

Stockton Foundation Scholarship Recipients Thank Donors at Annual Recognition Dinner

For Immediate Release; photos on [Flickr](#); list of [scholarship recipients](#)

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Galloway, NJ – More than 165 Stockton University Foundation scholarship recipients met the donors who have generously supported their academic endeavors during Stockton's annual scholarship recognition dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 18.

This academic year, the Stockton Foundation will award 400 students with financial awards totaling \$645,000. Philip T. Ellmore, chief development officer and executive director of the Stockton University Foundation, told the nearly 150 donors and friends of the university that the dinner "reminds us why we do what we do at Stockton. So many of you chose to make a difference."

One representative from each of Stockton's academic schools delivered a speech to thank their donors and show them the impact of their gifts. The student speakers were Jade Fleming, of Ventnor, representing the School of Arts and Humanities, Joseph C. Epps, of Cherry Hill, representing the School of Business, Nicole A. Vancil, of Forked River, representing the School of Education, Elizabeth A. Paton, of Barnegat, representing the School of General Studies, Jessica R. Mahon, of Barnegat, representing the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies, Chel-Lei C. Twyman, of Coatesville, PA, representing the School of Health Sciences, Frank C. Malatino, of Ship Bottom, representing the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Michael J. Tumminia, of Neptune, representing the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Interim President Harvey Kesselman said, "Scholarship recipients regularly tell us that the financial support they receive is incredibly helpful and makes all the difference in their ability to gain their education. When someone believes they deserve the scholarship, it also inspires them to do well."

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For Michael Tumminia, there were tears of joy when he received his Stockton acceptance letter in 2013, just one week after receiving a life-saving brain surgery.

“I could not contain my excitement after learning how precious our time is and how wisely I was going to be spending it,” he said.

Just weeks into his first semester, Tumminia felt at home on Stockton’s campus and was asked by Justin Ostrofsky, assistant professor of Psychology, to get involved with a psychological research project. However, he faced challenges too.

“I suffered from severe PTSD and panic disorder stemming from my brain surgery. During this dark and devastating time, Stockton University was my oasis and the faculty were my personal heroes. My classes, the lectures, my research and even my homework were a safe haven during my personal suffering,” he said.

Tumminia is the recipient of the Follett Bookstore Presidential Scholarship and the Stockton Hughes Family Scholarship, established by alumni Sean and Valerie Hughes.

Frank Malatino, a two-time Stockton graduate in Chemistry and Physics, has traveled to present his research and has published two academic papers. He noted that his experiences while working under Jason Shulman, assistant professor of Physics, have “helped to prepare me for my graduate work and the rest of my professional life.”

Donors John and Helen DeMario, of Port Republic, sat with Malatino for dinner. The DeMarios established a scholarship for science students in memory of their son, Jonathan, who was Bioengineering Student of the Year at Rutgers in 2006 and worked for FEMA and later the FAA.

“In memory of our son, we established a scholarship for a science student. He had something called multiple myeloma, which is a blood cancer, and it may be environmentally related, but there’s no conclusive evidence of that. But, we are hoping that a science or medical student can work in that field to help find a cure for that or other cancers or a science student who is diligent in environmental studies who can help the planet by making it less toxic and finding ways to cure problems such as waste dumps,” said John DeMario, a 1976 Stockton graduate.

“Johnny was very diligent, really on-point. He knew his stuff. He was going to meetings in Washington at a time when he couldn’t walk to talk about his concerns with groundwater safety. He had a love for science,” DeMario said.

Paul Herron, executive director of the Bay-Atlantic Symphony, attended the dinner with his wife, Patricia, as a supporter, alumnus and soon-to-be doctoral student. Herron earned an MBA from Stockton and was recently accepted into the new Doctorate in Organizational Leadership program.

Herron said, “The Bay-Atlantic Symphony has decided that they want to support musical education to help develop the programs, specifically instrumental. We think it’s important for us to help the new generation of musicians come about and this is a perfect way for us to help them. We think the bond between the symphony and Stockton is really close and we think this is a way of making it closer and providing for future generations of musicians.”

A number of Stockton faculty and staff were in attendance as donors and members of the scholarship selection committee, which had the difficult task of reviewing 775 qualified scholarship applications this year.

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Diane Falk, professor of Social Work, has established a \$25,000 endowment for the Master of Social Work Program. "Social work is not something you go into for the money. You go into it for the passion. Students deserve the support," she explained.

Support from the Council of Black Faculty and Staff, as well as the Diane Leitner Book Award, have eased financial burdens for Jessica Mahon, who graduated from Stockton in 2014. She is now a graduate student in the Communication Disorders program working to complete her clinical externships. She completed her undergraduate degree with minimal debt because her parents started a college fund for her. But, "when it came to paying for graduate school, I knew it was on me," she said.

"Stockton has given me more than just a great education. It has given me leadership opportunities, research experience, helped me to build long lasting relationships with professors and staff, and most of all it has challenged me and forced me to step outside my comfort zone. I know no matter where I go in life, I will always have my Stockton family," she said.

Support from Stockton graduates is also very strong. Stockton Accounting and Business Administration alumnus Bruce Dooley, president of the Antique Collectors Club of Atlantic County, said that his club wanted to support local students studying history or art history "to keep antique collecting and history alive."

Also among the donors was a group of current Stockton students who won the grand prize in a national competition to raise awareness about the national debt. The 2015 Up To Us team donated \$5,000 of their winnings to the Stockton University Foundation to create the Up to Us 2015 Term Scholarship, which will provide a \$1,000 award to qualified undergraduates over the next five years. The team also donated \$2,000 to the General Scholarship Fund in support of the Students Helping Students Initiative.

"This is the first time the Development staff can recall students donating such a generous amount to fully fund a scholarship at this level," said Ellmore.

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