learning must be a lifelong habit. To this end, the most successful people make continuous learning a priority in whatever vocation they pursue.

While our knowledge gives us confidence to act, our level of energy drives us to action. It reflects that our work has purpose and meaning. Our energy is in direct proportion to the personal commitment that we make to get the job done right and on time, indeed maybe even ahead of time. People with high energy are doers, not talkers. For lack of better wording, our level of energy demonstrates that we are ready to roll up our sleeves; that failure, as the saying goes, is not an option and that there is no time like the present to get done what needs to be done.

I have always been impressed by knowledgeable folks who have endless

*Al and Cathy Annexstad and family.*

energy and a burning desire to get things done right the first time. Our level of energy enables us to apply our knowledge with an unrelenting focus and sense of urgency.

The third of these most powerful forces that fuel successful people is passion. Sometimes people confuse energy and passion. While definitely related, these terms are distinctly different. Whereas our energy reflects our sense of urgency to do the right things at the time, our passion reflects our commitment to do so over the long haul. Our passion manifests an amazing capacity to do the right things over and over again throughout our lives. People who are genuinely passionate about what they do are extraordinary. Armed with high energy and a head full of knowledge, passionate people have no boundaries on the road to success.

These three forces, when unleashed, lend themselves to good strong habits that can sustain the most meaningful careers and the most fulfilling lives.

***Building our knowledge is what arms us for success. Our level of energy is what engages and empowers us. And our passion is what sustains us.***

I Al and Cathy Annexstad

## giving hope and opportunity to bright minds with big dreams

- **1,107** Scholarships awarded to date
- **103** new Scholars in 2021
- **607** Graduates to date
- **62** participating institutional partners
- nearly **90%** of Annexstad Scholars graduate in 4 years\*
- an overwhelming majority of Annexstad Scholars graduate debt-free!
- an overwhelming majority of our Annexstad Graduates are gainfully employed or pursuing advanced degrees

\*many Annexstad Scholars made the hard decision to take a gap year as coursework moved online; many have returned to full-time status beginning in Fall 2021.



# top honor

The prestigious Annexstad Family Foundation Scholar Medallion has a longstanding history, from the very first Scholar, Amy Abrahamson, to receive it in 2001, to the 1,107th Scholar to receive it in 2021. Al and Cathy have always seen their Scholars as champions of their circumstances. As many champions, Annexstad Scholars demonstrate courage, determination and focus to move forward. Al and Cathy wanted to honor their Scholars with a gold medallion of comparable prestige.

“A great majority of our Scholars are the first in their families to go to college,” share Al and Cathy. “Their inspiring stories of triumph over hardship and the success that they experience before, during and after their college careers are poignant reminders that America remains a land of opportunity for those who are prepared.

Many of our Scholars are raised in a single-parent home, lived at or below the poverty line and survived traumatic situations that ranged from drug abuse, violence and serious crime to homelessness, hunger, foster home stays, neglect or a serious illness, injury or physical handicap. Each of them is armed with an inner strength and unyielding resilience to rise above their past and pursue the higher education they deserve.

“When we present the Annexstad medallion, there is a tremendous burst of smiling pride, from both our Scholars’ faces and our own,” say the Annexstads. “Neither one of us takes the medallion lightly and it reaffirms the significant investment from the Scholar to reach the ultimate goal of graduation and from the Foundation in developing America’s future leaders.”



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## THE Annexstad FAMILY FOUNDATION

21 YEARS OF BUILDING LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

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Patti Annexstad | executive director  
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Allison Cook | program administrator  
Zack Haas | program administrator  
Maggie Marinovich | digital marketing intern  
5516 Merritt Circle Edina | Minneapolis, MN 55436  
www.AnnexstadFamilyFoundation.org

Theresa Maggio | editor, art director, project manager  
Stacy Daniel, Hired Hands Graphic Design  
art director and designer

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# road to resiliency

In the Fall of 2020, The Annexstad Family Foundation offered our Scholars a survey to gain insight on potential virtual programming topics. Suggestions included themes of community, inclusivity and resiliency. In partnership with the University of Notre Dame, we welcomed **Professor Mark Sanders**, the inaugural Director of Notre Dame's Initiative on Race and Resilience, to present on strategies to practice resiliency.

Pursuing higher education, particularly as a first-generation college student, is the most important thing you can do for yourself and your family. The American democratic experience is built upon having an informed citizenry, and pursuing a higher education is critical to the process. You are in the right place at the right time.

Even so, your path is not the easiest one. It requires fortitude and perseverance in light of the obstacles facing you and environments where you may not always feel welcome or at ease. It requires resilience, of which there are several definitions.

These include:

- the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or a sense of toughness
- the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape, like an elasticity
- the ability to adapt to a hostile environment

These definitions are a response to a situation that is somewhat hostile, a sense of adversity, stress or hardship for which a person or people are responding. Before we consider your current situation, let's take a look back.

### ***resilience facing adversity***

Historical figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and John Lewis of the civil rights movement were all reacting to the Jim Crow segregation in the South

and the most brutal forms of racism. Their reactions were acts of resilience. Their claims to inclusion, participation and democracy are laid out through the civil rights legislation of reconstruction in the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments.

Throughout our history as a nation and even now, Americans love stories supporting the underdog. Consider every immigrant group that persevered to come to the U.S. They faced obstacles and setbacks yet eventually made progress toward their goals. Each of these discriminated individuals persevered through hardships to find gainful employment, to open businesses or pursue higher education to secure a better future for themselves and their family.





*“Those who have gone before you have paved a brave history; you’re following boldly in their resilient footsteps.”*

***Anyone who has accomplished anything, anyone who has dealt with adversity or failure, has developed resiliency. Think of resilience as a state of mind that helps to mitigate moments of heightened stress.***

***resilience in higher education***

So, what does it mean to practice resilience in higher education? Traditionally, education was reserved for male elites. It was not until the Civil War that the federal government began to establish land-grant universities, which received benefits from the Morrill Acts of 1862. States sold federal land to gain funding to create state universities. During this time, the nation understood the importance of expanded access to higher education, including the addition of a larger population that included African Americans.

This is when the Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) were created. This was also the first moment compulsory education was required for children through the age of 16. Throughout the U.S. and especially the South, public schools were

opening up. There was a realization that if the U.S. was going to survive as a democracy, an informed citizenry needed access to higher education.

Fast forward to post-World War II. After the war, veterans received the GI Bill and the federal government paid full rides in unprecedented numbers so vets could go to college. This resulted in the largest expansion of the American middle class. Americans had greater economic leverage to participate in the democratic experience and the GI Bill opened more opportunities to first-generation students including Black veterans.

***resilience for equality***

During this post-WWII moment of expansion of the middle class, the Civil Rights Movement begins. Lyndon B. Johnson sets into effect The Great Society, a series of domestic programs whose goal was the total elimination of poverty and racial injustice. It was believed that we could end poverty largely because the economy was expanding rapidly and more wealth was available. From 1955 with the

Montgomery Bus Boycott to 1965 and the passing of the Civil Rights legislation, Black communities decided they were no longer going to tolerate being treated as second-class citizens. Here is another act of resilience pushing back against a hostile environment.

Currently, Americans have seen so many other political movements exhibited that have all come out of this moment of resilience: Black Lives Matter, Me Too, LGBTQ, disability and Native American rights.

***resilience in your own life***

There is a fundamental link between resilience in the larger collective sense and the individual sense. As individuals, your parents exemplify resilience. They are responsible for your upbringing, providing for you and positioning you to go to college. There is a collective belief that you are part of a long legacy of resilience. But what does it mean to practice resilience on a regular basis?

# professor mark *sanders*



Professor Mark Sanders is the inaugural Director of the Notre Dame Initiative on Race and Resilience, an interdisciplinary program launched by the University of Notre Dame on the redress of systemic racism and support of communities of color both within and beyond the Notre Dame campus. Sanders researches and teaches African American and Afro-Latin American literature and culture at the University of Notre Dame. He examines the ways in which Blacks across the Western Hemisphere participate in local, national and international print cultures of the late 19th, 20th and 21st centuries to enhance material social and political conditions.

Think about the obstacles you face at school including:

- Workload
- Unresponsive professors
- Curriculum that minimizes your cultural heritage
- Cultural wealth and assumed privilege
- Assumption that you are not there on your own intellectual merits, that you're an athlete or you have taken a spot from someone else who earned it
- Micro-aggressions and overt acts of racism and sexism
- Isolation during the pandemic



How should you respond to what might be a quasi-hostile environment for you? Let's consider these options:

### **community**

Community includes the people with whom we live within our household or neighborhood (including family, friends, faith community, classmates, dormmates, teams, fraternities/sororities and study groups). Community is also a group with shared values, forged around shared goals and fostering a sense of belonging and wellbeing. **Linking into a community is essential to resilience.** In contrast, isolation is a real detriment which leads back into the challenges of maintaining our own mental health.

### **mental and emotional health**

Your mental and emotional health involves your cognitive, behavioral and emotional wellbeing. To maintain positive mental and emotional health, it is important to consider time- and stress-management, counseling and relaxation. Having a detailed daily schedule is enormously important. Set time for your class schedule, studying, meals, recreation time, etc. It helps you to be in control of your daily practices. **If you are in control of the way your time is allocated, you will be less anxious.** You will devote enough time to everything, which lowers your stress levels.

There will be moments of heightened stress, so focus on deep breathing, mindfulness, stretching or getting some fresh air. If you notice that you are becoming more anxious, look into campus resources for counseling as a proactive preventive measure. Going to counseling is a sign of strength.

### **recreation**

Despite your full schedule, it is important for you to have time for recreation. Select an activity for pure enjoyment that requires physical movement. **Regular physical exertion gets your heart rate up. Mentally, it clears the mind and releases endorphins.** If I have a stressful meeting, I'll go for a run, shower and recalibrate. Consider reading, listening to music, dancing or anything that makes you happy. Book this time into your schedule so you can enjoy the full benefits.

### **final thoughts**

Resilience is yours for the taking. Annexstad Scholars, you have your own community built within this scholarship where you can connect and talk through your specific challenges. Having a common sense of concern to what each of you are facing and developing strategies to reduce any issues is mutually beneficial. Also, make full use of campus resources including your advisor to help you address your challenges.

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View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).

# university of mississippi

## connects first-gen students

### to support their success

By Jonathan Scott

In early 2018, the Honors College at the University of Mississippi hosted two meetings for Black, indigenous and other students of color to gauge interest in forming an organization. “When over 50 students crowded into the meetings, the Ole Miss staff created the Minority Engagement Council (MEC),” says **Rachel Coleman**, advisor of the MEC at Ole Miss. “I had a bad undergraduate experience myself. By either not looking like my peers or else looking like my peers but not sharing their same interests, I was falling through the cracks.”

On both a personal and a professional level, Coleman appreciates the MEC’s mission to “foster an environment that promotes interconnectivity, cultivates greatness in academia and generates a respectful community that opens dialogue for minority students.”

She’s not alone. **Ajah Singleton** and **Elsi Gabriela Muñoz Ramos**, two first-generation students and Annexstad Family Foundation Scholars, have discovered ways to thrive while in school. Both are members of the university’s Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College (SMBHC), where they

participate in two supportive academic programs, the MEC and the First-Generation Student Network (First-Gen).

For Singleton, “First-Gen and the MEC fully complement The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship,” which is awarded to Ole Miss students who meet three primary criteria: They must exhibit exceptional potential to become leaders in their chosen fields; they must have successfully triumphed over significant personal or family hardship; and their financial situations would otherwise prevent them from attending college.

“All of these programs focus on supporting those who need help,” she adds. As a junior majoring in health care management and the current president of MEC, Singleton

notes, “If the Honors College had not established these organizations, I would have been so lonely and isolated.”

Ramos echoes her sentiment of gratitude for the school’s sensitivity to their needs. Having grown up in Mexico, transitioning to the U.S. educational system wasn’t easy when her family moved to Mississippi four years ago. “In high school, my sister and I felt out of place,” she shares. “As a freshman Scholar, the First-Gen and the MEC helped me find a community with people who have had to overcome similar struggles.”

**Ashleen Williams**, who mentors the First-Gen organization, says “This initiative works specifically to dismantle the hidden curriculum. We focus on service and eliminating the barriers first-generation students might encounter. We provide



access to a network of resources and people who can help empower them to succeed at our university.”

Once a first-generation college student himself, Ole Miss Chancellor **Glenn Boyce** is familiar with the importance of this programming for a transformative school experience and a path to post-graduation opportunities. Boyce grew up in New York and, when he considered transferring to Ole Miss, the school told him to “come on down.” He got in his old, beat-up car and drove more than 1,200 miles to get there.

Boyce earned his bachelor’s degree in Education and a doctorate in Educational Leadership at Ole Miss where he also met his future wife. Before becoming chancellor, Boyce enjoyed a career in secondary and post-secondary education spanning more than 37 years. “The most pivotal point of my life was based on trusting Ole Miss to take care of me,” he says. “I did my part by coming and they certainly did theirs by investing in my success and changing the trajectory of my life. I’m touched and inspired by how our partnership with The Annexstad Family Foundation is helping us achieve that same tremendous personal impact for our students and their future.”



*Annexstad Scholars Ajah Singleton and Elsi Gabriela Muñoz Ramos (second and third from left) are pictured with Rachel Coleman (left), Minority Engagement Council advisor, and Ashleen Williams, faculty mentor for the First-Generation Student Network.*

Cathy and Al have been awarding Scholarship at Ole Miss since 2015. “Education is the great equalizer,” believes Al. “While there are no guarantees for any of us, a first-rate education is the surest path to realizing the opportunities that life has to offer.” Ajah and Elsi are on that path now.

Ramos hopes to work in international affairs between Mexico and China after college, while Ajah plans to become a health care administrator and ultimately serve in executive leadership at a major hospital.

“I’m so thankful to the Annexstad Family Foundation for the financial and academic support they provided me,” Ramos says. “I recently contacted the Foundation about my plans after college and they connected me with alumni who provided me with career advice.”

Singleton adds, “As a young Black woman in the South from a low-income family, scholarships were the only way I could afford college. Thanks to the Annexstads and Ole Miss, I can achieve my professional goals and build a better future for myself.”



# scholar superstars in the news



**KAYVON ASEMANI**  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
CLASS OF 2018

## rapper, designer and investor in human beings

Two-time TedX Speaker and one of *Forbes'* Most Outstanding Business School Grads in 2018, **Kayvon Asemani** empowers others to innovate. His inspiring story was recently featured in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

As a junior at Penn, Kayvon used his studies as a springboard to create his own music and clothing company, Kayvon Enterprises.

Making an impact is at the core of Kayvon's brand identity, which includes his free-trade clothing line, his thriving rap career and being an investor in human beings. "We are all going through something," he says. "And we have the opportunity to turn our adversity into our advantages."

At 25, Kayvon's career highlights include being the first rapper to perform at the United Nations and performances with Waka Flocka Flame and iLoveMakonnen. As a Product Manager at Facebook, he introduced Messenger "Dark Mode" and worked on Instagram's "Stories About You". He has also been featured in two *New York Times* bestsellers: *Option B* by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant and *Grit* by Angela Duckworth.

Congratulations, Kayvon on your continued success.



**BESSIE BAUMAN**  
YALE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2020

## pathways to a more accessible financial system

Recent Yale Grad **Bessie Bauman** has always been driven to create economic stability and prosperity for all. In 2020, Bessie received the prestigious Yale Institute of Social and Policy Studies Director's Fellowship which supports Yale undergraduates conducting research on U.S. domestic policy. As a 2020 Director's Fellow, Bessie served as a Policy Intern for Prosperity Now!, a Washington, D.C. based non-profit whose mission is to ensure Americans have a clear path to financial stability, wealth and prosperity.

This summer, her research was published in a Prosperity Now! report that she co-authored in collaboration with policy and racial wealth equity experts. The report highlights how universal access to banking could support the 60 million financially underserved households in the U.S to better manage money, avoid costly alternative financial services and build wealth.

Armed with her bachelor's degree in Economics, we are excited to see Bessie continue to impact positive change!



**AUBRIANA DAVIS**  
SPELMAN COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2022

## get ready for netflix's new rising star

**Aubriana Davis** is no stranger to life in front of or behind the camera. She is set to star in the second season of "Raising Dion," a superhero drama on Netflix. Throughout her time at Spelman, Aubriana dedicated herself to her coursework and her passion. A documentary filmmaking major with a minor in theatre, Aubriana has championed opportunities to learn both on and off campus.

Performing since a young age, she appeared on stage through various theatre productions where her love for acting developed.

At 18, she landed a big break and her first movie credit in the film *Richard Jewell* directed by acclaimed director Clint Eastwood. Make sure to binge watch Aubriana's latest work on Amazon Prime in *The Underground Railroad* (directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Barry Jenkins) and National Geographic's *Genius Arethra*.

We are so proud of you, Aubriana!

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To learn more about our Scholars, visit [www.annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://www.annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).



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21 YEARS OF BUILDING LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

*1,107 scholarships awarded to date*

*103 new scholars in 2021*

*607 graduates to date*

*62 participating institutional partners*



# national scholars changing the world

- 1 Auburn University**  
Turner, Ella
- 2 Augsburg College**  
Barger, Sierra  
Goodwin, Danielle  
Jacobs-Hurtubise, Gabe  
Jacobson, Leah  
Roberson, Jacarri  
Trevino, Crystal  
Ung, Robert  
Yang, Lee
- 3 Bemidji State University**  
Morgan, Jordan
- 4 Bethel University**  
Adesanya, Ayomide  
Barlue, Elijah  
Barthel, Tyler  
Bauer, Levi  
Bjorgo, Janessa  
Garcia, Tania  
Hser, Hsa Hsay  
Mortenson, Grant  
Osagiede, Andrew  
Pe'A, Bronson  
Sanchez-Sanchez, Lizania  
Thosaengsiri, Ratsamee  
Xiong, Zang  
Zar, Ekhudah
- 5 Boston College**  
Ali, Ijaabo  
Barry, Lou  
Briar, Naren  
Collier, Jared  
Davidson, Raven  
DePina, Kyannah  
Dowling, Kayla  
Encarnacion, Eric  
Fotopoulos, Joseph  
Hunt, Angelo  
Nohmy, Ally  
LaSage, Kelby  
Okorie, Chiamaka  
Sam-Hinton, Mikaela  
Tang, Amy
- 6 California State University, San Bernardino**  
Duenas, Trinity
- 7 California State University, San Marcos**  
Estacio, Katrina  
Hanson, Jennifer  
Martinez, Adrian  
Tintero, Romel
- 8 Carleton College**  
Abdirahman, Ahmed  
Ahmed, Sagal  
Brooks, DeJimon  
Bui, Thien  
Campos González, Danny  
Cota, Alé  
Finch, Zene  
Hooper, Kavon  
Korems-Wolinski, Heidi  
Legba, Francine  
Luong, Hak  
Seley, Molubah  
Velasco, Miguel  
Williams, Chavonn
- 9 Clemson University**  
Briz, Karen  
Capleton, Darryl  
Creswell, T'Laysha  
Darby, Sallie  
Haley, Danielle  
Hunter, Arabella  
Lloyd, Mary Lee  
Pou, Sabriyya  
Sine, Hunter  
Smith, Xavier  
Stewart, Destiny  
Widdifield, Winter  
Williams, Jackson
- 10 College of Saint Benedict**  
Bevan, Amanda  
Harms, Janessa  
Hengel, Stephany  
Morrall, Catlin  
Rodriguez, Yariset  
Saffert, Gretchen  
Soro, Nancy  
Sumrall, Lydia
- 11 College of the Desert**
- 12 Concordia College**  
Teigen, Lindsey  
Williams, Britany
- 13 Crown College**  
Bonati, Skye
- 14 Duke University**  
Abdulrahman, Ahmed  
Ahmed, Mohamed  
Argueta, Laura  
Brockman, Emily  
Butron, Lynette  
Chaudhry, Haseeb  
Cheng, Amy  
Clayton, Timothy  
Davis, Bailey  
Hamill, Haley  
Hewett, Bethany  
Koleini, Mehdina  
Lopez, Brandon  
Middlebrooks, McKenzie  
Real Williams, Vanessa  
Sanchez-Rolon, Alexandra  
Schmidt, Brooke  
Wayne, Moses
- 15 Emory University**  
Blount, Christian  
De La Cruz, Dulce  
Gaytan, Nayive  
Guyette, Lindsay  
Kilic, Elif  
Lee, Ariona  
Macri, Christian  
Mammas, Demetrios  
Martin, Lalita  
McDonald, Tanique  
Paul, Brandi  
Pendergrast, Keaton  
Porto, Joshua  
Rhee, Amie  
Rivera, Suzanne  
Sell, Jason  
Shana  
Soas, Alex  
Thompson, Tristen  
Wheeler, Austin
- 16 Georgetown University**  
Ali, Habon  
Asuen, Esohe  
Brault, Gabrielle Elliott  
Cooper, Demetrius  
de Araujo, Katie  
De Zoysa, Anaga  
Garcia, Elsie  
Haddad, Stephanie
- 17 Georgia Institute of Technology**  
Bruschi, Melissa  
Chester, Raymond  
Cvijetinovic, Ivan  
Fung, Florey  
Johnston, Heather  
Luke, Avery  
Mekonnen, Bathlehem  
Miranda, Isabella  
Perry, Timothy  
Robinson, Alexis  
Rodriguez, Vanessa  
Saunders, Shaunice  
Shirley, Courtney  
Suffrena, Alaika  
Tuttle, Charitty  
Ware, Jacob  
Yopp, Harley  
Zaharieva, Yoana  
Zaharieva, Zornitsa
- 18 Gonzaga University**  
Azizi, Jasmin  
Bazie, Felecia  
Benjamin, Marychristie  
Carrillo, Loren  
Lanegraff, Meghan  
Núñez, Carlos
- 19 Gustavus Adolphus College**  
Abrahamson Miller, Amy  
Afful, Anthony  
Araya, Christian  
Atkinson, Monica  
Campbell, Madeline  
Choenyi, Tenzin  
Coller, Haley  
Davis, Nadvia  
Dornon, Chrissy  
Dubose, Jeffrey  
Dubose, Veronica  
Durgapersad, Asha  
Ellefson, Erica  
French, Amanda  
Gonzalez, Jennifer  
Gotthardt, Elise  
Green, Donte  
Hansen, Hannah  
Halvorson-Johnson, Alex  
Htoo, Baby



open to see the impressive list of Annexstad Family Foundation scholars

Hutchins Feldman, Kelsey Johnson, Kady Juantos, Neida Kramer, Michael Lavan, Gabrielle Love, Grace Meadows, Patrick Metcalf, Ashleigh Naber, Carrie Newell, Jesse Mayén, Brian Pitsch, Kiana Reliford, Shaketta Robbins, Emma Say, Eh De Cem Simmons, Megan Sosa, Ashley Spaulding, Elizabeth Thao, Tong Trejo, Louis Ung, Mindy Williams, Daniel

**25 Minnesota State University, Mankato**

Abdulahi, Yaxye Anderson, Skylar Avila, José Brito Lino, Yuseina Brown, Angie (Foster) Buchanan, Tiarra Buth, Vanessa Cordova, Emily Creger, Payton Edel, Gabriell Fedder, Sierra Grove, Blake Herber, Hunter Jorgensen, Tierra Kanz, Christina Kim, Irene Nereson, Anastasia Nguyen, Zoey Papadakis, Marybeth Polinder, Jenny Schumacher, Molly Sellers, Travon Sjodin, Brendan Van Dalen, Hannah Vang, George Walstrom, Maggie Williams, Shanique

**26 Minnesota State University, Moorhead**

Hettwer, Amber Martin, Michael Rudenick, Molly Stulken, Timothy Winkelman, Kattlynn

**27 Mississippi State University**

Ross, Samantha

**28 North Dakota State University**

Al-Hammad, Adam Baumgartner, Jesse Chicaderis, Vincent Gronvold, Whitney Hager, Angela Haller, Rebecca Johnson, Mel Lamba, Emilio Lokosang, Yeno Nelson, Nick Nelson, Samantha Rude, Ashley Semmens, Jacob Schmiesing, Daniel Swanson, Duncan Van Phan, Tony Whiteaker, Wyatt Zitzow, Kirkland

**29 Northern Michigan University**

Creighton, Michael Currie, Hailey Galindo, Logan Martin, Kelsey Qualley, Courtney

**30 Pomona College**

Baker, Devon Edmonson, Zemia Garcia, Daniel Pettengill, Bella Sanchez, Emmanuel

**31 Saint John's University**

Arellano, Alex Browne, Elijah

Ellis, Terrence Figueredo, Joseph Fleck, Devon Louks, Noah Tha, Ayebra

**32 St. Catherine University**

Collins, Precious Dubose, Ashley Hopkins, Shalonda Howard, Roberta Kelley, Ici Rush, Andrez

**33 St. Cloud State University**

Dingman, Brad Goman, Ryan Kassahn, Krystal Koester, Lynn McDaniel, Amara Moua, Kang Papadakis, Michelle Roering, Kelly Swanson, Melissa

**34 St. Olaf College**

Culpepper, Dimitri Dubose, Mariah Maskalo, Guttu Welle, Megan

**35 Santa Clara University\***

Del Toro, Sandra

**36 Southwest Minnesota State University**

Koehler, Paris Perry, Leon

**37 Spelman College**

Britton, Courtney Brown, La'Candis Craddock, Brie Davis, Aubriana Fearce, Chelesa Hammonds-Wyatt, N'Zinga Harpe, Ka'Necia Hawkins, Jala Hayes, Unique Holmes, Jada Kenyatta, Ikya King, Nia Lawson, Aryanna Lewis, April Mickens, Ataesia Mitchell, Cheyane Monroe, Monique Nash, Jordan Shimobi-Objuru, Niké Shortt, Jasmine Westbrook, Alesha Young, Asattah

**38 Stanford University**

Calvin, Ghawayne Demir, Nikita Duan, Lee Kelly, Destiny King, Chelsea Marquez, Azucena Mason, Eric McCloud, Paula Mi, Jessica Nichols, Emily Rodarte, Hayden Rodriguez, Emily Sambrick, Maria Tran, Christina Vu, Khan Williams, Joelle Williams, Kayla Zoch, Jeffrey

**39 Texas Christian University**

Jackson, Janae Mason, Charity Mays, Romane Minor, Lance Terrell, II, Mario

**40 University of Alabama**

Bennett, Wyatt Birmingham, Jonathan Dillard, David Figueroa, Javier Franklin, Dakota Gangwer, Nicholas Goodwin, Austin Goodwin, Ty Gore, Alivia Hartline, Rosemary Jackson, Jhabrea King, Rulondo Lockhart, Wesley Lones, Kailey Luster Jr., Danny McGuire, Meg McMullan, Genesis Moore, Trent Morgan, Molly Pruitt, Graci Roberson, Taylor Rowe, Kayla Ryals, Austin Sinyavina, Ana Tice, Steven Trawick, Emily Winfrey, Anna Winslett, Matthew Zotaj, Courtney

**41 University of California, Berkeley**

Ayon Del Carmen, Maria Borja-Snell, AumunIQUE Chen, Cynthia Gonzalez, Mark Henry, Mariah Jazo, Luis Jeffries, Nathan Lewis, Britany Lopez, Jessica Munsar, Rasha Ong, Vincent Papias, Michael Saephan, Tommy Solis, Alondra Urrea, Shay Devon Zarate-Cervantes, Hilda

**42 University of Chicago**

Chesney, Angel Collins, Kelly Contreras, Giezi Cook, Courtney Fields, Anna Haj, Husam Helou, Nicole Kirkes, Eric Kuehnle, William Lubin, Watson Mishler, Danielle Moore, Shauna Mosley, Da'Shawn Peralta Ortiz, Dannerys Quiles, Amanda Shotwell, Amira Sokolowski, Kuba Warren, De'Jon



**43 University of Colorado, Boulder**

Handy, Andrea Ortega, Robert

**44 University of Georgia**

Awad, Canada Barton, Emma Berberick, Amelia Brown, Jacob Brown, William Chagoya-Garcia, Diana Chappell, Lorretta Cintron, Ashley Coleman, Savannah Collins, Dolton Dang, Celine Davis, Jaci Egson, Daysha Fambro, Nina Garcon, Codey Hassan, Hussain Iglesias, Jennifer Ivey, Jay Johnson, Gabrion Kellogg, Selena Klos-Gromadzka, Maja Li, Xueying Long, Dylan Lopez, Alondra McGrath, Sierra Montgomery, Devon Murray, Nicholas Murray, Tyler Naylor, Veronica Neptune, Jupiter Newman, James Nham, Thanh Player, William Priest, Rachel Safford, Caitlin Schilling, Mollie Sesay, Banta Tsui, Edward

**45 University of Michigan**

Anderson, Krystel Ashford, Emma Belko, Gage Brooks, Andre Jenema, Sonny Liston, Alexandria Mason, Sophia McCowin, Ariana Mondrella, Kaylee Russo, Ashton Shackelford, Davon Sims, Samantha Smith, Cadigan Spencer, Hailee Thompson, Angelarose Venson, Barbara

**46 University of Minnesota, Duluth**

McMillan, Tyler Nation, Branden Parnow, Jessica Paulson, Lisa Trainor-Sample, Nathaniel

**47 University of Minnesota, Morris**

Sunde, Desiree

**48 University of Minnesota, Rochester**

Nguyen, Phillip

**49 University of Minnesota, Twin Cities**

Ahmed, Sofiya Ali Amiin, Mohamed Bach, Eldred Bates, Jason Bell, Courtney Boettcher, Tayna Brown, Jasmine Cao, Kevin Durgapersad, Dylan Durkee, Alicia Durrah, Sherry Edwards, Zakiya Fellows, Melanie Gabriel, Abigail Grant, Alexander Hemmesch Deters, Bridgette Hemmesch, Jacob Hill, Brandy Howard, Tierra Jacot, Megan

Johnson, Cavonte Kennedy, Justin Knott, Cassandra Kwakye, Rita Lee, Eileen Long, Kimberly Lusty, Leif Lynn, Grace Medina, Alexander Moreno, David Newton, Ciara Nguyen, Abbeygail Nguyen, Thien Phuc Nyuma, Rosemary Othoudt, Kayla Pulido-Nava, Arleth Rivers, Kadeeja Sevilleja, John Shaffer, Gabriela

# 62 prestigious colleges & universities

1,107 scholarships awarded to date

103 new scholars in 2021

607 graduates to date

\* new college and university partners in 2021



Hargil, Sofia  
Himmelberger, Shae  
Hobgood, John Henry  
Hunt, III, Gary  
Hunt, Madisyn  
Hutchinson, Michael  
Huynh, Lisa  
Ibarra, Uriel  
In, John  
Inzunza, Ruben  
Jarrell, Elyn  
Kery, Felixander  
Kim, Eric  
Kim, William  
Knopoff, Seaira  
Kress, Monika  
Kroner, Madeline  
Lewis, Rachel  
Limp, Elizabeth  
Linden, Katrina  
Locust, Taylor  
Lore, Adrian  
Lyons, Claire  
Magdaleno, Cristian  
Martin, Ashby  
Martinez-Silva, Pablo  
Mathurin, Tania  
Matveev, Valentin  
McAbee-Thomas, Logan  
McCaskill, Yolandis  
McDonald, Breanna  
McDwayne, Christine  
McGrath, Tristan  
Meyer, Sasha  
Mikes, Andrew  
Miller, Gregory  
Miller, Matthew  
Moxley, Jasmine  
Mueller, Peyton  
Muha, Kelsie  
Mungia, Robert  
Murphy, Mikaela  
Ngai, Joan  
Novak, Kiely  
O'Brien, John  
Oronia, Eduardo  
Ortiz Santibanez, Abraham  
Parker, Cheyenne  
Parker, Taylor  
Parnell, Lamara  
Pham, Tommy  
Pierre, Cynthia  
Pino, Yvette  
Presley, Ashley  
Ramsey, Mikaela  
Rangel, Juan  
Rathon, Elie  
Rausch, Erin  
Rhyne, Christopher  
Rivera, Kesi  
Rivers, Christopher  
Robertson, Aiden  
Robinson, Avian  
Rodriguez, Helton  
Sanford, Shawn  
Scholl, Cooper  
Smith, Kimberly  
Sullivan Willkom, Maureen  
Sweis, Matelda  
Tarnasky, Aaron  
Therault, Jordan  
Tiscareno, Juliana  
Ton, Anvi  
Trittipo, Nicholas  
Trujillo, Cynthia  
Tunkara, Aisha  
Tutton, Airrial  
Vadlapatia, Varsha  
Vargas, Adam  
Vargas, Dolores

Vasquez, Makayla  
Vu, Thinh  
Vucinich, Taylor  
Watson, Noah  
Zepeda, Matthew

**53 University of Pennsylvania**  
Acevedo, Brandon  
Asemani, Kayvon  
Bell, Tahir  
Conniff, Elijah  
Davis, Sylvia  
Fisher, James  
Garcia, Carlos  
Gatter, Shandi  
Hilgendorf, Sean  
Krone, Michael  
Medina Martinez, Jasmine  
Muñoz, Yareqzy  
Perez, Daisy  
Rivera-Garcia, Alexies  
Shah, Bhavya  
Weiner, Noah

**54 University of Redlands**  
Arellan, Elena  
Dimas, Yusvizaret  
Esqueda, Angie  
Gamboa, Giselle  
Gonzalez, Kenia  
Herrera, Ariel  
Herrera, Fernando  
Huerta Navarro, Vanessa  
Manzi, Paul  
Munoz, Jennifer  
Rios-Hernandez, Kimberly  
Rodriguez, Isaac  
Romero, Beatriz  
Vargas, Leslie

**55 University of St. Thomas**  
Alba Garner, Janelle  
Cazin, Devin  
Coborn, Kenzi  
Cochran, Cameron  
Dolge, Andrew  
Ellis, Bethany  
Erickson, Hazel  
Fields, Shaye  
Flores-Reyes, Alan  
Franklin, Carissa  
Franklin, Walter  
Herzog, Andrew  
HoangLong, Samantha  
Nur, Ismail  
Rathon, Elie  
Rausch, Erin  
Rhyne, Christopher  
Rivera, Kesi  
Rivers, Christopher  
Robertson, Aiden  
Robinson, Avian  
Rodriguez, Helton  
Sanford, Shawn  
Scholl, Cooper  
Smith, Kimberly  
Sullivan Willkom, Maureen  
Sweis, Matelda  
Tarnasky, Aaron  
Therault, Jordan  
Tiscareno, Juliana  
Ton, Anvi  
Trittipo, Nicholas  
Trujillo, Cynthia  
Tunkara, Aisha  
Tutton, Airrial  
Vadlapatia, Varsha  
Vargas, Adam  
Vargas, Dolores

**56 University of Wisconsin – Madison**  
Paust, Amien

**57 Valdosta State University**  
Smith, Joanna

**58 Vanderbilt University**  
Boyd, Joi  
Brown, Zackary  
Carr, Donovan  
Conwell, Sara-Catherine  
Driscoll, Maureen  
Franklin, Olivia

Hammons, Kaitlynn  
Martinez, Jaylen  
Miceli, Charles  
Moore, Heath  
Mundo, Alexis  
Rushing, Jaret  
Saunders, Lavonte  
Shao, Karen  
Smolock, Kadie  
Speelman, Steele  
Zanibi, Hannah

**59 Washington University in St. Louis**  
Abdalla, Riyad  
Branson, Chelsea  
Chambers, Andrea  
Cook, Amaia  
Lopez, Elyse  
Lopez, Shirley  
Molinatti, Natalia  
Patel, Khushi  
Perkins, Connor  
Sheptin, Jeffrey  
Stokalyuk, Mykyta  
Tinoco, Alexis  
Turner, Naimah  
Ungerleider, Adriana  
Williams, Isabelle  
Williams, Jakyra  
Wynn, Briana

**60 Western Carolina University**  
Dyer, Bethany  
Fragoso, Brianna  
Moritz, Taylor  
Renfroe, Victoria  
Shuler, Jade  
Towery, William

**61 Winona State University**  
Becker, Crystal  
Curtis, Nathan  
Escalera, Jada  
Gee, Brianna  
Harvey Rigby, Jessica  
Hernandez, Sonya  
Larson, Taylor  
Lende, Makayla  
Liu, Ryan  
O'Brien, Max  
Pelletier, Nina  
Peterson, Chelsey  
Smith, Zaria  
Taylor-Moore, Erykah  
Vang, Jadellynne  
Ward, Haley  
Wenzel, Isaac  
Zarate, Helena

**62 Yale University**  
Adaya, Patricia  
Anifowoshe, Kanyinsola  
Bauman, Bessie  
Choe, John  
Dibich, Reed  
Foley, Elaina  
Goyal, Ramsay  
Hunt, Victor  
Lee, Kyung Mi  
Lilollari, Adela  
Lopez Aguirre, Oscar  
Mahoney, Madison  
Morsy, Abdelrahman  
Olivares, Kevin  
Pham, Linh  
Price, Jaclyn  
Shea, Patrick  
Toste, Helder

Sol-Lopez, Jocelyn  
Thompson, Miranda  
Xiong, Fue  
Xiong, Mao  
Yang, Lue  
Yusuf, Mulki

**50 University of Mississippi**  
Harris, Hannah  
Hebert, Ethan  
Kelly, Jada  
Lambert, Ethan  
Le, Tan  
Lee, Laurel  
Milner, Gloma  
Morgan, Angelina  
Nguyen, Peter

**51 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**  
Bello, Afi Apefa  
Cendejas Hernandez, Jasmine  
Conn, Hope

Eguh, O  
Garcia Cortez, Jonathan  
Hamrick, Abigail  
Hottel, Martin  
Humphrey, Taimek  
Kirby, Davis  
Lewis, Yamahjai  
Plumley, Ciara  
Salinas, Christian  
Summer-Graves, Maria  
Tyner, Austin  
Woods, Tarik

# Annexstad Family Scholarships

## Leaders for Tomorrow National Scholarship Program

Working with a select group of America's most revered institutions of higher learning, the *Leaders for Tomorrow* National Scholarship Program makes a significant investment in developing America's future leaders from deserving young people who have come from humble, challenging beginnings. The schools identify, educate and nurture highly talented young people into tomorrow's leaders. These Scholarship recipients show a great deal of character, grit and intelligence. The Foundation collaborates with colleges and universities carefully chosen from among the nation's most prestigious institutions of higher learning to cultivate what America needs most: exceptional people who will one day measure their success not merely in personal terms, but also in terms of how they have contributed to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens. The *Leaders for Tomorrow* program invests in extraordinary leaders who will make a remarkable difference in the world. Scholarship candidates are exclusively identified by participating universities and earn their undergraduate degrees as free from debt as possible.

## Al and Cathy Annexstad Horatio Alger Association Scholarship

In 2010, Al Annexstad was the recipient of the Horatio Alger Award, one of America's highest civilian honors, given in recognition of his inspiring life story of achieving personal and professional success despite a challenging upbringing. The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans bears the name of the renowned author Horatio Alger Jr. whose tales of overcoming

adversity through unyielding perseverance and basic moral principles captivated the public in the late 19th century. The Association was organized to recognize men and women of outstanding achievement and to remind all Americans of the limitless possibilities that exist through the free enterprise system. Deeply moved by this recognition, Al and Cathy chose to pay it forward by establishing a Scholarship at a select group of prestigious institutions that identify recipients from their ranks who likewise reflect the spirit of the Horatio Alger Association.

## St. Peter High School Hope and Inspiration Scholarship

In appreciation of their Minnesota hometown roots, the Annexstads endowed a college Scholarship at St. Peter High School, which they hope will help change the lives of some deserving young people who have not experienced many of life's blessings which so many others are fortunate to have received.

## The Annexstad Family Foundation Veteran Student Scholarship

As a military veteran, Al Annexstad recognizes the sacrifices our service men and women make for our country. He and Cathy believe our veterans are a vital resource to our nation and that they too can benefit from higher education. To this end, they fund 25 Scholarships for veterans each year at the College of the Desert in Palm Desert, California.

## Annexstad Family Foundation Hope and Inspiration Scholarship at Northern Michigan University

The Annexstads established a Scholarship at Northern Michigan University to help bright young people who have triumphantly overcome some very difficult challenges. The Foundation partners with Northern Michigan University and Kingsford High School in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on this Scholarship program.

## Annexstad Family Foundation Hope and Inspiration Scholarship at Rabun County High School

In the spirit of goodwill and charity, the Annexstads established a college Scholarship at Rabun County High School in the North Georgia mountains. The program assists deserving students from the surrounding community who have overcome significant hardship in their young lives.

## Marie Eustice Scholarship

The Marie Eustice Scholarship, named after Cathy's mother, is awarded by Minnesota State University, Mankato College of Education to a deserving student in their junior year pursuing the Elementary Education Professional Program. The recipient of the Scholarship dedicates themselves to shaping a classroom of young minds as an elementary education teacher, just like Cathy's mother, Marie.



Vanderbilt University Scholars Olivia Franklin and Donovan Carr in 2019.

open to see a map of the 62 prestigious universities 1,107 Scholars have attended.

# celebrating our grads



Shawn Sanford Juan Rangel Cavonte Johnson April Lewis Winter Widdifield

The notion that we're stronger together as an Annexstad community was a powerful theme of the virtual celebration for 2020 & 2021 Grads.

All of the 150 attendees who Zoomed in nationally would agree: the Year End Celebration was memorable and a beautiful way to honor our Scholars and Graduates!

Coming together virtually, united by shining hopes and plans, by a history of valiant resilience and promising futures aspiring to change the world, attendees could sense the shared energy.

"You have shown incredible strength in the face of constant change and uncertainty, while still attaining the ultimate goal of achieving higher education," affirmed Executive Director **Patti Annexstad**. "The courage and commitment you conveyed while navigating a year filled with immense stress and isolation is a true testament to your character. As with our founders, you have demonstrated the grit and determination to achieve greatness. Al and Cathy see a little bit of their story in each and every one of you, knowing that you have what it takes to be a leader."

Thus launched a special night of kinship filled with heartwarming testimonials and sincere offers of support from talented Alumni and recent Graduates. These emotional tributes revealed both successes and challenges along with their personal journeys and heartfelt gratitude to Al and Cathy, celebrating the success of their vision in supporting over 1,100 Scholars.

An emerging theme took shape, echoing Patti Annexstad's words and embracing each attendee. While the Annexstad Alumni are scattered geographically, the bond among them is solid. The "bright minds, big dreams" spirit emanated powerfully.

**Shawn Sanford** (University of Notre Dame, Class of 2008) gratefully recalled phone calls, care packages and the semester she studied at Georgetown University. "The Annexstad Family Foundation gave me stability and financial support as well as a village that has consistently had my back," she shared. "Graduates, know that you are a part of an Alumni village that extends nationwide. What a powerhouse we would be if we came together and spurred on innovation and opportunities!"

Sanford urged everyone to utilize the "tight, supportive" network by connecting on LinkedIn or scheduling virtual coffees. "Live out your passion and share it with us. Let's start a conversation and focus on the future. Let's come out of this stronger than when we went in."

Originally from Mexico, **Juan Rangel** (University of Notre Dame, Class of 2015) is currently a staffer on Capitol Hill for a Congresswoman lobbying for equitable education policies for children. "I could always count on the annual Annexstad visit to lift my spirits and remind me of the importance of gaining my degree," he shared. "When I felt homesick, challenged by school or I doubted whether I belonged, I knew the Annexstad family believed in me." Now, he says, "Alumni have an obligation to raise the next set of leaders. So reach out to them and help support their dreams."

**Cavonte Johnson** (University of Minnesota, Class of 2017) thanked the Annexstads for gifting him with a Scholarship and trusting his character and his hard work. On the heels of a challenging upbringing, he says,

"they gave me more than a chance to go to school; they gave me a lifeline."

Currently a first-year student at Saint Louis University of Medicine, **April Lewis** (Spelman College, Class of 2020) was one of two Keynote Speakers selected to represent the graduating classes. "I am so grateful to the Annexstads for sponsoring me as a first-generation college student. I was in dire need financially and they have helped me become who I am today," she said. Her best advice? "Do something you are passionate about and you will gain skills that you can apply everywhere. And Graduates, remember your story and pour yourselves into the next generation."

Preparing to pursue a master's degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland studies at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina, Keynote Speaker **Winter Widdifield** (Clemson University, Class of 2021) shared her insights. "Be flexible in finding your true passion," she offered. "I entered college believing I wanted to study one thing, but the pandemic led me to a rewarding internship that led me to entirely change my career!" Through it all, she says, her Annexstad Scholarship was her "biggest source of motivation. It meant the world to know that someone believed in me."

As the celebration came to a close, Graduates participated in the break-out sessions – an immediate sign that this enduring community will indeed remain close as each one carves their own path.

Congratulations, classes of 2020 and 2021. As Sanford emphasized in her message, "You made it. You made it!"

michigan technological university

# preparing students

for what tomorrow brings

Founded in 1885, Michigan Technological University (MTU) is a public research university that enrolls approximately 7,000 students in 120 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The school is known for its STEM focus, and its students embrace rigorous academics.

To ensure student success, academic support is woven into the student experience from day one. Freshmen and transfer students transition to university life and navigate its many challenges and opportunities with help from the Waino Wahtera Center for Student Success.

“The Wahtera Center provides outreach programs designed to help students meet their goals,” says **Susan Liebau**, Center Director and Michigan Tech’s Associate Dean for Student Academic Support.

The Excelling the Student Experience of Learning (ExSEL) Program is a comprehensive partnership between the center and all of Michigan Tech’s colleges and schools.

“ExSEL provides year-long support that includes a dedicated staff member for each participating student as well as peer mentoring and our Frameworks for Success course,” says Liebau.

“Midterm outreach provides a contact point for students who may be struggling with coursework or balancing their college experiences.”

Approximately 20 percent of students are first-generation students who often experience “college shock” compounded by family stress when they don’t understand why the transition to college is so difficult.

In 2018, the Wahtera Center partnered with MTU’s College of Engineering to host a “First-Gen in STEM” panel featuring university faculty and staff who were first-gen college students themselves. The event was well attended with many panelists sharing their college experiences.

This inspired the center to further refine first-gen programs, including how and who offers help. To support a culture that expresses collective pride in the accomplishments of first-gen students, Wahtera Center staff and student mentors who were first-gen students volunteer as counselors and provide students with first-gen swag. While the road to successful outreach hasn’t been without bumps, the center remains focused on expanding efforts to provide a welcoming, inclusive environment for all first-gen students at Michigan Tech.

Here, two MTU Annexstad Scholars share their experience:



David Soderman

**David Soderman** graduated in 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. Soderman’s Senior Design focused on redesigning a locomotive wheel lathe for a steel manufacturing company. “The Annexstad Scholarship enabled me to be the best version of myself,” Soderman says. “By not having to be burdened with college finances, I was able to excel in my academics and give back to the community. The Foundation’s generosity has shown me the power of giving and compels me to want to give back too. I am forever thankful.”



Riley Saldana

**Riley Saldana** also graduated from Michigan Tech in 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. During his final year, Saldana participated in Senior Design where his team focused on improving a railway company’s assets by zeroing in on new track alignment. “The Annexstad Family Foundation’s generosity allowed me to pursue my degree and have an amazing support system,” Saldana says. “As a first-gen freshman, adapting to college was intimidating, but the Foundation coordinators encouraged and reminded me how you can achieve anything with a great support system.”



# is graduate school right for you?

Who should attend and what's required to fund and obtain your graduate degree? The Annexstad Family Foundation hosted a webinar with three accomplished Alumni who were the first in their family to go to college and grad school. **Dr. Courtney Bell-Duncan**, **Dr. Oscar Gonzalez** and **Unique Hayes** shared their insights which led to an engaging discussion.

**dr. gonzalez**, *when did you know you wanted to pursue a graduate degree?*

"I knew that if I wanted to go into research or become a Social Psychologist I would need to go to graduate school. I applied my senior year to schools, but I realized that I wasn't prepared for the programs I was applying to. I took a year off, worked at Notre Dame and found a real passion for collecting and analyzing data. During this discovery, I searched out specific grad programs for what I wanted to do. While it was not immediate, in the end I found the right path to get me to where I am now."

**dr. bell-duncan**, *when did you know that you wanted to pursue your Ph.D.?*

"I tell people that insanity drove me to pursue my Ph.D. I was driven by the inequality that I was seeing as an educator in the high school where I grew up and was teaching. I knew being a teacher wasn't enough – I needed to influence on policy while having a sociological perspective on K-12 to institute change. One of my mentors, Dr. Keith Mayes, was one of the developers for the African American History course I taught. I was fortunate to work alongside him and understand how he was able to teach and effect change. He and other mentors inspired and supported me in going for my Ph.D. while still teaching full-time. I wouldn't be anywhere without the service of these incredible mentors."

**ms. hayes**, *how did you secure funding for your graduate program?*

"Education is priceless. I encourage everyone to research the best ways to make it work for you. Corporations like Tylenol and Apple have scholarships for grad students, so do your homework. Going to graduate school was the best decision I ever made."

**dr. gonzalez**, *how did you find fellowships and funding to go through your graduate and Ph.D. programs?*

"Depending on your specific school and program, funding is available as long as you work for the university as a research or teaching assistant. As a graduate student, you won't make a lot of money, but you do reap the rewards of going to school. Additionally, fellowships are a great way to double your funding to help pay for housing, etc."

**ms. hayes**, *tell us about "imposter syndrome" and what you discovered in grad school?*

"Imposter syndrome is very real. I grew up going to an all-female African American high school then went to Spelman where I felt like I belonged. When I started my grad program at Case, a predominantly white university, I felt tiny at first. I started questioning and doubting myself until I went to a campus seminar on imposter syndrome and recognized what I was going through. We formed a small group from that seminar, and we supported each other. If you start to experience imposter syndrome, make sure you ask for help because you are worth it."

**dr. bell-duncan**, *how did you stay motivated while you were juggling teaching and school?*

"I recognized that I was called to interrupt the current curriculum and instructional inequities. I take my calling very seriously. Anything affiliated with it is intrinsically motivating. I worked full-time for the first two years, went part-time my third year and took a leave for my fourth year. My last year, I started to lose motivation because I was not anchored in the classroom. My scholars are my reason for being. I want them to experience emancipatory learning and culturally responsive instruction, so I focused on getting my Principal license while getting my Ph.D. so I could be in a position to make change on a political, instructional and curriculum level for them."

**dr. gonzalez**, *you are now teaching graduate students. what would you like to convey to them?*

"I have found that I have complete admiration for my previous professors and what they taught me. It takes a village to raise a grad student. I encourage my students to talk more to the faculty who are experts in their fields of study. It's an overwhelming process, and whether you are going through imposter syndrome or trying to navigate intense expectations, you need to give yourself a release from the pressure and talk with the faculty or advisors because, chances are, other students are feeling the way that you feel."

# alumni *presenters*



**dr. courtney bell-duncan** is a triple graduate from the University of Minnesota. At UMN, Dr. Bell-Duncan gained a systemic, socio-historical and socio-political understanding of the U.S. education system and the impacts that it has on its constituents. This outlined her mission of eradicating educational inequality. She received her Bachelor of Arts in 2011, her Master of Education in 2014 and most recently her Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Leadership in 2020. As an esteemed educator, Dr. Bell-Duncan currently works as an Assistant Principal in the Brooklyn Center School District and was named a finalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program in 2018.



**dr. oscar gonzalez** received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Notre Dame in 2012. After graduation, Dr. Gonzalez studied at Arizona State University with support by the prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and received his Ph.D. in Quantitative Research Methods in 2018. Currently Dr. Gonzalez is an Assistant Professor of Quantitative Psychology in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He studies statistical mediation, machine learning/ data mining and psychometrics to help identify, evaluate and measure behavior change in interventions or prevention programs. While his main focus is research, he teaches courses on machine learning and psychometrics at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.



**unique hayes** received her Bachelor of Science from Spelman College in 2018. During the pandemic, Hayes was on the front line working for University Hospitals in Cleveland while also pursuing her Master of Science in Medical Physiology from Case Western Reserve University. She graduated in the summer of 2020. Hayes has long worked to educate the African-American community on sexually transmitted infections through organizing STI testing events and hosting health fairs. Her ultimate goal is to obtain her Doctor of Medicine, become an OB/GYN and provide excellent, affordable healthcare and resources. Currently at University Hospitals, she serves as an Adolescent Health Educator providing education and awareness to young adults in support of behavioral change.

**to all of the presenters, what is the best thing that you gained by adding additional letters after your name?**

**ms. hayes:** “The legacy I leave behind. My sisters believed they could go to college because they saw me graduate. I am mentoring students who are applying for college and sharing my resources and experiences. I am fortunate to see the success they are having. So many people have supported me, and I have the opportunity to give to the next generation.”

**dr. bell-duncan:** “The ability to break generational cycles. I am proud of where and who I come from, but I also understand how much of a blessing it is to stand where I am now. My reality could have been very different. One of my biggest accomplishments was to buy my mother a home, and that is directly correlated to my education from the University of Minnesota, which all started with The Annexstad Family Foundation. I thank Al and Cathy for remembering where they came from and propelling education for changemakers. Because the Annexstads gave back, I can give back to my family, my community and my scholars. I am so grateful.”

**dr. gonzalez:** “Resiliency, in taking my education from the beginning to the end. It’s more important to be smart enough to get out of grad school than to get in. The opportunity to see not only the diversity of students, but also the diversity of faculty is a powerful experience. I can now be the change to help students grow and learn, to push the next generation to become who they want to be and make the change that they want to affect.”

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View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](https://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).

# maintaining wellness in stressful times

The Annexstad Family Foundation's Scholars expressed a desire to learn strategies to help confront the stresses of the last academic year. AFF invited Wellness Expert Reidy Dukes to amplify a plan of action to maintain wellness during stressful times.

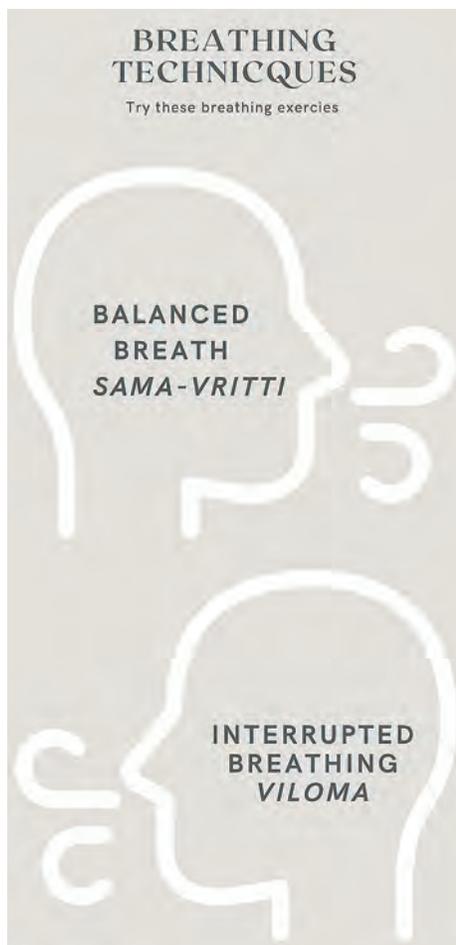
Unmanaged stress can lead to negative long-term health outcomes. Stress involves changes affecting every system in the body, which then affects how we feel and behave. At its worst, stress puts tension on our mind, body and soul.

A common misconception is that all stress is bad – and that actually isn't true. Who would we be without stressful challenges in our lives? We wouldn't have much of a personality, strengths, accomplishments, problem-solving skills or know how to be resilient.

No matter what stage of life you are facing, stress is inevitable. What's more important is how we manage and respond to it.

Stress comes in two forms: chronic and acute. Chronic is the long-term stress that impacts you every day, like what we have been experiencing with the pandemic. Chronic stress can evolve into health issues if it's not dealt with on a daily basis. Then there's acute stress, which is short-term stress like taking a test or driving in traffic. Stress of any kind is cumulative, so it's important to find healthy coping skills to maintain positive self-esteem and stability.

While it might seem fun, binge-watching Netflix or scrolling through social media when we feel anxious are unhealthy coping skills. Instead, focus on healthy skills such as managing your diet, getting enough sleep and exercise, practicing meditation and journaling or making a list. These actions allow you to look at your stress more objectively. We are our own harshest critics, so positive affirmations, mindfulness and self-care are healthy ways for us to manage stress.



To gain some insights behind the scenes, consider that the Autonomic Nervous System (a segment of your nervous system) is responsible for unconscious processes like your heart rate, blood glucose, digestion and other things your body just does on its own. The Autonomic Nervous System is split into the Sympathetic (SNS) and the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS). The SNS gets our adrenaline pumping, dilates our pupils, increases heart rate and inhibits digestion. When these feelings come on, breathing techniques that emphasize inhalation are helpful. After you have experienced a stressful event, the PNS takes over. It's your rest and digest phase where stress-reducing breathing techniques are more grounded in the exhale.

Stopping stress in its tracks often means literally halting your day to try such breathing techniques along with other methods that counter the effects of stress. Working some of these into your routine should prevent stress from catching up with you so you can enjoy life's crazy ride:

**mindfulness** is a type of meditation, a form of paying attention to your five senses on purpose while also recognizing your thought patterns and your emotions without judgement. To get started, sit down comfortably on a sofa or chair, let your feet relax onto the ground, rest your hands, close your eyes and relax your shoulders. Then try these breathing techniques:

- **balanced breath** or "**sama-vritti**" is widely used in yoga. Exhale all the air out and inhale for 1, 2, 3, 4, pause; exhale for 4, 3, 2, 1. Repeat at your own pace.
- Try **longer exhalation** if you really need to calm down. Exhale all the air out and inhale for 1, 2, 3, 4 pause; exhale for 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.
- With **Viloma**, think about your breath as starting from the base of your spine at the bottom of your inhale. Then, as you start to breathe in, halfway up is at chest level. Pause. When you're inhaling all the way, think about your breath being at the top of your head. Pause. On the way down, exhale halfway to your chest, then exhale all the way to the base of your spine. Pause.

**body scan meditation** is another way to get grounded before bed, whether for a few minutes or a 60-minute meditation with an app. Close your eyes, sit up tall and start with a full breath in through your nose then out again. Shift all your awareness to your feet; notice any sensations pulsating



As an Instructor for Highland Yoga in Atlanta and an expert in mindfulness and fitness, Reidy Dukes has dedicated her career to learning about ways in which exercise, mindfulness, sleep and nutrition are interdependent. Dukes holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Georgia. She has worked with victims of domestic violence, families, children and groups struggling with mental health issues. In addition, Dukes has training in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction from the Atlanta Mindfulness Institute.

in the soles. Shift your awareness to your legs; notice how your knees feel. Imagine sending breath to your hips, thighs, lower back, shoulders and hands. Bring your awareness to your neck and face; soften your jaw and the space between your eyebrows. Bring your awareness to the crown of your head. Now imagine sending your breath into your entire body. Take a full breath in and out, one more deep inhale and open your eyes.

### ***beating stress night and day***

While we know sleep is critical in relieving long-term stress, most Americans just don't get enough of it. Sleep improves our ability to think clearly and to sustain attention. Memories are consolidated during sleep, and sleep also serves a key role in our emotional regulation. Sleep is important to your physical and mental health and your longevity.

So, what is "sleep debt"? It is the optimal hours of sleep needed minus the hours that you actually sleep. Say that you need 8 hours of sleep yet on Monday night you get 6 hours because you were busy studying. You have a sleep debt of two hours to carry into your next day. Then on Tuesday night, you sleep for 6 hours again. Now you are at a loss of 4 hours. Eventually you need to make up for that lost sleep or you will slip into sleep deprivation (a terrible feeling that can cause long-term harm). Chances are you will become irritable, have difficulty concentrating, get confused easily, have no motivation to exercise and crave unhealthy food, which impacts your nutrition.

It's beneficial to have a nightly ritual and a cool, calming environment. Use your five senses to create your sleep environment: Clear the clutter, turn on fans, sleep on soft, clean sheets, eliminate caffeine 6-8 hours before bedtime and add an essential oil diffuser with a relaxing oil such as lavender. (Peppermint is a good, invigorating one to wake up with.) Over time, your brain starts to associate bedtime with lavender oil, which will help you drift into sleep. You can also journal, meditate and use a 3-way lightbulb or dimmer so you can gradually turn down the lights as you get closer to bedtime.

Find yourself hitting the snooze button? Studies show that the more you snooze in the morning, the groggier you'll be. It's counterintuitive, because you're thinking you're getting 5 extra minutes when actually it's a more restless sleep. Rise on time then make the bed first thing, which makes you feel like you've already accomplished something.

Equally important, a healthy diet promotes mental health. You'll experience a better mood, less stress, a lower risk of illness, improved cognitive function and, of course, stronger physical health. Nutrition can be confusing because there's a lot of conflicting information about what we should and should not be eating. The best approach is to not be super rigid with rules about diet. Eat smart and exercise regularly.

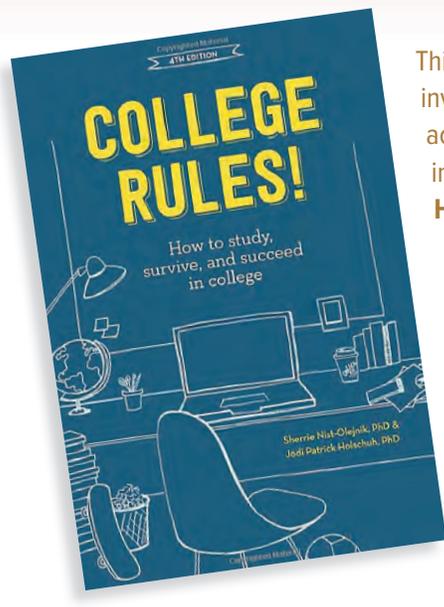
Several studies support physical activity as a noninvasive therapy for mental health improvements in cognition, depression, anxiety, neurodegenerative diseases and drug addiction. Exercise can be just as effective as antidepressants in combatting depression and anxiety. Getting 30 minutes of exercise per day is ideal.

Above all, be patient with yourself and your efforts toward wellness. Focus on taking small steps that lead to bigger steps. Many times if we're not exercising, sleeping well or eating healthily, we beat ourselves up over it. But the secret to keeping stress at bay goes beyond our habits and routines. The most important part of finding wellness day to day is simply being kind to yourself.

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View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).

# a professor's tips for scholar success



This past spring, Annexstad Scholars were invited to a webinar to prepare for a new academic semester. The Foundation invited author and professor **Jodi Patrick Holschuh, Ph.D.** to give some sage advice.

## So, how can we survive and thrive in online and modified courses?

- **embrace self-management**  
Do the tasks you need to do when you need to do them. Hint: if you can get something done in 15 minutes (responding to an email or finishing an online quiz), do it now and don't put it off for later.
- **find an effective place for attending class and studying**  
In other words, lying in bed is probably not the most conducive spot for learning.
- **use a calendar, alarms and reminders**  
These will keep you on track for work, class or study sessions.
- **prep for success**  
Plan ahead by looking at your syllabi and what you need to tackle each day. Prepare for every class before you attend. Study in earnest. (Reading the text does not equal studying.)
- **communicate your needs**  
If something is going on in your life, talk to your professors. Most are empathetic and will work with you.
- **set goals and use rewards to keep up your motivation**  
We all need something to hold our focus!

View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).

jodi  
patrick  
*holschuh*  
ph.d.

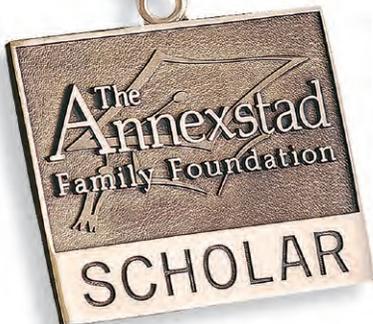


Jodi Patrick Holschuh, Ph.D. is an Assistant Dean and Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas State University. She is the co-author of *College Rules! How To Study, Survive, and Succeed In College*. Her areas of research interest include developmental learning, learning strategies and disciplinary literacy. Dr. Holschuh received her doctoral and master's degrees from the University of Georgia and her bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University.

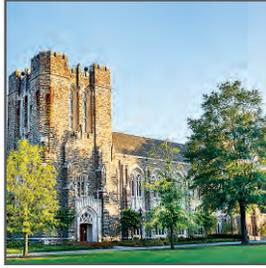
## Why do students find college difficult?

- **expectations about tasks are different than in high school**  
When no one checks if you've done your homework or read materials, it's easy to lose accountability.
- **a dip in motivation**  
College can be fun, but online learning has been challenging and we are less motivated to study. Even when classes are not online, students should expect and prepare for a dip in motivation at some point in each semester.
- **advanced reading requirements**  
Some students haven't read college-level text before, and it can be difficult to understand higher-level materials.
- **competing pressures interfere with coursework**  
Whether someone in your family is ill, you are juggling multiple jobs or dealing with being alone, sometimes it's hard to concentrate.
- And of course, we're trying to manage these struggles while **navigating a global pandemic**, which is making everything that much harder.

*scholars*



# scholars



**AHMED “ACE”  
ABDULRAHMAN**

Without your help, I would be one step behind, worrying about my financial situation. Thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for helping me further my education so I can develop my engineering focus.

DUKE UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: ENGINEERING

To me, The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship means a new community and support system. Your Scholarship is more than someone paying a portion of my education. It represents a group of people who believe in me and my power to make substantial change. It’s a chance to meet people with similar experiences to mine and become a better citizen.

BOSTON COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**IJAABO  
ALI**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is a tool to accomplish my future goals. Your Scholarship serves as a reminder that there are people willing to help students in challenging situations and that a person’s financial situation is not a barrier to that person’s success. I am forever grateful.



**JOSÉ  
AVILA**

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION



**AYOMIDE  
ADESANYA**

Thank you, Annexstad Family Foundation, for believing in me. My aspiration is to use this tremendous college experience to discover more of who I am. I am studying Social Work and I look forward to gaining as much knowledge as I can and leaving a significant imprint on someone’s life.

BETHEL UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: SOCIAL WORK

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship brings me hope, because it motivates me to pursue my goals. Your incredible gift is reassurance that I can achieve my dreams. If people who don’t know me are willing to invest in my future because they see potential, then I should be able to do it as well. Your Scholarship is such a blessing; thank you for opening the doors to my future.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
2018-2022  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY WITH AN EMPHASIS IN NEUROSCIENCE



**CANADA  
AWAD**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is a chance for me to achieve my dreams. I grew up in a low-income community and I am the first in my family to go to college. Because of this, my philosophy is rooted in educational equality and entrepreneurship. Perhaps I will become a College Professor, or maybe a Movie Director, or own my own business. Whatever I decide to do, I am blessed with this tremendous opportunity to go to Notre Dame and DREAM BIG!



**LOGAN  
BALFANTZ**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: MARKETING

◀ **About the  
Scholar Coverman**  
*Meet Annexstad Alumnus  
Kayvon Asemani, a  
University of Pennsylvania  
Class of 2018 Grad with  
a B.S. Economics and  
Management. Read more  
about him on page 10.*



marie  
eustice  
scholarship



In 2012, The Annexstad Family Foundation introduced the Marie Eustice Scholarship in the College of Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Marie was renowned for her work ethic and her ability to prepare her wide-eyed grade-school students for lifelong learning before her untimely death in the late 1950s. The Scholarship has become the college's flagship award presented to a deserving student who, despite adversity, dedicates oneself to shaping a classroom of young minds as an elementary education teacher, just like Cathy's mother, Marie.

Each Scholar is selected during their junior year and completes the two-year Elementary Education Professional Program without the burden of student loans.

- 2016 **Tierra Jorgensen** (graduated)  
Elementary Education
- 2017 **Vannessa Buth** (graduated)  
Elementary Education
- 2018 **George Vang** (graduated)  
Communication Arts  
and Literature
- 2019 **Irene Kim** (graduated)  
Elementary Education
- 2020 **Devon Minke**  
Elementary Education
- 2020 **José Avila**  
Elementary Education

My friends will tell you how much I love stats and basketball, so it would be really cool to pursue a career in a sports analytics-related job where I could analyze data for a living. As I get more into my major of Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics, I plan on adding a business-related major or minor. Thank you for your Scholarship. What an incredible feeling it is to know that I have the freedom to have options and the time to explore them.



**DANIEL BAPTIST**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: APPLIED AND COMPUTATIONAL MATHEMATICS  
AND STATISTICS



**NOOR BEHNAM**

Economic problems almost kept me away from attending college, so I am grateful that I can continue to study and work hard in order to provide for my family. Thanks to The Annexstad Family Foundation, I am proud to be able to attend the University of Notre Dame.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: APPLIED AND COMPUTATIONAL MATH AND STATISTICS

Your generosity is allowing me to strive for an education that gives me access to our dynamic world. I am able to attend Notre Dame without a financial burden in a community of brilliant thinkers who motivate me. Your Scholarship means that I can pursue what I want to do, not just what gives me the financial means. You have given me the privilege to discover my passion and create myself.



**ISAAC BIESE**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: PROGRAM OF LIBERAL STUDIES AND THEOLOGY



**TAYNA BOETTCHER**

My dream is to provide quality dental care to individuals who would not otherwise have access to it. I want to volunteer in a third-world country to administer dental hygiene and make a positive impact on the people there. I believe everybody everywhere deserves access to proper oral hygiene and I look forward to helping every patient find their beautiful smile!

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: DENTAL HYGIENE

# scholars

**ELIJAH BROWNE**



Thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for their investment in my future. My dream is to become a Computer Science Teacher and teach in New York City where I grew up.

**SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



**JASMINE CENDEJAS HERNANDEZ**

Thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for this incredible opportunity. I am proud to be an Annexstad Scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and begin my studies to become a Doctor.

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY

*Texas Christian University Scholar Romane Mays in 2019.*



Growing up struggling financially has taught me the value of working hard to capitalize on any opportunity. I possess a dynamic drive to give 100% and take every day as it comes. The generosity that The Annexstad Family Foundation has given me is the chance to apply my focus at MTU and learn at the highest level – an opportunity I will look back on and be grateful for throughout the rest of my life. Hopefully one day, I can pay it forward.

**MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



**NICHOLAS D'AUTREMONT**

Receiving The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has been incredibly beneficial to my college education. Not only am I relieved of the financial burden of university tuition, but I am also offered a compassionate support system. As a low-income student, I would not be able to afford college without the abundant generosity of others. With my education, I hope to get into law school so that I might be able to represent and help others in disadvantaged situations. Thank you Annexstad family for your kindness.

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: POLITICAL SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT



**SALLIE DARBY**

Receiving your Scholarship means more than just receiving money. I want to make a difference in the world, and if I can achieve greatness in the process, even better!

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**JACI DAVIS**

Thanks to your Scholarship, I am able to pursue an education at an incredible university like Emory without placing a financial burden on myself or my family. I have hopes of finding a career where I can help others because of the generosity from the Annexstad family.



**DULCE DE LA CRUZ**

**EMORY UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

alice  
*annexstad*



Alice Annexstad was revered and loved by Gustavus Adolphus College students, faculty and administration not only for her fabulous cooking, but also for the kindness she exuded toward the community. Inspired by Al's endearing memories and the countless sacrifices that his mother made for her family, in 2000, Al and Cathy established The Annexstad Family Foundation and awarded their first Scholarship in her honor.

The successful partnership has led to over 30 Scholars and Graduates exhibiting the values inspired by Alice, Gustavus and The Annexstad Family Foundation. These exceptionally bright first-generation college students have overcome extraordinary hardships; one day these Scholars will emerge as future leaders for our nation.

Gustavus thanked Al and Cathy in 2014 by naming the campus heart of the community the Annexstad Mall. "This is quite an honor for our family," Al praised. "This honor is magnified by the success we see our Annexstad Scholars having at Gustavus as they continue on the path to productive and rewarding lives."

Attending Santa Clara University is my greatest accomplishment. Thank you so much for your generous Scholarship. I wouldn't have been able to set an example for my family when it comes to chasing your dreams. Even if they seem so unattainable and out of reach, you have made it possible for me to attend college and overcome all the odds that were against me.



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: NEUROSCIENCE

**SANDRA  
DEL TORO**



**AMY  
DO**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship serves as a steady foundation for my college experience. I have always been fascinated with numbers and now my goal is to become a Financial Advisor. I want to work with all kinds of families to help them focus on the importance of long-term investing so they can build a better tomorrow and support their dreams.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: FINANCE

Your Scholarship means more to me than words can give justice. The opportunity to attend Notre Dame is the best I have had in my life. I am happy every night going to bed knowing that I am studying what I love at a place that I love even more!



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: CHINESE AND FILM

**KATE  
DONOHUE**



**ANTONIO  
DUMNICH**

Receiving The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is helping me on my journey to serving my nation. I want to grow in and strengthen my faith in God, build character and become wise and well-versed so I can help guide the country in a positive direction, both morally and politically.

HILLSDALE COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: POLITICS

# scholars

**SHAKER ERBINI**



Your generous Scholarship fuels me because I know that my success has an impact on my entire family and I can show them that anything is possible.

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: NEUROSCIENCE AND BEHAVIOR

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship was the deciding factor in me going to college. I have been truly blessed to study Psychology at Western Carolina University. Thank you for your generosity and kindness in supporting my education. There are no words that can express my gratitude for your generosity.

**WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**BRIANNA FRAGOSO**



**ANGIE ESQUEDA**

I want to personally thank Al and Cathy Annexstad for gifting me with your very generous Scholarship. Without your help, it would be very difficult for me to attend college and pursue my dreams.

**UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PHILOSOPHY



**HELENA FRANCO**

I cannot express how honored I am to have been chosen by The Annexstad Family Foundation. Let the teaching begin! I cannot wait to graduate, become an Elementary School Teacher and give my future students amazing learning experiences!

**HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

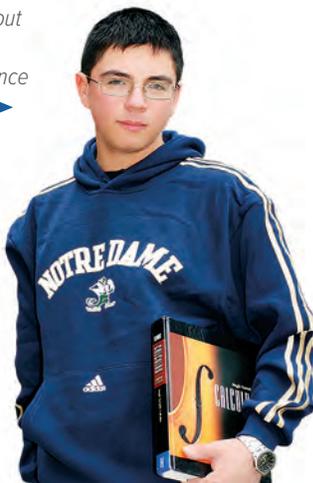
The gift of this Scholarship has moved me one giant step closer to my dreams. College is just a stepping stone in my classroom experience, as my true desire is to be an Elementary School Teacher and inspire children to grow up to be dynamic and charismatic leaders. Thank you for supporting my dream and countless others.

**UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: LIBERAL STUDIES



**GISELLE GAMBOA**

*University of Notre Dame Scholar Oscar Gonzales in 2012. Read more about his Graduate school experience on page 20. ▶*



**TANIA GARCIA**

Every day I wake up knowing there are a million people in the world who do not have the opportunities that I do, and that makes me work extra hard. I want to pursue a career in social work because I want to change the world. I am grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation for providing me this opportunity.

**BETHEL UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: SOCIAL WORK

## our cover model

tania  
*mathurin*

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2012  
B.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE  
LEADERS FOR TOMORROW SCHOLARSHIP



We wanted this year's cover to reflect the wide variety of industries our Annexstad Alumni are working in today while also emanating the resilience the Scholars, Graduates and Alumni have shown throughout the past two years. And Tania's heartwarming, confident and genuine image along with her impressive background became an inspiration to our design.

**Tania Mathurin** graduated in 2012 from the University of Notre Dame before receiving her Master's in Public Affairs from Princeton University. She is currently a Program Officer at Results for Development, managing all activities related to a USAID Health Systems Strengthening project in responding to HIV in the Côte d'Ivoire. Since graduation, Tania has lived in two different countries and now mentors a Haitian student in applying to colleges in the U.S. through a program called Education Haiti.

"I am so grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation. You allowed me to prioritize and focus on my education while having a close-knit family within a family environment at Notre Dame," she shares. "I learned humility and perseverance while also having the opportunity to learn from great leaders and students within the field of international development."

Without your help, I would be one step behind, worrying about my financial situation. Thank you to the Annexstad Family Foundation for helping me further my education so I can learn more about the law.



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE

**JONATHAN  
GARCIA  
CORTEZ**



**ROBERTO  
GARCIA-  
URISTA**

As a first-generation college student, attending the University of Notre Dame is my proudest accomplishment. Without The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship, I would never have been able to enroll in the Mechanical Engineering program and begin on my path to better the lives of others through the skills that I learn there. Thank you!

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

The Annexstad Family Foundation is the gravitational force that grounds me in the work that I do. It has developed my motivation and mentorship in order to further my aspirations. Without the Annexstad family, it would have been difficult to find the courage to pursue my education.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

**MARK  
GONZALEZ**



**ELISE  
GOTTHARDT**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is very important to me because it takes a lot of stress out of my life. With my education, I hope to help people and my family in as many ways as I can.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING

# scholars

**RAMSAY GOYAL**



My focus is to learn the skills necessary to become a leader who precipitates lasting, positive change. With my Urban Studies degree, I hope to engage in local government as an elected official or work as a Transportation Planner in a bustling urban metropolis. I want to understand the socioeconomic inequalities omnipresent in urban areas and the methods in which policy begins to ameliorate disparities. I hope to apply my nuanced perspective on cities to an agency catalyzing growth and progress in urban or regional development.

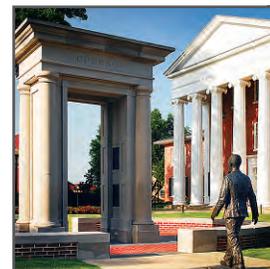
YALE UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: URBAN STUDIES

I am so blessed to be given the opportunity to go to college and I cannot thank the Annexstad family enough. Without your Scholarship, I have no idea how I would have been able to fulfill my future as a Dentist.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**HUSSAIN HASSAN**



**ETHAN HERBERT**

My hope for the future is to graduate and receive a job helping people right out of college. The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is a way for me to continue my education and take me to the next level. Without this Scholarship, I would not have been able to attend the University of Mississippi.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



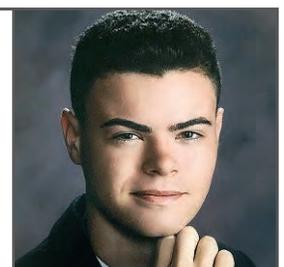
**LAYLA HAGEN**

At Georgetown, I would love to learn more about international relations, particularly in the Middle East where my family is from. I plan to study Mathematics and the Arabic language. This year, I was able to study beginning Arabic as well as Multivariable Calculus. I have many things that I would like to do with my degree. Thank you for this opportunity.

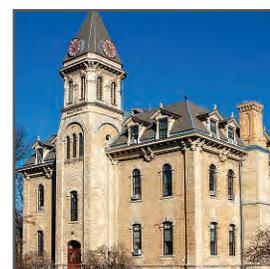
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

I am motivated to become the best in my field, improve academically and personally and try a variety of new activities. Thank you for giving me this generous Scholarship!

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**SEAN HILGENDORF**



**KAVON HOOPER**

Your Scholarship serves as a foundation for my academic success. Knowing that there are people behind me drives me to work harder. I cannot wait to see where my life leads because of the commitment you have made in me.

CARLETON COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

# jasmine azizi

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2023  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE



### **how do you log off from class?**

Hang with friends, podcasts, Netflix, cooking, journaling.

### **what do you do to manage stress?**

I like to exercise, especially taking long walks.

### **who is an inspiration to you?**

Senator Cory Booker.

### **what do you hope to do with your degree?**

I want to focus on education policy reform with an emphasis on increasing accessibility to sex education and training faculty on anti-CSEC protocols. After graduation, I plan on getting my Master's in Education Policy, K-12 and hope to become a Policy Analyst with the Department of Education.

### **what songs, podcasts or audiobooks motivate you?**

SONGS: Elton John's songs gets me fired up.

PODCASTS: "Make Your Damn Bed."

### **how are you paying it forward?**

I work for the ACLU in its National Political Advocacy Department on issues-based campaigns (e.g., family reunification, sex education and decriminalizing sex work). I take at least one Community Engaged Learning course every year to engage with the greater Spokane community.

### **what new skill do you want to learn?**

How to surf.

Your Scholarship is an opportunity for me to accomplish my dreams and goals. There are others in this world who have faced challenges similar to mine and I want to make a difference by supporting students like me. I look forward to making you proud in my academic endeavors.



**TAIMEK HUMPHREY**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY



**MADISYN HUNT**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship means a lot to me because you are a shining example of people having faith in my abilities. Thank you for helping me to see that I can be a beacon of change for our future.

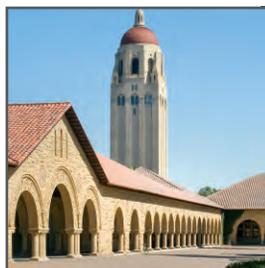
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

My goal for the future is simply to succeed in life. I know that not everyone is lucky enough to receive this tremendous opportunity, so I will strive to continue to be worthy of all the belief that The Annexstad Family Foundation has invested in me.



**JOHN IN**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BUSINESS ANALYTICS



**DESTINY KELLY**

Affording a college education was definitely viewed as a luxury – one that no one in my family was able to experience. Thanks to your Scholarship, I will be the first of my family to attend a four-year university. I am so excited about giving us all a better life and future.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

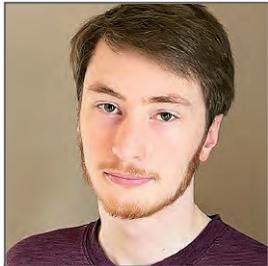
# scholars

**JADA  
KELLY**



The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship eases the financial burden I face, enables me to worry less about how I will be able to fund my college education and lets me focus on my goals. I am extremely grateful that you recognized my potential and encourage me to succeed in life. I hope to follow in the Annexstad family's footsteps and help students with similar struggles reach their full potential.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**JUSTIN  
KENNEDY**

I want to become a Genetic Engineer, pioneering the next frontier in human health. Armed with the understanding of how to manipulate and control the very building blocks of life, there is great opportunity to reduce human suffering and disease. Already we can use genetically altered organisms to increase crop yields, decompose plastics pollutants and purify brackish water. The future holds many possibilities, and I look forward to excelling science and developing a better tomorrow.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: GENETICS, CELL BIOLOGY,  
AND DEVELOPMENT

No matter how hard life gets, I know I have the power to excel in my future. Knowing that others care and are truly hoping to see me succeed is exciting. Eventually, I'd like to use my education to carry forward the dream of The Annexstad Family Foundation and help provide underprivileged youth with scholarships and the resources they need to succeed.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



**FELIXANDER  
KERY**



**ERIC  
KIM**

Thank you for helping me achieve a world-class education, one that will allow me to grow an extensive knowledge of finance. After graduation, my goal is to use business and investing to help families grow and communities thrive.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: FINANCE

Your Scholarship has meant so much to me, allowing me to focus on school rather than finances. I hope that my education will help me launch a successful career so that I can give back just like the Annexstad family has been able to give to me.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: MATHEMATICS AND PHILOSOPHY



**WILLIAM  
KIM**



**MADELINE  
KRONER**

I couldn't have gone to Notre Dame without The Annexstad Family Foundation. You, along with my talented professors, are preparing me to eventually develop cutting-edge technology that has the potential to truly have an impact on the world.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# ted talks *we love*

Check out these TED Talks to keep you inspired and motivated!

1. ***Want to Win? Stop Trying to Beat Other People*** with Annexstad Alumna Kayvon Asemani
2. ***What I Learned From 100 Days of Rejection*** with Jia Jiang
3. ***Being Young and Making an Impact*** with Natalie Warne
4. ***Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders*** with Sheryl Sandberg
5. ***How Great Leaders Inspire Action*** with Simon Sinek
6. ***The Happy Secret to Better Work*** with Shawn Achor
7. ***Your Elusive Creative Genius*** with Elizabeth Gilbert
8. ***Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*** with Angela Lee Duckworth
9. ***My Year of Saying Yes to Everything*** with Shonda Rhimes
10. ***10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation*** with Celeste Headlee



Being a recipient of The Annexstad Family Foundation is an absolute privilege! After graduation, I plan to earn my M.D.-Ph.D. and work in pharmaceutical research and development to make more affordable medicines.



**ELIZABETH  
LIMP**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: CHEMICAL ENGINEERING AND PRE-MED



**RYAN  
LIU**

Thanks to The Annexstad Family Foundation, there are no limits to what I can achieve with my education. I am motivated to become a Pulmonary and Critical Care Physician where I can help people who are near death and feeling hopeless.

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOCHEMISTRY

I am grateful to have been named a recipient of The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship because the additional financial support has allowed me to focus on my education and begin to incite change without being worried about making ends meet.



**MARY LEE  
LLOYD**

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**WESLEY  
LOCKHART**

I am very grateful for The Annexstad Family Foundation. Your Scholarship allows me to afford college and take the first steps toward my career serving my country as a Criminologist and FBI Agent.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

# scholars

**YENO  
LOKOSANG**



The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship holds a special place in my heart. I have no regrets in my life and I am motivated to grow into my full potential. Thank you for giving me the future that I long for.

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE**

There are no words to express my gratitude for the freedom that The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship grants me. Duke has been the best and most challenging experience for me. My goals are clear, and I am putting in the hard work and effort to make you proud.

**DUKE UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: PSYCHOLOGY AND COMPUTER SCIENCE**



**BRANDON  
LOPEZ**



**SHIRLEY  
LOPEZ**

As a first-generation Scholar, higher education was always a priority in my life. I'm passionate about medicine and global health equity. One day, I hope to become a Physician to serve marginalized populations and give back to my community.

**WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PRE-MED**



**DYLAN  
LONG**

The Annexstad Scholarship offers me a chance to prove that people with challenges can succeed as much as anybody else; my challenges don't define me. I want to thank The Annexstad Family Foundation for believing in me and allowing me to prove myself to the world.

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is allowing me to attend one of the best liberal arts colleges and pursue a degree in Political Science. The amazing financial and academic support that you provide me are essential for my needs. My dream is to go to law school, pass the bar and become a Lawyer who fights for justice and equality. You are helping my dreams come true.

**CARLETON COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE**



**HAK  
LUONG**

*Texas Christian  
University  
Scholars  
Charity  
Mason and  
Janae  
Jackson  
in 2019.* ▶



**DANNY "DJ"  
LUSTER JR.**

Thanks to The Annexstad Family Foundation, I can focus on school without having to balance school and a job, and without facing mountains of debt. Your Scholarship is liberating, and I cannot thank you enough for your generosity. I hope to change lives with my education and empower others to do the same. Knowledge is power – this is a phrase I have replayed in my head for many years, and I intend to make sure that there are no obstacles standing in my way as I aim to achieve my highest goals.

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED**

sagal  
ahmed

CARLETON COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2022  
MAJOR: STATISTICS / MATHEMATICS



**how do you log off from class?**

Exercise, cooking, journaling, long walks.

**who is an inspiration to you?**

Several Somalia-based artists, activists and philanthropists.

**what do you hope to do with your degree?**

I want to study maritime security and fisheries analysis and policy.

**what songs motivate you?**

Somalia's electrifying disco era.

**how do you pay it forward?**

I am a voluntary educator at an emergency housing shelter for women and children; a voluntary community youth mentor addressing drug abuse; and a research assistant at Collaborating for Resilience, an international non-profit addressing obstacles to natural resource management through partnerships and research.

**what have you learned over the course of the pandemic that has changed how you work and study?**

Prioritizing my relationships and my mental and physical health.

**what new skill do you want to learn?**

How to fly a plane.

It is my honor to be a recipient of The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship. It has lightened my financial burdens and will allow me to begin my career without loans. You have given me a tremendous gift!



**GRACE LYNN**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**CLAIRE LYONS**

I am honored to be a recipient of The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship. I am very grateful for your generosity. College will help me determine if I will become a Writer or go to law school after graduation. But for now, I am simply thrilled that I have an opportunity to make a choice and follow what I love most. Thank you!

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ENGLISH

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has given me the opportunity to show my family the importance of higher education. I believe it's important to give back to your community, and your Scholarship is helping me to achieve this goal by getting me closer to my future career.



**JASMINE MEDINA MARTINEZ**

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**BATHLEHAM MEKONNEN**

Words cannot express how truly grateful I am for your investment in my future. I promise that I will not let this investment go to waste.

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

# scholars

**DEVON  
MINKE**



The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has given me the self-confidence that I can accomplish whatever I want to or need to in life. It feels really great to know that my efforts are being noticed.

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION



**LANCE  
MINOR**

I am very honored to accept your Scholarship. The generosity and support from Mr. and Mrs. Annexstad have provided my future with incredible opportunities and I couldn't be more thankful.

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: JOURNALISM

*Spelman College  
Scholar Chelesa  
Fearce in 2017.* ➔



The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship serves as the foundation for my academic existence. I am currently exploring research options in Biochemistry with the hope to continue onto a master's program after I complete my undergraduate degree.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOCHEMISTRY



**RAHMA  
MOHAMED  
JAMAC  
ABDULKADIR  
SHEIKH-KASSIM**



**ANGELINE  
"ANGEL"  
MORGAN**

Hard work is the fuel of the future, and I look forward to navigating it well for developing personal ideas, research, learning and helping others. When I see kind, thoughtful and impacting people like the Annexstads, I am driven to show them just how far an individual can go when people believe in them.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: ART

Your Scholarship means that I have more financial freedom to focus on my goals and make my loved ones proud!

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: NURSING



**CHEYENNE  
MOYER**



**PEYTON  
MUELLER**

I want to become a successful individual who can give back to my community. There were challenges I had to overcome while growing up, and the fact that I am attending Notre Dame is a testament of how hard work truly does pay off. I have made great friends and formed incredible memories that I would not have had otherwise. I thank The Annexstad Family Foundation for all they have done in helping me achieve my dreams.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: SCIENCE BUSINESS

addictive  
*podcasts*  
worth a listen



1. *The Happiness Lab*
2. *This American Life*
3. *The School of Greatness*
4. *Hello Monday*
5. *Mindvalley Podcast*
6. *Optimal Living Daily*
7. *The Ramsey Show*
8. *Nutrition Matters*
9. *Happier With Gretchen Rubin*
10. *Good Life Project*

Without your Scholarship, University of Georgia would be just a dream. With it, my diploma and my future career as a Child Psychologist are a reality!



**JUPITER  
NEPTUNE**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



Getting accepted to University of Georgia and being selected as an Annexstad Scholar has boosted my confidence and reassured me that I deserve a quality education and the opportunity to build my career.

**JAMES  
NEWMAN**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

I am extremely thankful for The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship! It is greatly appreciated to know that as a first-generation college student I have the opportunity to study Cinema and Media Cultures and receive my bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota.



**LUCKY  
NGUYEN**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: STUDIES IN CINEMA AND MEDIA CULTURES



**ALLY  
NOHMY**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship serves as a reminder that there are people willing to help students in challenging situations and that a person's financial situation is not a barrier to that person's success. I look forward to furthering my education with medical school and eventually becoming a Physician to help others. I am forever grateful for your generosity.

BOSTON COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY

# scholars

**CARLOS NÚÑEZ**



Gonzaga University is my dream school! My hope is to obtain a business degree that is versatile and applicable to many jobs and to one day start and run my own business. Thank you Annexstad Family Foundation for giving me a safety net and allowing me to go to college. Your support means the world to me.

**GONZAGA UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

It's truly amazing that The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship exists and has been helping Scholars like me for the past two decades. My dream has always been to work for Apple as a Software Engineer. I would love to be known as an Asian American woman that developed the next best innovation in the high-tech industry.

**WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS**  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: COMPUTER SCIENCE AND FINANCE



**KHUSHI PATEL**



**DANNERYS PERALTA ORTIZ**

Thank you for your heartfelt dedication to my college career and my future goals! I look forward to focusing on classes in my major: Global Studies and Linguistics.

**UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: GLOBAL STUDIES AND LINGUISTICS



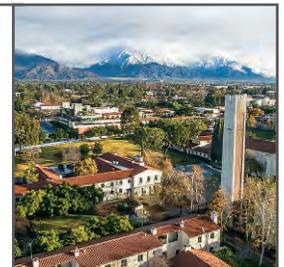
**DAMINI PATEL**

The loss of several important role models in my life has motivated and encouraged me to dedicate my career towards advancing modern medicine. Currently I am expanding my knowledge in the field of science by majoring in Biology at Indiana University and I plan to attend pharmacy school after graduation.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship means the world to me. It gave me the ability to go to college because, without it, I wouldn't have been able to afford this education and the incredible experiences that go along with it.

**POMONA COLLEGE**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**BELLA PETTENGIL**



**LINH PHAM**

I'm deeply interested in pursuing how war and conflicts affect society, more specifically the social and cultural trauma towards civilians as a result of outside intervention. One of the main reasons I am interested in pursuing history is because we analyze sources to prove an argument during a time in the past. While many people assume events have to be hundreds of years ago, those skills can be applied to today. I am also interested in Statistics and Data Science because the way we use data can be used to make predictions in future policy making.

**YALE UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: HISTORY

*Gustavus Adolphus* ▶  
College Scholar  
Haley Collier in 2016.



# romel *tintero*

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
SAN BERNARDINO  
CLASS OF 2025  
MAJOR: NURSING



### **how do you log off from class?**

Hanging with friends, volunteering, meditating and playing video games.

### **what was the most surprising thing about spring semester?**

My resilience and adaptability to continue forward in one of the toughest environments ever.

### **what do you do to manage stress?**

Listen to music and meditate.

### **who is an inspiration to you?**

My mother. She had the resilience to come to America alone and succeed in the medical field. I want to follow in my mother's footsteps and be what she has been to me, a guardian angel whose heart warmed me on the coldest nights.

### **what songs motivate you?**

Somber-toned songs about success. The melody ends up sounding sad, but the lyrics behind it teach humbleness and how to catch your dreams.

### **are there any ways you are currently "paying it forward" in your community?**

I am developing an eSports program at school with more inclusive efforts. I have also been developing a Discord server for all gamers on both campuses to keep everyone connected.

### **what new skill do you want to learn?**

How to create art. I'm fascinated with the art people make in gaming. They're fantastical, creative and expressive.

I am truly grateful for The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship as it has allowed me to focus on my academic interests without the fear of a financial burden. I look forward to going to graduate school someday and giving back to my Gustavus community, much like Al and Cathy Annexstad.



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PRE-LAW

**KIANA  
PITSCH**



**ASHIYA  
PROWELL**

One day I want to own my own law firm that not only provides mentors and financial assistance to students interested in the field of law, but also provides a quality organization for people of color to begin and expand their careers. The quality attorneys in my law firm will help people of color by working hard, focusing on their clients and winning their cases.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Your Scholarship means that I will be able to graduate debt-free and begin helping others as soon as possible. I believe a person's life is wasted if it is not spent giving back to the world.



UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**ELSI MUÑOZ  
RAMOS**



**MARTIN RIOS  
DE LA ROSA**

I look forward to making an impact on my community and finding ways to make it less challenging for future generations. I want to innovate, design and create through engineering to give back to others. My goals are to serve, enjoy and learn from every second in the future.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# scholars

**AIDEN  
ROBERTSON**



Without The Annexstad Family Foundation, I would not be able to attend the University of Notre Dame and my life would look drastically different.

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



**EMILY  
RODRIGUEZ**

I want to take action that is focused on improving the world around us. My future will involve a field that will allow me to be more involved in my community and work towards improving the inequality and inequity that exists in society against marginalized and underrepresented groups. I hope to learn how to be more actively involved through policy work and conduct research into the history of systemic issues. I look forward to discovering what my future holds for me.

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECLARED

I am the first person in my family to graduate from high school and the first to go to a university. Because of the generous financial aid program at the University of Alabama and The Annexstad Family Foundation, I can afford a college education. I could not be more grateful.

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**KAYLA  
ROWE**

I plan to pursue my interest in becoming a Surgeon. I know this goal is a lengthy one and it will take years of concentration and focus. The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has helped me realize that I can still pursue my goals and become the first in my family to receive a higher education.



**LAVONTE  
SAUNDERS**

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PRE-MED

My family does not have enough money to put me through college, so without The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship, I would have been destined for a community college or the obligation to take on massive student loans.

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**COOPER  
SCHOLL**

Thank you for your generous Scholarship as it allows me to pursue an education without having to stress about how to pay for it. I can pursue interests including conducting undergraduate research.



**LILY  
SERGENT**

**MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

**KAREN  
"KAY"  
SHAO**



The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has given me the opportunity to accomplish my dreams and career goals. I hope to one day become a Veterinarian because I would like to help not only the people around me but also our companion animals that bring us so much joy.

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**JAZARAH  
SHIM**

As a first-generation low-income student attending a prestigious institution, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and concerned about my own future because it seems like everyone else has it figured out. My hope is to discover more about myself and how to align my passions for social justice and activism with possible career endeavors and ways to give back to my community. I look forward to creating life-forming friendships and connections while broadening my intellectual horizons. Thank you for giving me the financial support to allow me to discover my true self.

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

I am so grateful that I can move forward with the rest of my life without loans and interest weighing me down. Your generosity will have an impact on my life extending much further than just through my undergraduate career.



**ALONDRA  
SOLIS**

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**NANCY  
SORO**

I am very grateful to the generosity of The Annexstad Family Foundation. Thank you for your investment in my future!

**COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: GLOBAL BUSINESS

I look forward to making connections with professors and other students, making use of the extensive resources, getting out of my comfort zone and experiencing what Indiana University has to offer – all while maintaining a great academic standing. My professional goal is to be a News Correspondent for CNN or MSNBC overseas in Europe.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BROADCAST JOURNALISM



**DESIREE  
TAYLOR**

I plan to graduate from the University of Michigan with a Computer Science degree, concentrating in Bioinformatics. Biology has been a passion of mine since high school. After I graduate, I plan on working in the field for at least a couple years and then possibly pursuing a master's degree.



**ANGELAROSE  
THOMPSON**

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE

# scholars

**ROMEL  
TINTERO**



Thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for their investment in my future. I cannot even process their generosity, because it seems so surreal.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
SAN BERNARDINO/PALM DESERT CAMPUS  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: NURSING



**EDWARD  
TSUI**

It is the Annexstad family who has lifted an extreme economic burden from my family's shoulders and given me a chance to attend college. Thank you for supporting my dreams.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: POLITICAL SCIENCE  
AND GOVERNMENT

*Amy Abrahamson Miller,  
The Annexstad Family  
Foundation's first  
Scholarship recipient  
and a 2005 Graduate  
from Gustavus  
Adolphus College.*



College was never a reality because I came from a low-income family and paying for college was a huge obstacle. Your Scholarship is extremely important to me because I can continue my education and study Nursing.

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: NURSING



**JADELLYNNE  
VANG**



**THINH  
VU**

I am so lucky to have the opportunity to go to school at the University of Notre Dame. I want to be a Doctor who focuses on preventative and affordable health care. Thank you, Annexstad Family Foundation, for supporting my dream.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: PRE-MED

After completing my degree at the University of Chicago, I aspire to continue my education with the goal of becoming a Psychologist. Thank you for your tremendous support. I wouldn't be here without the Annexstad family!

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: PSYCHOLOGY AND CREATIVE WRITING



**DE'JON  
WARREN**



**AUSTIN  
WHEELER**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship was my deciding factor in me going to college. I have been truly blessed with this opportunity to focus solely on my education. There are no words that can express my gratitude for your generosity.

EMORY UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

**DANIEL WILLIAMS**



Gustavus Adolphus College and The Annexstad Family Foundation have given me the tremendous opportunity to go to school and someday soon earn my Biology degree. I look forward to helping the interaction with special needs children in the areas of research and physical therapy.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



**JACKSON WILLIAMS**

I am so proud to be an Annexstad Family Foundation Scholar and study at my dream school.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
2020-2024  
MAJORS: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
AND MANAGEMENT

I am excited for the opportunity to attend University of Alabama as an Annexstad Scholar! I'm jumping into my future with both feet as I spend this summer taking Marine Biology classes at the Sea Lab on Dauphin Island.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



**ANNA WINFREY**

The Annexstad Family Foundation has made college possible for me. Thanks to your Scholarship, I am able to pursue an education without placing a financial burden on myself or my family. Even though I am undecided right now, I have hopes of finding a career where I can help others.



**MATTHEW WINSLETT**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

Thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for helping me further my education so I can study Biology at a prestigious university such as Georgia Tech.

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
2020-2024  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



**HARLEY YOPP**

*Annexstad Family Foundation Scholars attending University of Redlands in 2019 (l-r): Scholars Kenia Gonzalez, Isaac Rodriguez, Fernando Herrera, Ariel Herrera, Leslie Vargas and Kimberly Rios-Hernandez. ▼*



duke university

# supports the journey

## of first-generation low-income scholars

Twenty percent of Duke University's undergraduates are first-generation students and come from lower-income families. In fact, five out of every ten students receive some form of financial aid. Yet, when admitted, Duke commits to meeting 100% of demonstrated need for these students.



Gary Bennett

Duke remains one of a small number of “need blind” colleges that admits students without regard for whether they can pay. “It is a high priority for us to ensure that the most intellectually curious, ambitious, globally minded problem-solvers can attend Duke – and thrive here – regardless of a family’s finances or familiarity with higher education,” says **Gary Bennett**, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.

James B. Duke, who endowed Duke University in 1924, believed in the transformational power of education to positively affect individuals and

communities. Inspired by that tradition, Duke offers the highest quality education to the most talented students, regardless of their socioeconomic background or their family’s prior educational experience.

In recent years, it became clearer that it is not always enough to simply admit students and provide them financial support to reduce or eliminate the cost of tuition and room and board. To address this issue, the school created Duke LIFE (Low-Income First-Generation). The program benefits approximately 1,300 students by enhancing their academic experiences and promoting their full participation in the university’s intellectual communities. Duke LIFE essentially combined a successful pre-orientation program for 1GLI (first-generation low-income) students with new facets introducing them to Duke’s academic and social culture, campus resources and mentorship program – and the 1GLI students are thriving.

They are invited to attend skill-building workshops and seminars on exploring majors, careers and advanced degrees. Joining the school’s career counseling and resume-writing services, Duke also assists 1GLI students in applying for national scholarships, enrolling in test-prep programs for graduate and professional school and even meeting travel costs for academic conferences and securing professional attire for job interviews.

During the pandemic, Duke LIFE added a new university-wide committee of administrators working with 1GLI students to better coordinate resources and communication including access to remote classes with loaner laptops and wi-fi hotspots. Duke LIFE has strengthened relationships among participating students along with the faculty who serve as volunteer advisors.

**Dr. Sachelle Ford** serves as the Director of Duke LIFE and the Rubenstein Scholars Program, a premier merit scholarship program created for 120 1GLI students.



Colleen Scott

Her colleague **Colleen Scott** serves as Director of the Baldwin Program, focused on providing leadership opportunities to women. Scott shares, “What I love most is

connecting with students like the Annexstad Scholars one on one and figuring out how I can best support them through their college journey,” she says. “It has been rewarding to help guide them, sometimes being a cheerleader, sometimes being the voice that reminds them that one bad grade does not define their worth.

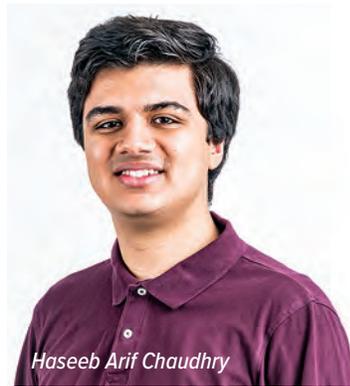
“Many students want to pack every minute of every day with activities,” she adds. “Leaving no time for rest, reflection and just being has costs. We are there to support them when having it all becomes too much.”



Annexstad Scholar **Vanessa Real Williams** is a senior studying Public Policy. She shares, “Through Duke LIFE, we have been given the opportunity to engage in so many interesting activities. Currently, I am the president of Duke Splash, a college-for-a-day program for middle and high schoolers. I have also been a part of the Human Rights Student Advisory Board,

joined Illyria (a women’s organization) and written articles for Duke’s undergraduate law magazine.

“I remind myself daily of the sacrifices my dad made to ensure that I would have a good education and the support given to me by The Annexstad Family Foundation,” she adds. “With graduation next May, I hope to attend law school and focus my career on protecting people’s rights to water and sanitation health both nationally and internationally.”



Junior **Haseeb Arif Chaudhry** is expected to graduate in 2023 with a degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering and Computer Science. During COVID, Duke

really stepped up and “has provided tremendous resources for students in all areas and from all socioeconomic backgrounds including wellness and advisory resources to help manage the transition between in-person classes to online classes,” he shares. “As the class structure changed, so did the workload. Duke’s Academic Resource Center helped me manage my time, build a better pandemic schedule and offered Wellness Day activities including picnic-style events and outdoor gatherings. This allowed me to connect with fellow students in a more natural setting and not feel so alone.

“Thanks to The Annexstad Family Foundation and Duke, my goal of working for either a leading space technology company focused on advancing humanity’s reach for the stars or a high-tech robotics company focused on helping us here on Earth is well within reach.”



# how to stand out in your job search

In an Annexstad Scholar survey, the Foundation recognized an opportunity to share effective job search methods. Adapted from her virtual presentation, expert **Nikki Mills** shares a few tips on confidently crushing the job hunt.



## ***build an effective resume***

Use the job description as a guide to tailor-make your resume. Incorporate keywords from the company's job description to reference your similar work-life experience and internships. If you are lacking job experience, then add volunteer work, school activities and class projects to elevate personal pursuits. Select a format that has some visual interest and remember to highlight your experience first, then add your education as one of the final features.

## ***network in-person and virtually***

Take advantage of your personal network through college and university alumni, The Annexstad Family Foundation, LinkedIn and, of course, connecting with family, friends, community groups and more.

Maximize your profiles on LinkedIn, Monster, Indeed, etc. by posting your resume. HR professionals are always mining for people with specific qualifications and they look for solid candidates across all platforms.

## ***prepare for the interview***

Whether the interview is virtual or in person, preparedness is the key. Learn everything you can about the company. Candidates that stand out most are the ones who have invested time in researching the company, its mission statement, the job description and where the position fits into their organization.

Be ready for questions like, "What was it in the job description that caught your eye?" and "What about our company most appeals to you?" Also, have a list of questions ready to ask them, which shows self-assuredness, tenacity and expresses your interest in the job.

Other suggestions include:

- Mock interview in advance with an experienced professional.
- Dress above the part and take particular care with your interview appearance.
- Maintain quality eye contact.
- Show engaged body language.
- Turn off your phone and be present.
- It's okay to be nervous. It's better to be authentic, but not overly casual.

## ***in-person interviews***

When interviewing in person consider the following:

- Bring extra resumes, write notes during the interview and follow up the same day with a thank-you email.
- Arrive early. Be in the parking lot 30 minutes before your interview and at reception 15 minutes early. Showing up early is a sign of respect.

nikki  
mills



Nikki Mills is a forward-thinking, growth-focused and tactical business partner who serves as a change management driver with over 25 years of extensive experience aligning human capital development and corporate strategy within large and small organizations. As the current Group HR Director at Tegna Inc., Mills leads the strategic and operational human resource function for Tegna's central region to include Tegna broadcast television stations in 14 states. She has been recognized as a collaborative and hands-on manager with outstanding leadership, problem solving, communications and relationship management skills. Nikki was the first in her family to receive a bachelor's degree. She majored in Speech Communications at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

- Articulate why you want the job and why you are qualified for the position.
- Inquire about next steps as it shows initiative and will provide you a decision-making timeline.
- Prepare for behavioral-based questions about how your past performance is indicative of your future performance. These include:
  - > Describe the biggest decision you've made in the last year.
  - > What is one of the most difficult assignments you've received?
  - > Tell me about a time when you missed a deadline.
- Thank the interviewer for their time and the opportunity.

#### **the virtual interview**

Initial interviews are often conducted virtually. To find interview success:

- Test your technology. Log in 15 minutes early.
- Consider your setting. Limit your distractions for sight and sound.
- Dress to impress.
- Be present and look at the camera.
- Deliver articulately by slowing down your pace so you are easy to understand.
- Add inflection, enjoy the experience and show your excitement in the job.

#### **a word about compensation**

Compensation discussions should not be initiated by you in the first interview. However, more and more HR professionals are asking compensation questions so they know if they can afford you. Websites like Payscale, Glassdoor and Salary.com can give you some reference points. However, when asked, you might consider saying, "I'm more interested in finding a position that's a good fit for my skills and interests. I'm confident that you're offering a salary that's competitive in the current market."

If pressed you can consider answering, "According to my research and past experience, my understanding is that \$75-90,000 per year is typical based on the role and requirements."

Or when asked about your current salary, you can consider saying, "Since this position is not exactly the same as my current job, let's discuss my responsibilities and work together to determine a fair salary."

#### **send that thank-you note**

A thank-you note is a sign of respect, a way to build your connection and a way to express that you are genuinely interested in the job after having learned more about it during the interview. In the note, remind them of your key qualifications and experienced skillsets then thank them for the opportunity to be considered. It's easy to Google for samples and work in the language that best benefits you.

#### **your digital footprint matters**

HR professionals will look at your digital footprint before hiring. Be smart and consider the following:

- Google yourself.
- Make sure your posts are positive.
- Think twice before you post.

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View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).

# smart habits for financial freedom

As part of a Fall 2020 survey, Annexstad Scholars requested resources on building financial wellness. The Foundation invited Tasha Murdoff, CFO of AMA Investments, LLC to give sage financial advice.

When **Tasha Murdoff** researched colleges, her priority was finding a school offering the best financial aid and scholarships. “I couldn’t afford to go to college and worked two jobs,” she shares. “My college experience shaped me into the person I am today and I decided early on that I wanted more out of life including becoming financially independent and giving my kids the full college experience that I missed.”

To help you do the same, here are her financial tips for building your future.

## 1. live within or below your means

Start by taking care of yourself first. Keep your needs simple. Know that real value lies in what things mean to you, not their cost or how they are valued by others. Being rich can be deceiving because it’s not what you make or spend but what you save that will give you true financial wealth.

In the book *The Psychology of Money*, there are several examples of rich versus wealth. You need to decide: Do you want to create and sustain wealth? Or, do you want to live within the moment and spend money that you do not have and amass debt?

## 2. create a liveable budget

Budgets are lifelong tools that create financial success. If you want to be a step ahead of your peers, create a budget and have the discipline to follow it.

A budget helps you form habits and helps you decide between what you want and what you need. Set up a reasonable percentage amount of your salary for you to save (say 10%) and another percentage

for a rainy-day fund to pay for unexpected essentials (10%). Once you deduct your necessary expenses, the remaining funds should be saved for purchasing a car or home.

When you receive a raise, save it! Delayed gratification is what American society rejects, but those who save will have a much higher likelihood of financial wealth. Always think twice before spending and, if you have to think about it, then it’s probably not worth having.

## 3. avoid and pay off debt

If you are currently in debt, making payments should be the priority in your budget. Debt is easy to accumulate, but considerably more difficult to pay off. It’s virtually impossible to purchase a house if you are too far in debt. I advise you to take out less on a mortgage than what the company says you can afford. A mortgage will stay with you for 30 years and it takes long-term discipline to pay it off.

Credit cards can be very dangerous. It’s good to have a credit card to establish good credit, however, it is so easy to charge on them. Most people cannot pay off their credit card debt. And thus, the vicious cycle of high interest rate compounding debt occurs.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the average credit card revolving balance now is over \$7,000. This \$7,000 is the balance that people carry on their credit card that never gets paid off and they just keep accumulating more and more interest. The total revolving credit card debt in the U.S. is \$416 billion. Let’s

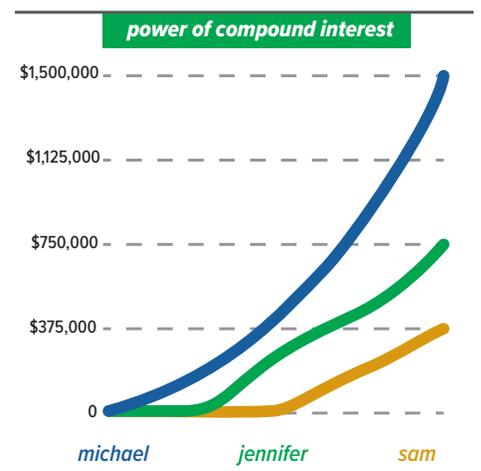
say you have a \$7,000 balance on your credit card and your annual interest rate is 20%. That equates to \$120 in interest each month! If your minimum payment is \$100, then you are projecting \$20 onto your balance due and propelling it forward every month. Instead, pay off the entire balance every month and only charge what you can afford to buy.

Lastly, beware of smaller loans including cars and appliances. It’s better to pay cash for these items or purchase a car without all the bells and whistles so your payments will be lower.

## 4. save early and often

Time and compounding are the two most powerful components of saving. Most millionaires will tell you that time is a key attribute to their long-term financial wealth.

Warren Buffett started investing at the age of 11 and has now been investing for over 80 years. He’s currently worth over \$85 billion, but he’s had over 80 years to achieve that. He always lived below his means, saved and invested.

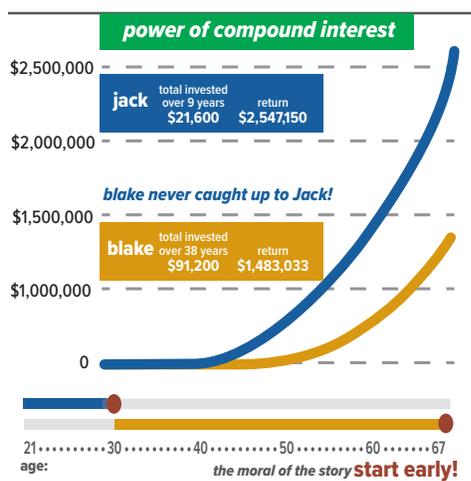


# tasha murdoff



Tasha Murdoff is the Chief Financial Officer of AMA Investments, LLC, in Minneapolis, Minn., where she manages investment strategy in real estate, bonds, equity and philanthropic giving throughout the United States. Prior to AMA, Murdoff has had a successful 25-year investment career in private equity, where she managed global and international portfolios for high-net worth clientele, mutual funds and institutional firms. Murdoff travelled extensively throughout Europe and Asia in search of quality equity investments for clients. She also mentored the young equity analysts and associates at her firm. As the first in her family to pursue higher education, Murdoff earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of St. Thomas and a bachelor's degree from Augsburg College.

In the example on the previous page, Michael, Jennifer and Sam all invested \$120,000, but they did so at different times in their lives. Michael ended up saving \$1.4 million by the time he reached 65 years old. He had time on his side. The \$1,000 he invested from ages 25-35 had time to grow over the course of 30 years. Sam and Jennifer invested later in life and received less as they had much less time to make their funds work for them.



In the example above, Jack started investing \$200 a month at age 21 for nine years; by the age of 67, he had over \$2.5 million. Blake invested \$200 a month from ages 30-67 for a total of \$91,200. At the age of 67, he had made almost \$1.5 million. Had Blake started earlier, he would've invested less and received almost twice the money.

Warren Buffett says, "If you don't find a way to make money while you sleep, you will work until you die." Let your money work for you by understanding active versus passive income. Active income is what you're currently making; passive income is how you generate wealth and income. To build passive income, consider investing in or starting a business, pursuing investments with dividends or trying your hand at real estate. Every millionaire has at least seven sources of passive income. Start with one form that interests you.

## 5. invest in your future

401(k) and Roth IRAs are wise retirement plans for college students. 401(k) plans are offered by many employers and most offer a generous match. If your employer offers you a 100% match up to 3% of your annual income and your salary is \$40,000, the maximum amount your employer will pay is \$1,200 or 3%. If your employer matches your 3% contribution and you contribute \$1,200 to your 401(k), then you've just received \$1,200 for free. Why wouldn't you take advantage of that?

Roth IRAs are individual retirement plans that you do not have to create through your employer. Most retirement plans are set up for you to pay taxes when you retire, but Roth IRAs are different. You put in after-tax dollars, but withdrawals are tax-free. Additionally, you can withdrawal your contributions prior to retirement without any tax implications, which helps in emergency situations. First-time home buyers can withdrawal up to \$10,000 for a down payment. The current limit you can invest per year is \$6,000 and it's limited by how much you make. So, if you are single and you make less than \$125,000, you can contribute the entire \$6,000.

There are several ways to invest in money including: stocks, bonds, mutual funds, index funds, gold, bitcoin, etc. Investing is a personal decision and there are many factors that come in to play. If you are investing beyond your comfort zone, then it's not worth it. Invest early so you can have time on your side.

## 6. educate yourself

There are many ways to educate yourself. *The Psychology of Money* by Morgan Housel gives an understanding of what money means. *Financial Fitness* by Chris Brady and Orrin Woodward offers a game plan for financial planning. Also, there are several free financial podcasts; download some to listen to that work for you.

I wish you great success in investing for your future financial freedom. I am impressed by the stories I hear of The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholars. I know that you will go far!

View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org).

# navigating law school

In an effort to explore the work that goes into applying for and obtaining a Law degree, we asked first-generation Annexstad Family Foundation Scholars **Azucena Marquez** and **Hayden Rodarte, J.D.** to share their experiences.



*when did you know you wanted to pursue your Law degree?*

**marquez:** "I always knew I wanted to be a lawyer. When I was ten years old, my family was processing immigration paperwork and I quickly realized that as an attorney you have a lot of power to make a huge impact. During my first year in college, I was asked to interview a woman in a career leadership position. I researched top California lawyers and contacted the top three women. The first two were understandably busy, but the third one responded to me and we met. At the end of the interview, she asked me if I would like a summer job. I took it and knew law was for me."

**rodarte:** "My freshman year (at Stanford), I was considering pre-Med, but by the second semester I was more interested in my Latin culture classes. I knew that I wanted to work in international human rights, so I focused on law school. While getting my master's, I was working as a legal assistant focused on human rights. This was the kind of law I wanted to practice."

*what was the first action you took toward your law school application?*

**marquez:** "I thought about my personal statement early on and I still go back and read that statement so that I don't lose sight of my goal. I also collected my letters of recommendation early."

**rodarte:** "The LSAT is a big determinant of admission and I tend to be a nervous test taker, so I went on a fact-finding mission to understand how the LSAT was graded. I spoke with several pre-Law advisors on ways to achieve better scores. During the three years in getting my master's, I prepared for the LSAT. I also researched all of the elements needed to be able to fill out the law school application."

*any tips on surviving the LSATs?*

**marquez:** "Make a schedule and stick to it. I bought some books and reached out to the pre-Law department who had past exams. Allow five months to study and take a lot of practice exams. And don't be afraid to take it more than once."

*what was the application process like and how did you handle waiting out the acceptance letter?*

**rodarte:** "It's a difficult time in your life. I treated my application process like a night job so I would study on breaks and prepare items at night and on weekends. You don't hear back for months, so you need to distract yourself. Luckily, I was working and I didn't know anyone else who was applying, so I didn't have to compare myself with others."

**marquez:** "I had just started a new job and I didn't tell anyone I was applying. After I applied, I told myself I was just going to focus on working, but my brother told me about Reddit. Don't look into Reddit, because I got sucked into checking it all the time! It's hard not to compare yourself to anyone else's acceptance or rejection."

# alumni *voices*



**azucena marquez** received her bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 2019, majoring in History and minoring in International Relations. She served as President of Stanford's Women in Politics, tutored and mentored in East Palo Alto, studied abroad in Paris and served as a research assistant at Stanford Law School. In 2018, she received the prestigious Arthur Lyman Undergraduate Fellowship. She has also served as an Analyst at Cornerstone Research where she conducted economic and financial analysis for attorneys in commercial litigation and regulatory proceedings. In 2020, Azucena was accepted to Harvard Law School, and this past summer she worked as an associate at Cooley LLC on a Diversity Fellowship.

*you both took some time off before before applying to law school. How has that contributed to your current success?*

**marquez:** "I was working on economic consulting and litigation matters, becoming familiar with depositions, so I felt more familiar with the legal field, I also learned that there's a lot more to life than law school and a career, and I needed to find a work-life balance."



**hayden rodarte, j.d.** was the first recipient of the *Leaders for Tomorrow Scholarship* outside of the Midwest. In 2013, he received degrees from Stanford University in International Relations and in Latin Language and Literature. Hayden returned to Stanford to receive his Master of Arts in Latin American Studies with a Political Economy concentration in 2014. In 2016, Hayden began his pursuit of his J.D. at Yale Law School, he served as a mentor to Annexstad Scholars at Yale, he was involved with the *Yale Journal of International Law*, the Wellenstein Human Rights project and the International Refugee Assistance Project. In 2019, Hayden received his J.D. and quickly passed the California State Bar. He works as a Justice Catalyst Fellow at the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of San Francisco and is a champion and a voice for the voiceless.

**rodarte:** "I think the time I spent working for the *Stanford Law Review* gave me a reference for what the profession was like and how the elements are used in practice. I didn't know anyone who was a Lawyer, so it was really abstract to me."

*where did you find your community?*

**marquez:** "Starting at a new school during a pandemic was very difficult. I found La Alianza, a LatinX organization where students met in a Cambridge park with

our masks on. Even a small group can help you feel connected. I'm also involved in First Class, a first-generation law association. Plus, at Harvard they divide us into seven sections of about 70 people and from there I found friends within affinity groups that have helped me belong."

**rodarte:** "I spent my first two years at Yale and my last year as a visiting student at Stanford where I was very involved in student life. Changing your whole sense of reality can be very consuming — switching schools and coasts, moving away from family, friends and resources. The second year in law school is very formulaic so I became involved in student leadership to help build connections."

*how did you find faculty mentorship?*

**marquez:** "I was very worried about finding mentorship and it has been difficult. After class, half the students would stay on Zoom to ask questions and connect with the professor, so it's been challenging to stand out. I've attended office hours, made 1:1 appointments, and I've become co-president of my section committee. I have joined an immigration reading group which is mentored by the professor who started the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic and I have met other professors who are very active and have inspired me. I encourage Scholars to search out those opportunities to be in smaller spaces with faculty to inspire you."

**rodarte:** "It was hard to develop these mentorship opportunities. My first two years everyone who taught was unapproachable and I felt like I didn't deserve their attention. Especially those teaching in the black letter law classes in the large lecture halls. I should have pursued more faculty engagement, but I had some challenges in breaking through. I did however find connection through interdisciplinary work in the human rights space. I worked in the public health clinic and we did some interesting work on reproductive health and developed a fellowship program with students who wanted to present on law and public health



which allowed me to engage with faculty. When I returned as a visiting student to Stanford, I worked in the Immigrants' Rights Clinic and, since I wasn't getting my J.D. from Stanford, I pushed myself to go to office hours and connect more with the faculty to fulfill that mentoring."

*what advice would you give students to initiate that faculty engagement?*

**rodarte:** "Typically, the system is built to keep some people in and others out, so it's challenging to navigate around that. I would say to believe in yourself and put your confidence into action to create the connection."

**marquez:** "Imposter syndrome hits hard when you are in law school and everything and everyone is unfamiliar and you have to navigate again. You start seeing preferences towards some students and away from others. So, find the professors who are doing the work that you are interested in and they can be a great advocate for you. Select a professor, do some research on their work, then set up a time to connect with them. People like to talk about themselves and the law business is really built on connections."

*how is legal writing different from undergraduate writing?*

**marquez:** "Legal writing is more cut and dry. There's a lot less room for creativity. Briefs are written on either the defendant or the government side and you have to cite everything. Try writing for any journals; you'll gain a lot of experience."

**rodarte:** "There's a lot of growing pains and I'm still going through it now. I took two advanced writing classes in law school and having that experience makes you more confident in your writing."

*how did your law school experience contribute to where you are now?*

**rodarte:** "The law school experience is formulaic in that it provides you a new language, framework and lens to look at

the world. As a practicing Attorney, you are constantly calling upon those tools. Inspired professors will teach you the most, so make sure you give attention to those who are excited about the topic they teach. As an immigration Attorney, I direct services and represent those seeking asylum, but I also do impact litigation. I didn't have a mentor, so I'm a bit green. I found passion in immigration law which has led me in the direction that I am working today."

**marquez:** "When people talk about 'Justices trying to find the law,' I have become disillusioned because you can't divorce yourself from the law and the impact it has on people. It's a big role that you play as an Attorney in either hurting or saving people and the injustices that you have to face. I know that I need to fight through the frustration and focus on best ways to help others."

*what advice would you offer an undergrad who's interested in pursuing law school?*

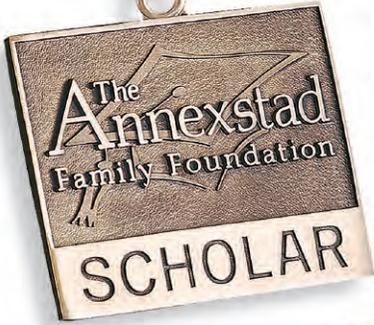
**rodarte:** "Think practically about law school – what can I do with the degree? Are you ready to go into debt and can you support yourself in what you love to do? Financial aid comes in all shapes and sizes, so consider: How can my future career help pay for the debt of going to law school?"

**marquez:** "Loans are very real. Only Yale, Stanford and Harvard give financial aid and, even then, packages are slim. I found better advice in speaking with friends in affinity groups who had attended law school more than from undergraduate advisors because my friends' perspectives were closer to the experience."

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View the entire webinar via the Scholar Portal at [annexstadfamilyfoundation.org](http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org). And if you are considering further education, please research AccessLex Institute as a resource for law or medical scholarships.

# *graduates*



# graduates



**BRANDON ACEVEDO**



Thanks to the generous support of The Annexstad Family Foundation, something that was once a dream has turned into reality. I promise to make you proud!

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY,  
AND ECONOMICS



**JANELLE ALBA GARNER**

My goal is to make an impact wherever I go, with whatever I choose to do. In college I started a socially focused apparel brand called Blessed Threads. I am proud to donate 10-50% of all profits to my NGO partner, Project Pearls in the Philippines, which provides access to basic needs such as food and water, shelter, education, health services and more. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go to college to find and develop my passion and business brand.

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: JUSTICE AND PEACE STUDIES

I cannot thank the Annexstad family enough! I am so excited to have graduated from the University of Notre Dame! I have accepted a job offer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Texas. As a Coastal Engineer in their Hydrology and Hydraulics Coastal Engineering Section, I will continue to work hard and learn as much as I can. After two years, I have the opportunity to advance to working on their major projects on the coast of Texas.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING



**SAMANTHA AMEZQUITA**



**KRYSTEL ANDERSON**

Thank you for your generous support! At the University of Michigan, I discovered my passion for Psychology. I am applying to research labs to gain research experience before going to graduate school to receive a Master's in Social Work or in Library Sciences and Information.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

My mother's incarceration was a defining moment in my life. In the disparity, I found motivation to strive for success and break the mold so, when I have a family, my children will never endure what I did. I'm grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation for their empowering Scholarship because it gave me the opportunity to attend such a prestigious school. I am blessed with an excellent education where I can pursue a career in the field of chemical engineering.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: CHEMICAL ENGINEERING



**NAMIR ARGILAGOS**



**RAPHAEL BANUELOS**

As a first-generation student, I left my family in Arizona to study at one of the country's finest institutions. The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has been a blessing to me, offering support and a chance to grow my brain and my skills. I am now prepared to take on global environmental challenges and repair them through the knowledge that I have gained while at Notre Dame.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# top 10 commencement speeches

by Kristi Kellogg and Noor Brara

## 1. Steve Jobs

**Stanford University, 2005**

“You’ve got to find what you love. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle. As with all matters of the heart, you’ll know when you find it.”

## 2. Michelle Obama

**Tuskegee University, 2015**

“I’ve found that this journey has been incredibly freeing. Because no matter what happened, I had the piece of mind knowing that all of the chatter, the name-calling, the doubting... all of it was just noise. It did not define me, it didn’t change who I was and, most importantly, it couldn’t hold me back.”

## 3. Natalie Portman

**Harvard University, 2015**

“I just directed my first film. I was completely unprepared, but my own ignorance to my own limitations looked like confidence and got me into the director’s chair. Once there, I had to figure it all out, and my belief that I could handle these things, contrary to all evidence of my ability to do so, was half the battle. It was the deepest and most meaningful one of my career.”

## 4. Amy Poehler

**Harvard University, 2011**

“What I have discovered is this: You can’t do it alone... Listen. Say ‘yes.’ Live in the moment. Make sure you play with people who have your back. Make big choices early and often.”

## 5. Meryl Streep

**Barnard College, 2010**

“This is your time and it feels normal to you – but really there is no normal. There’s only change and resistance to it and then more change.”

continued on page 59

Pursuing a degree at Yale was a way to release the personal adversity I faced in high school while taking the next step in my academic journey. The Annexstad Scholarship brought me continuous financial and emotional support, allowing me to focus more on the educational experiences that transformed my life. Your Scholarship recognizes students for all that they are – successes, failures, hardships and more. Now I feel even more empowered to continue pursuing my goals of attending law school and serving others in a way that empowers them, too.



**BESSIE BAUMAN**

YALE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ECONOMICS



**AMELIA BERBERICK**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has allowed me to receive a great education, build long-lasting friendships and have a fighting chance to improve my future. I am grateful beyond words for what you have done for me!

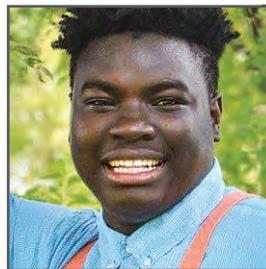
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BUSINESS

I am so grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation. You have supported me financially and soulfully, allowing me time to join a myriad of cultural clubs, which has changed my life forever.



**KAREN BRIZ**

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: SPANISH AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS



**GHAWAYNE CALVIN**

My dream is to become a Physician. As a first-generation and low-income Scholar I was worried as to how I was going to pay for school. But thanks to the generosity of The Annexstad Family Foundation and the professors at Stanford I am one step closer to fulfilling my dream!

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BIOLOGY

*“Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”* | NELSON MANDELA

# graduates

**LORETTA CHAPPELL**



Thank you so much to The Annexstad Family Foundation. Your support throughout my time at the University of Georgia was truly a blessing!

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: B.S. POULTRY SCIENCE

You have given me the hope and courage to chase my dreams. I hope that I will one day be able to return the favor to someone else in need just as you have so graciously done for me!



**HOPE CONN**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



**ANGEL CHESNEY**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship allowed me to focus more on my academics and volunteer activities instead of working two jobs. I plan on pursuing a career in the non-profit sector, working with an organization that motivates youth to pursue education. This is something I hold very near to myself because of all the good that I have experienced as a result of similar efforts and support from the people in my life.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: PHILOSOPHY



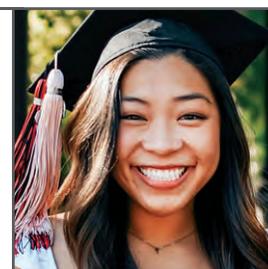
**ELIJAH CONNIFF**

The Annexstad Family Foundation has given me the gift of opportunity. I'm so grateful for the opportunities that I've had because of your generous Scholarship. So many doors have been opened for me, and I can't wait to use this opportunity to open those same doors for the students who come after me.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: STATISTICS AND MANAGEMENT

The University of Georgia and The Annexstad Family Foundation have given me everything that I need to pursue my career goal of becoming a Physician's Assistant. Thank you for believing in me.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION



**CELINE DANG**

**About the Graduate Coverwomen**  
Meet 2018 University of Michigan Graduates Ariana McCowin (left) who received her B.A. in Psychology and Samantha Sims (right) who received her B.A. in History and English. ▶



**RAVEN DAVIDSON**

College taught me more than I expected: academics, skills, service, reflection, relationships and overcoming challenges. The experiences I have had shaped me into the woman I am today; I am more understanding, mindful, curious and capable. After graduation, I started working in a neuroscience research lab, which I hope will set me on the path to running my own lab. While the future is unknown, I want to make my mark in the science community while filling my endless curiosity with the magic of scientific discovery. The future is exciting and the experiences and connections I made in college will help guide me through my aspirations, failures, successes and challenges during this journey.

BOSTON COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: NEUROSCIENCE

# top 10 commencement speeches

*continued from page 57*

**6. Barack Obama**  
**Howard University, 2016**

“You have to go through life with more than just passion for change; you need a strategy. I’ll repeat that. I want you to have passion, but you have to have a strategy. Not just awareness, but action. Not just hashtags, but votes.”

**7. Kerry Washington**  
**George Washington University, 2013**

“You and you alone are the only person who can live the life that can write the story that you were meant to tell.”

**8. Conan O’Brien**  
**Dartmouth College, 2011**

“There are few things more liberating in this life than having your worst fear realized. Today I tell you that whether you fear it or not, disappointment will come. The beauty is that through disappointment you can gain clarity, and with clarity comes conviction and true originality... Work hard, be kind and amazing things will happen.”

**9. J.K. Rowling**  
**Harvard University, 2008**

“I stopped pretending to be anything than what I was. My greatest fear had been realized. I had an old typewriter and a big idea. Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.”

**10. Oprah Winfrey**  
**Harvard University, 2013**

“Learn from every mistake because every experience, encounter and particularly your mistakes are there to teach you and force you into being more who you are. And then figure out what is the next right move. And the key to life is to develop an internal moral, emotional G.P.S. that can tell you which way to go.”

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship is the reason I was able to embark on the amazing journey of my college career at the University of Notre Dame. I am proud to be working as a Project Developer for Habitat for Humanity International.



**BRANDON DAVIS**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ARCHITECTURE



**CHRISTINA DULAL**

Because of The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship, I have graduated from my lifelong dream school, the University of Notre Dame, completely debt-free. I am working as a Research Assistant within the University of Pennsylvania’s Radiology department before starting medical school.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PRE-MED

My father passed away when I was a little girl, and I watched as my mother struggled to provide for my two younger brothers and me. Her struggle and perseverance was inspiring and I want to make my parents proud by working just as hard. My goal is to work as a Registered Pediatric Nurse before going back to school to earn my Master’s in Nursing to become certified as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. I am thankful to the Annexstad family for having faith in me and my dream of helping future generations in meaningful ways. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.



**ASHA DURGAPERSAD**

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: NURSING



**DAYSHA EGSON**

Thank you to the entire Annexstad Family Foundation. It has been a wonderful four years at the University of Georgia and it would never have been possible without help from you!

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BIOLOGY

*“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved.”* | HELEN KELLER

# graduates

**O  
EGUH**



Receiving The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship really allowed me to follow my dreams at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Thank you!

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
AT CHAPEL HILL  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: MANAGEMENT AND SOCIETY**



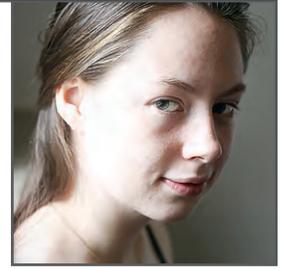
**GABRIELLE  
ELLIOTT  
BRAULT**

Georgetown gave me a dynamic learning experience filled with incredible research methods and strategies to finance Chinese policy in Latin America. I started as a full-time analyst with JP Morgan Chase through their Corporate Analyst Development Program with a focus in the private sector in corporate social responsibility. I plan on going to law school or getting a Master's in Poverty Studies. Eventually, I hope to start a non-profit organization that increases access to career and technical education to underrepresented groups in Latin America.

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREES: FOREIGN SERVICE  
AND GLOBAL SCIENCE**

The Annexstad Scholarship means so much to me; it's a testament to my journey, my hard work and determination. You have made the impossible possible. You gave me the opportunity to breathe and focus on my passion, and reach out to those who are struggling through my own work and represent the underrepresented, as many of my own personal issues with identity were ignored or suppressed as I grew up. I want to pair my knowledge and artistic ability with humanitarian efforts, to make art about important issues and bring it to the audiences that need it the most.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: THEATRE ARTS AND ENGLISH**



**MELANIE  
FELLOWS**



**JAVIER  
FIGUEROA**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has allowed me to be financially secure, educationally confident, and focused on achieving my goals.

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: NURSING**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has relieved the financial burden of my education but, even more importantly to me, you have been a constant and reliable mentor during my time at the University of Alabama. I will be going on to pursue an MBA with a focus on Operations Management and Supervision.

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: SPORTS SCIENCE, KINESIOLOGY,  
AND EXERCISE SCIENCE**



**NICHOLAS  
GANGWER**



**DANIEL  
GARCIA**

I want to use my education to give back. Whether that is working with non-profits, giving money to those in positions similar to mine, or working towards large-scale reforms in the American education system, I want to produce change on small and large scales to work towards a true equality. Your Scholarship put me in such a privileged position. Now I can focus on building up others as you have blessed and built up your Scholars.

**POMONA COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS**

# top 10 *master class* sessions

Looking to be inspired or reignite special interests? Subscribe to Master Class and check out these entertaining sessions:

**1. Usher teaches *The Art of Performance***

You may not be looking to perform on stage, but this class can help you find and use inspiration to your advantage.

**2. Sara Blakely teaches *Self-Made Entrepreneurship***

Blakely gives practical tips that are immediately applicable when creating a business, selling a product and developing a team.

**3. Lynnette Marrero and Ryan Chetiyawardana teach *Mixology***

This dynamic duo invites you to tap into your creative side and up your bartending confidence when entertaining for any occasion.

**4. Bob Iger teaches *Business Strategy and Leadership***

The Disney CEO shares fascinating stories with nuance, painting a colorful picture of the years he spent working with Steve Jobs.

**5. Gordon Ramsay teaches *Cooking***

The seven-star Michelin chef talks you through how he's cooking and why he's using certain ingredients.

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship made it possible for me to attend Georgetown University and focus on my future.



**ELSIE GARCIA**

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: PUBLIC POLICY



**NAYIVE GAYTAN**

The generosity from The Annexstad Family Foundation has given me the chance to go to one of the best universities in the country. You have given me a tremendous opportunity – one that I will be grateful for the rest of my life.

EMORY UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: HISTORY AND SPANISH

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has given me a first-class education while at the same time giving me an endless support network, something I have wanted my entire life. You mean the world to me.



**ALIVIA GORE**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING



**REBECCA HALLER**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has changed my life! I am very excited to begin med school at the University of North Dakota. I'm looking forward to taking the next step toward my goal of becoming a Radiologist and being able to help those in need.

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: MUSIC

*“No matter how you define success, you will need to be resilient, empowered, authentic and limber to get there.” | JOANIE CONNELL*

# graduates

**JANESSA HARMS**



I have had personal experience with poverty, racism, sexism and classism, and have faced challenges of being the child of deaf adults. This has given me a broader and deeper understanding of social issues and how they play a huge role in how the American society functions. My goal is to practice law focused upon human rights. Thank you for believing in me and giving me the chance to give others a voice.

COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: PHILOSOPHY

Having this Scholarship is an extremely important part of my life, it has allowed me to continue to pursue my college academic career without the financial worry that has been a burden most of my life. As a biracial young woman, I want to be able to find my voice, shape my own beliefs on the world and earn a degree to support and inspire my younger family members. My love for education is a strong and bursting force that follows me always and has continued to follow me with the help of The Annexstad Family Foundation.



**MARIAH HENRY**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY



**ARIEL HERRERA**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has given me a chance to further broaden my knowledge to better the future. At the University of Redlands, I became part of a community that believes in me and the vision of better society, and for this, I could not be more grateful. Thank you!

UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT



**JALA HAWKINS**

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for making my dreams possible. College seemed impossible and you have allowed me to live at school and focus on my passion for Mathematics!

SPELMAN COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: MATHEMATICS

To receive any kind of patronage is truly an honor. I'm so proud to say that the Annexstad family decided to choose me. The support I received helped me so much through college and I cannot wait to pay it forward. Thank you.



**FERNANDO HERRERA**

UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTING

2009 University of Notre Dame Graduate Maureen S. Willkom who received a B.A. in Psychology. ➤



**SAMANTHA HOANGLONG**

You have given me the financial freedom to pursue a degree, the mental freedom to focus on my studies and extracurricular involvement and the social freedom to break out of the cycle. You have inspired me to change the lives of others!

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREES: COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM

# top 10 *master class* sessions

*continued from page 61*

**6. *Chris Voss teaches the Art of Negotiation***

This former FBI Hostage Investigator takes expert-level negotiation and breaks it down into digestible concepts to use everyday.

**7. *Anna Wintour teaches Creativity and Leadership***

Wintour speaks to building a vision, convictions and a brand as much as believing in yourself.

**8. *Neil deGrasse Tyson teaches Scientific Thinking and Communication***

Viewers find the classes incredibly interesting to watch while also helping them develop ways to communicate complex topics at work.

**9. *Tan France teaches Style for Everyone***

France walks you through dressing for your proportions and knowing your style to better develop a capsule wardrobe.

**10. *Dr. Jane Goodall teaches Conservation***

Goodall shares how her time studying chimpanzees taught her trust and compassion while also sending the message that you need to connect with those you wish to change.

My future focus is to research for a more sustainable renewable energy and its large-scale implementation in the world economy. I have worked in construction since I was thirteen and, during this time, I became fascinated with the global energy crisis. The Annexstad Scholarship allowed me to double major and bridge the gap between the technical engineering side of renewable energy and the business aspect of the industry. I plan to start my own renewable energy-focused company that can make a significant impact in the world's energy market.



**NATHAN  
JEFFRIES**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: ENERGY ENGINEERING AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



**SONNY  
JENEMA**

Thank you for giving me hope and a future. Your Scholarship taught my family and me that we can chase our dreams even when the odds are stacked against us.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS

In a life full of unknowns, receiving this Scholarship and graduating from Spelman College has been one of my life's highlights. You have lifted financial burdens and given me the opportunity to become involved.



**IKYA  
KENYATTA**

SPELMAN COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



**IRENE  
KIM**

I was looking at taking out massive student loans, but The Annexstad Family Foundation saved me and allowed me to follow my dreams. Thank you.

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

*“Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving;  
we get stronger and more resilient.”* | STEVE MARABOLI

# graduates

**MEDHINA KOLEINI**



Facing adversity made me the person I am today. I am proud to be an Annexstad Family Foundation Scholar. You have given me the support to study, work hard and achieve my degrees in Public Policy Analysis and Political Science. Now I am armed and ready to make the world a better place. Thank you!

**DUKE UNIVERSITY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREES: PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

As a first-generation African American student, I have a strong urge to prevail and set an example for my younger siblings. I am extremely thankful to The Annexstad Family Foundation. If it were not for you, I would not have been able to attend college. Your support and faith in me means more than I could ever describe. Thank you!

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREE: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**



**EMILIO LAMBA**

Attending the University of Mississippi has been my dream since I was a little girl. I am beyond thankful to have been selected for The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship. It opened up so many doors for me that I never thought were possible. I am forever grateful.



**LAUREL LEE**

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREES: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY**



**RITA KWAKYE**

For me, The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship was the first assurance that I had support and encouragement outside of my family at college. I cannot thank you enough.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES**  
**CLASS OF 2020**  
**DEGREES: FINANCE AND MARKETING**

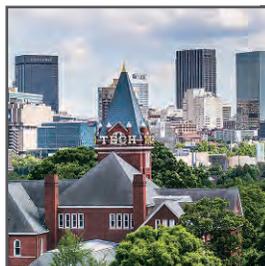
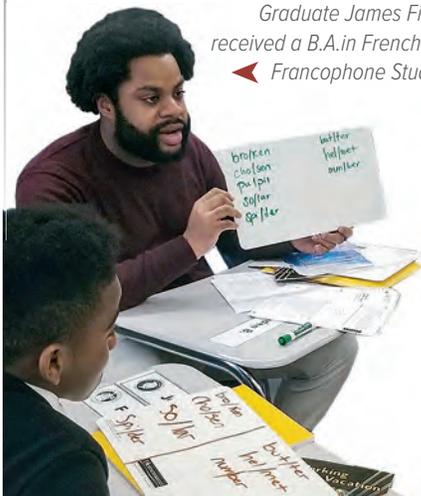
"Thank you" hardly expresses how grateful I am for your continuous support, encouraging messages and taking the time to meet with us every fall.

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**CLASS OF 2020**  
**DEGREES: ANTHROPOLOGY AND PEACE STUDIES**



**ADRIAN LORE**

*2019 University of Pennsylvania Graduate James Fisher received a B.A. in French and Francophone Studies.*



**AVERY LUKE**

I am so honored to be an Annexstad Family Foundation Scholar from the Georgia Institute of Technology. I am excited to share that I have started my career in Biomedical Engineering!

**GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREE: BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING**

# 11 best locations to be a *digital* nomad

according to  
[www.websiteplanet.com](http://www.websiteplanet.com)

More and more employees are choosing to embrace a location-independent, technology-enabled lifestyle that allows them to travel and work remotely anywhere in the world.

To take advantage of this lifestyle, it's important to fine-tune your skills according to what's in demand. You can join a digital nomad community to gain insights on the best location for you.

1. **Prague, Czech Republic:**  
*Best Historic City*
2. **Koh Lanta, Thailand:**  
*Best Island Paradise*
3. **Playa del Carmen, Mexico:**  
*Best Foodie Destination*
4. **Taipei, Taiwan:**  
*Safest Destination*
5. **Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain:** *Best Year-Round City*
6. **Belgrade, Serbia:**  
*Friendliest Destination*
7. **Lisbon, Portugal:**  
*Europe's Biggest Hotspot*
8. **Medellin, Colombia:**  
*Best Startup Destination*
9. **Tbilisi, Georgia:**  
*Best Central Asia Destination*
10. **Tallinn, Estonia:**  
*Best City for New Business Owners*
11. **Buenos Aires, Argentina:**  
*Best Cultural Hub*

I was born and grew up in Lebanon as an Armenian and immigrated to the United States in 2012. I come from a low-income family from Montebello, California. I will be forever thankful for The Annexstad Family Foundation for their generosity. Because of this Foundation, many people like myself are able to afford college and pursue our dreams. I'd like to use my education from Georgetown University to represent low-income families and underprivileged youth in government.



**ALEX  
MANOUKIAN**

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: GOVERNMENT AND ARABIC



**JAYLEN  
MARTINEZ**

I love learning and want to pursue my dreams professionally. I appreciate the faith and support that you have in me. Knowing that someone believes in me makes me feel more confident that I can succeed.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ENGLISH

Thank you Annexstad family, you have helped me graduate from college! I could never have afforded it on my own. I am getting my Master's in Social Work from Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis. After graduation, I will work at an agency until I complete my hours and then continue as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker working with individuals or groups that deal with mental health.



**JOSELINE  
MATIAS**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: SOCIAL WORK



**ROMANE  
MAYS**

I plan to use my versatile degree to pursue careers in sales and security. Alongside pursuing my career, I will continue to stay involved in my community and provide college advice and guidance to local high school students. I plan to be a resource for future first-generation students and become an active alumnus on my campus. Thank you, Annexstad family!

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

*“Life is a test of many things – of our convictions and priorities, our faith and our faithfulness, our patience and our resilience, and in the end, our ultimate desires.”* | SHERI L. DEW

# graduates

**JESSICA  
MI**



I've been in the foster care system since I was 14 years old and have lived in my own apartment with housemates throughout high school. Those experiences have definitely shaped me into who I am today and have helped me learn what I value. I want to give back to underprivileged youth in those communities. I am also interested in the environment and plan to pursue a career in social responsibility and sustainability.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: HUMAN BIOLOGY

Thank you Annexstad Family Foundation! My aspirations are to help rural small businesses strengthen their local economies without creating urbanization. Eventually I will go on to get my Master's in Public Administration.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ECONOMICS



**KAYLEE  
MONDRELLA**



**ASHLEY  
MONTAG**

Thank you, Al and Cathy! Your investment in the lives of students makes a palpable difference. I have been blessed with several character-shaping experiences that were made possible because of you, and for that I am forever grateful!

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: PHARMACY



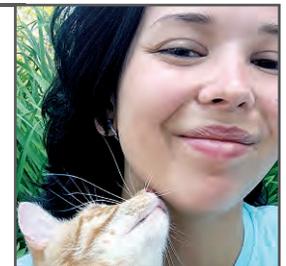
**HUNTER  
MOLLETT**

A big thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for their incredible support and my degree from Harvard University. They have not only provided me with access to an education, but also to a new, better life.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Your Scholarship means the world to me. It gave me the ability to go to college because without it I wouldn't have been able to afford it.

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREES: FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION



**TAYLOR  
MORITZ**



**KELSIE  
MUHA**

I was raised by a single mother of four children and, as the youngest child, I am the first to attend college. Even in the toughest of circumstances, my mother always found a way to provide us with everything we needed and more. Her strong independence and her ability to find the good in life motivated me to make her proud. I never dreamed that I could go to Notre Dame, yet with the help of the Annexstad family, I am able to do just that! I know that I will be able to attain my academic dreams and one day work as an Applied Mathematician for NASA.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: APPLIED AND COMPUTATIONAL MATHEMATICS  
AND STATISTICS

# empathetic leadership finding the right balance

by Sara Sabin, FastCompany.com

The pandemic has taught us the importance of being an empathetic leader so our team members feel listened to and have clear expectations. Creating an empathetic culture means people will stay longer and be a more engaged workforce. So, how do we set boundaries and maintain productivity?

## **blend empathy into tough conversations**

Try putting yourself in your employees' shoes and consider how they might feel. Knowing what you know and applying your own self-awareness, what is the most sensitive way to approach the conversation? If you practice transparency, it may keep the relationship intact and make the employee more receptive to what you are saying.

## **be very clear on expectations**

An employer–employee relationship is a two-way street. An employee should know what is expected of them and have the flexibility to comment on and meet those expectations while asking for help along the way. And an employer should provide the support structure to enable employees to meet expectations.

## **prioritize accountability**

Once expectations are clear, all parties need to hold each other accountable to meet them. Relevant peer-to-peer and management structures should be in place to support that.

The reality of being a leader is that sometimes tough decisions need to be made. If expectations are consistently not met, then understanding why is key. Once the reasons are understood and support is provided, then behavioral change of the employee needs to follow.

I'm Native American and grew up in a poor and struggling family, which has motivated me to continue my education so that I can contribute to my community and other tribal communities. My focus is to improve the state of education in places where it is not properly funded. Thank you for this amazing opportunity!



**MIKAELA  
MURPHY**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: AMERICAN STUDIES



**NINA  
PELLETIER**

You gave me the financial and emotional support I needed, thank you! With my degree, I hope to change how people view the world.

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship closed the gap between dream and reality for me. With your support, I have received an excellent education debt-free with the hopes of achieving my lifelong goal of attending medical school. Education levels the playing field for everyone, regardless of background or upbringing. With my degree, I hope to help the sick by furthering the study of the brain and how it interacts with the body.



**KEATON  
PENDERGRAST**

EMORY UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: ANTHROPOLOGY AND HUMAN BIOLOGY



**CIARA  
PLUMLEY**

I was so close to throwing in the towel on attending my dream school, but your Scholarship opened doors and gave me a support system that has meant the world to me.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

*"She stood in the storm and when the wind did not  
blow her way, she adjusted her sails."*

| ELIZABETH EDWARDS

# graduates

**MIKAELA  
RAMSEY**



My mother is an amazing woman and inspires me. Money has always been tight, but your Scholarship has enabled me to pursue the future I have always dreamed about. I am focused on getting my Master's in Education and either becoming a Language Immersion Teacher or going to law school to become a Lawyer for children in juvenile prison or in the foster care system. I want to work with children and make the world a better place through the lives that I touch.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: SPANISH

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship isn't just a Scholarship; I gained a family who cared about my well-being. It means so much to me that you are interested in students like us. I am taking a year to work and save up for law school in 2022.



**CHRISTOPHER  
RIVERS**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: POLITICAL SCIENCE



**TAYLOR  
ROBERSON**

Attending school as a first-generation college student can make one feel like they are always a step behind everyone else. The ability to graduate without student loans means getting a head start on life right out of college. I could not be more appreciative of what The Annexstad Family Foundation has done for me.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: FINANCE



**VICTORIA  
RENFROE**

Thank you Annexstad family for your generosity! My plans are to attend law school and become a bilingual Attorney. In high school, I was diagnosed with Von Hippel-Lindau, which is the same genetic form of cancer that killed my father when I was 11. I have had multiple surgeries so my college fund went directly to pay my healthcare expenses. Your Scholarship gave me a full education, a future career and a life worth living.

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: BUSINESS LAW AND  
ADMINISTRATION  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

I am so grateful for the support The Annexstad Family Foundation provided during my undergraduate career. I am so excited to begin my career this summer as a Civil Engineer in Florida!

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: CIVIL ENGINEERING



**RILEY  
SALDANA**



**MIKAELA  
SAM-HINTON**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship provided me with the help needed to succeed at Boston College, pay my mother back for all that she has sacrificed and to create a better life for myself. I want to use my education to study criminals and victims of violent crime so society can better help these people and protect targeted groups such as Black women. I would also like to produce and edit documentaries that tell stories of people who often do not get to have their stories told. The Annexstads have allowed me to envision a future in which these aspirations are possible!

BOSTON COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: SOCIOLOGY

# books that ceos love

by Beck Bamberger, *FastCompany.com*

Notable CEOs share an unexpected trait beyond their millionaire status: they're voracious readers. Check out these books that have profoundly impacted their businesses enough that they reread them regularly.

## ***When Breath Becomes Air***

by Paul Kalanithi

*When Breath Becomes Air* reminds Medina Baitemirova, founder and CEO of **clinica.com**, that her life is much bigger than it seems in terms of her work and dreams but also in terms of people that surround her.

## ***The Entire Harry Potter Series***

by J. K. Rowling

Christie Marchese, founder and CEO of **picturemotion.com**, says she rereads the whole saga every other year. J.K. Rowling created an incredible world that she enjoys revisiting. "Plus, Dumbledore gives great advice, and I'm inspired by Hermione's activism for the rights of house elves."

## ***Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life***

by Byron Katie

"Start-ups involve so many ups and downs, and it's easy to tie my own sense of worth to the company's and become too attached to outcomes," says Vlada Bortnik, cofounder of the video communication app **Marco Polo**. "This book helps me maintain healthy distinctions and reminds me to enjoy the journey."

continued on page 71

I want to help communities improve the healthcare provided for people – people who are underrepresented, have a language barrier or don't have access to health services. Growing up with a single parent, seeing my mother work hard every day, made me value hard work and determination. It's important to fight for what you want, even if the odds are against you. The Annexstad Family Foundation gave me the opportunity to work towards my dreams! I am very excited for my future where I can work in creating more health/medical awareness to give back to my community! Thank you.

BETHEL UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: COMMUNITY HEALTH



**LIZANIA  
SANCHEZ-  
SANCHEZ**



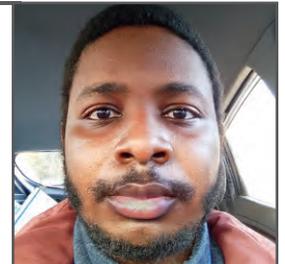
**MOLLIE  
SCHILLING**

Getting accepted to the University of Georgia and being selected to be an Annexstad Scholar has boosted my confidence and reassured me that I deserve a quality education and the opportunity to build the career of my choice.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: ENGLISH; THEATRE; ENTERTAINMENT  
AND MEDIA STUDIES

I cannot express enough how grateful I am for The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship. It is more than just an opportunity for me; it is a path to success, and I know it is going to take me to amazing places!

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: BACHELOR OF GENERAL STUDIES



**DAVON  
SHACKLEFORD**



**XAVIER  
SMITH**

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has allowed me to live independently and follow my passions at Clemson University! I am very excited to begin my career in the Biological Sciences industry.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

*"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you. Never excuse yourself. Never pity yourself. Be a hard master to yourself – and be lenient to everybody else."*

| HENRY WARD BEECHER

# graduates

**ALEX SOAS**



Watching my father die in front my eyes as I felt his hand turn cold in mine was something that I will never forget. I started to question whether or not I'd be able to get through the rest of high school and go to college, not only because of the emotional hardship but also due to the fact that my mom hadn't worked since when she had breast cancer in 2008 and didn't return to work when my father became ill in 2010. Receiving your Scholarship made it possible for me go to college without the worry of financials and pursue my dream of becoming a Pediatrician. The Scholarship also serves as a reminder that no matter how difficult things become, it's important to never lose sight of your dream and to keep working towards it, just as my parents did when they came to this country.

EMORY UNIVERISTY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES HUMAN HEALTH AND NUTRITION



**DAVID SODERMAN**

Receiving The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship really allowed me to follow my passion to pursue my MBA while also beginning my mechanical engineering career at Plexus.

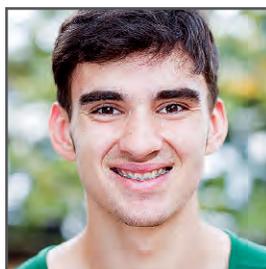
MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

I am working as a Preschool Teacher while also looking for an internship to work at a treatment center to work with adolescents. I plan to continue my education by getting my master's or Ph.D. and helping adolescents in my community with any mental and physical disorders. Thank you for believing in me and supporting me in achieving my dreams.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY



**JOCELYN SOL-LOPEZ**



**STEELE SPEELMAN**

Your Scholarship is more than someone paying for my education. It represents a group of people who believe in me and my knowledge to make substantial change in the world.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: NEUROSCIENCE AND COGNITIVE STUDIES

You have given me the hope and courage to chase my dreams. I hope that I will one day be able to return the favor to someone else in need just as The Annexstad Family Foundation has so graciously done for me! Thank you for gifting me with the education so that I can begin my career in research and development in the automotive industry.

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



**ALLISON STORM**



**ERYKAH TAYLOR-MOORE**

Your Foundation's Scholarship serves as a reminder that there are people willing to help students in challenging situations and that a person's financial situation is not a limit or barrier to that person's success.

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: BIOLOGY

# books that ceos love

continued from page 69

## **Blue Ocean Strategy**

by Renée Mauborgne and W. Chan Kim

“I tend to stick to entrepreneurial classics,” says Michelle Cordeiro Grant, CEO of **wearlively.com**. “*Blue Ocean* forces you to focus on how to create market share rather than take market share, in order to build a long-term, successful business.”

## **Dare to Lead**

by Brene Brown

“This is the one business book that I return to frequently, as our company has scaled quickly over the past three years,” says John Paasonen, founder and CEO of digital mortgage platform **himaxwell.com**. “It’s not a typical leadership book filled with hyperbole, but a practical guide for managers to address the emotion of leading a team.”

## **Thinking, Fast and Slow**

by Daniel Kahneman

Evan Maridou, founder and CEO of **getmilo.com** says, “This book has challenged my way of thinking and how I make decisions. The lessons can help CEOs understand the best way to market to customers, communicate more effectively with their teams and raise money from investors.”

## **The Boys in the Boat**

by Daniel James Brown

As a fan of this novel set during the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany, Julie Hansen, U.S. CEO of **babbelforbusiness.com**, believes this true story teaches the importance of grit, perseverance and hard work, as well as teamwork and putting the group before the self. It’s an incredible story of triumph against all odds.

Thank you immensely to The Annexstad Family Foundation for making attending college a possibility for my family. You have placed your faith in me and my education would not be possible without you. I will always be grateful! I am currently working with conservation efforts in helping cities transition to cleaner forms of energy.



**ALEXIS  
TINOCO**

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY



**CYNTHIA  
TRUJILLO**

Growing up in an urban city full of diverse people allowed me to be compassionate and open-minded to everyone’s different life story. There were students who had difficult homes but had so much potential to succeed and who just needed someone to believe in them. My focus is to get my Master’s in Social Work so I can give youths the tools and support to see that despite any obstacles they may face there is still room to succeed. I am extremely grateful for The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship. You believed in me and gave me an opportunity to work towards my goal.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREE: SOCIOLOGY

I am driven to succeed because I have had kind, thoughtful and impactful people like the Annexstads to believe in me. Thank you for supporting my future career in Biomedical Sciences.



**HANNAH  
VAN DALEN**

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
CLASS OF 2020  
DEGREE: BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES



**MIGUEL  
VELASCO**

My prospects for the future are incredibly bright! My focus is to engage in long-term research projects with hopes of generating productive discourse regarding science ethics and reproductive rights. The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has made my ultimate purpose all the more feasible by allowing me to focus on holistically educating myself.

CARLETON COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2021  
DEGREES: CHEMISTRY, BIOCHEMISTRY AND PHILOSOPHY

*“I can be changed by what happens to me.*

*But I refuse to be reduced by it.” | MAYA ANGELOU*

# graduates

**BRITNEY VONGDARA**



Because of the generosity of The Annexstad Family Foundation, I have the opportunity to live a life that feels too good to be true. I am thankful for the freedom to choose my path instead of complying with the power structures set before me.

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREES: SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**



**HALEY WARD**

Thank you for everything The Annexstad Family Foundation does. My undergraduate degree would not have been possible without your support!

**WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**CLASS OF 2020**  
**DEGREE: LEGAL STUDIES**

Without The Annexstad Family Foundation, Georgia Institute of Technology was just a dream. Now armed with my degree, I can begin my career in Industrial and Product Design. You have made my dreams become a reality!

**GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREE: INDUSTRIAL AND PRODUCT DESIGN**



**JACOB WARE**



**WINTER WIDDIFIELD**

I will be forever grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation. I can still remember the anxiety I felt right before I entered my first semester. I had taken out the maximum amount of student loans, scraped together just a little bit of money to pay what was leftover and I entered that semester not knowing how I was going to pay for the next one. Your Scholarship has changed my life. Not only was it my biggest source of motivation, but it also meant the world to me to know that someone believed in me. I am proud to say that I am pursuing a Master's in Coastal Marine And Wetland Studies at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina.

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREE: GENETICS**

Your Scholarship means opportunity. As a first-generation graduate, I have been on a quest to do something that no one else has done. My success has an impact on my entire family. Now we all know that anything is possible!

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**  
**CLASS OF 2021**  
**DEGREE: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS**



**HANNAH ZANIBI**



*2019 University of Alabama Graduates  
(l-r): Austin Goodwin, Ana Sinyavina,  
◀ Molly Morgan and Austin Ryals.*

# high point university's success coaches

## advance the first-year experience

High Point University has quickly become a key partner for the Annexstad Family Foundation. The Premier Life Skills University® ensures all undergraduates are prepared for life in and out of the classroom. High Point offers its students the chance to develop life skills, foster character and gain insight from experiential learning and through academics. With the first *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholar named in 2019, High Point's programming aligns with the Foundation's mission of supporting the next generation of leaders.

As part of the institution's holistic leadership development and student support model, every first-year student is assigned a Student Success Coach. More than academic advisors, these Coaches create a smaller niche community to promote engagement academically, socially and professionally all while establishing a sense of belonging.

The Student Support ecosystem at HPU was intentionally designed to promote self-efficacy amongst undergraduates.

In Fall 2019, High Point expanded its Student Success Program services to a virtual format by introducing the RISE app. **Stephanie Crofton**, the Vice President for Experiential Learning and Career Development shares, "We developed a freshmen-focused program where students gain credit for learning life skills, going to career and professional development offices, attending a study abroad fair and learning about undergraduate research possibilities. A quick QR code scan logs their activities and activates credit badges."

In addition to coaching and campus-wide services, Annexstad *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholars have the opportunity to actively participate in High Point's Bonner Leader Program. Since 2013, High Point has partnered with the Bonner Foundation to offer leadership development and service openings for low-income, first-generation students. Those in the program serve 6-8 hours per week at non-profits and social innovation projects in the Greater High Point area. Director of Service Learning, **Dr. Joseph Blosser**

shares "A lot of what we do is connecting communities with institutions." The profound positive impact of the Bonner Leaders has created a ripple effect in the region. Students participating in the program typically share their work with classmates, friends and peers engaging a greater number of High Point students into service and community work. With two current Annexstad students involved in the Bonner Leader Program, Scholars can create tangible impact with the support of the University.

**Dr. Nido Qubein**, President of High Point University shares, "Education has the power to create transformation. High Point University is grateful for The Annexstad Family Foundation and their partnership as we seek to transform the lives of talented first-generation college students. When these deserving students are equipped with premier life skills, an education grounded in their values and supported by caring people, they are capable of changing the world for the better. We are proud to contribute to this transformational journey of so many future leaders."



# sincerest gratitude

The Annexstad Family Foundation board and staff express our sincerest gratitude to our campus partners, campus officials, Alumni and Scholars for navigating through this past academic year. This year has reinforced our ideal that relationships lead to impact and change. The conversations and connections made in this past year have transformed our organization from providing a single Scholarship to over a thousand.

In the words of our founder, Al Annexstad, “The relationships that we develop and more importantly, the relationships that we maintain with our network of college partners, Alumni and Scholars are the key to creating impact and changing the lives of the young people our Foundation supports.”

As we look towards the future, we look forward to strengthening our connections and community.

We thank you for your continued partnership.  
| Al and Cathy Annexstad

*“Higher education can truly be a great equalizer in life...  
and, with the right partnerships, it can help craft  
the next generation of leaders for America.”*

| AL AND CATHY ANNEXSTAD  
CO-FOUNDERS

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**Bethel University**

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**California State University, San Bernardino**

**Carleton College**

**Clemson University**

**College of Saint Benedict**

**College of the Desert**

**Duke University**

**Emory University**

**Georgetown University**

**Georgia Institute of Technology**

**Gonzaga University**

**Gustavus Adolphus College**

**Harvard University**

**High Point University**

**Hillsdale College**

**Indiana University, Bloomington**

**Michigan Technological University**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

**Northern Michigan University**



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Dan Moen

## **WEBINAR CONTRIBUTORS**

Courtney Bell-Duncan, Ph.D.  
Naren Briar  
Lauren Brown  
Elicia Dennis  
Reidy Dukes  
Oscar Gonzalez, Ph.D.  
Unique Hayes, M.A.  
Cavonte Johnson  
Micki Kidder  
April Lewis  
Azucena Marquez  
Nikki Mills  
Tasha Murdoff  
Jodi Patrick Holschuh, Ph.D.  
Juan Rangel  
Hayden Rodarte, J.D.  
Mark Sanders  
Shawn Sanford  
Winter Widdifield

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**APRIL LEWIS  
SPELMAN COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2020**

*“Do something you are passionate about and you will gain skills that you can apply everywhere. And Graduates, remember your story and pour yourselves into the next generation.”*

# THE Annexstad FAMILY FOUNDATION

21 YEARS OF BUILDING  
LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

*“Great achievements come from unyielding  
perseverance and the relationships you foster  
with the people who most believe in you.”*

| AL AND CATHY ANNEXSTAD

