

## Stockton Foundation Scholarship Recipients Thank Donors at Annual Recognition Dinner

Nearly \$600,000 Awarded to More Than 470 Deserving Students

***For Immediate Release; Photos on [Flickr](#)***

Friday, November 11, 2016

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**Galloway, N.J.** - More than 130 Stockton University Foundation scholarship recipients met the donors who have generously supported their academic endeavors during Stockton's annual scholarship recognition dinner on Thursday, Nov. 10.

This academic year, the Stockton Foundation will award 473 students with financial awards totaling \$596,738. Philip T. Ellmore, chief development officer and executive director of the Stockton University Foundation, told the 150 donors and friends of the university in attendance, "you have the opportunity to see firsthand the impact that your giving has had on our students."

One representative from each of Stockton's academic schools delivered a speech to thank their donors and share how their gifts have already made a difference. The student speakers were Helmer Acevedo-Reyes, of Wildwood, N.J., Elianny Alberto, of Rahway, N.J., Anthony Thawley, of Gibbsboro, N.J., Joachim Cendana, of Williamstown, N.J., Tina Bridda, of Erial, N.J., Jennifer Ferro, of Jackson, N.J., Thomas Johnson, of Tabernacle, N.J., and Maryam Sarhan, of Somers Point, N.J.

President Harvey Kesselman said, "With the renewed commitment to our mission of excellence in teaching, support for scholarly research and dedication to service, we are providing students a high quality, engaged educational experience. We need you more than ever and thank you for your unwavering support of Stockton."

Elianny Alberto, who received the Council of Black Faculty and Staff Scholarship, works hard in honor of her parents who gave up their lives in the Dominican Republic to help her and her siblings find success in the United States. "Believing in yourself is an important part of success, but having people that believe in you can take you even further."

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The challenges and sacrifices a college student faces, such as of sleepless nights, long hours and constant trial and error, “don’t seem as hard when you’re being supported by so many different people,” she explained.

Joachim Cendana, who aspires to be an elementary school teacher, is already helping students and his peers daily as a student-teacher at St. Mary School in Williamstown, as a substitute teacher and as a writing tutor at Stockton. He called these experiences fulfilling. “It is my hope that I will be able to make an impact in the world through a career in education just as you have made an impact on my life and the lives of so many students through your generosity,” he said.

Tina Bridda has a career in special education and came to Stockton to begin her doctoral journey in the Organizational Leadership program. Her daughter, who is a sophomore Biology major in the Honors program, also attends Stockton, and her 13-year-old son hopes to be part of the Stockton track and field team in 2021. With her husband also continuing his education, scholarship support “helped to lift a financial burden in my household,” she said.

“For as long as you keep investing in us, we will continue to develop Stockton as a distinctive university,” she said.

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 747 qualified scholarship applications this year.

Members of the community support students too. Hazel Mueller, president of the Board of Directors for the Stockton Performing Arts Center (PAC), and treasurer Carmine Bonnani are supporters of the arts and friends of the PAC. Through fundraising, their group awards scholarships to students in the arts.

Frank Ingrassia, a scholarship recipient and student in the Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies program, of Cedar Run, N.J., is a lifelong learner. He had a career in the 1960s as a consulting engineer working on the landing modules for NASA’s Apollo Missions helping to land men on the moon and later taught at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan. Now he looks forward to visiting the Netherlands and France on a study tour in the spring. He is thankful for scholarship support helping him to continue learning and to his professors for being “terrific educators and motivators.”

Pam Cross, coordinator of the Skills Center Writing Lab, which is named after the late Paul D. Staller, a graduate and former tutor, shared why she became a donor. Cross, a Political Science graduate, met her husband, Greg, also an alumnus, while working in the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program, which has touched the lives of so many students by giving them a chance to attend college despite financial challenges.

Cross and her husband established a scholarship to honor her mother, Mary Kennedy, who passed away in 2012, to “keep her name alive” and to support a student with ties to the EOF program “that has meant so much to us.”

“So many of the generous donors have named their scholarships after loved ones, and it’s a powerful and beautiful thing. Thank you for turning your grief and loss into something positive,” she said.

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For Thomas Johnson, the Stacy Moore Hagan Memorial Scholarship gave him life-changing experiences through an internship conducting research at the Rutgers University Marine Field Station (RUMFS) in Tuckerton, N.J. He described it as an “opportunity to really fuel my passion, further my learning and prepare me for the job force and graduate school.”

Roland Hagan, a Stockton graduate, established the memorial scholarship in memory of his wife who also studied at Stockton and went on to have a successful career in marine science. Her career was inspired by a cooperative internship experience at RUMFS, and to continue her legacy, Hagan created two awards to support Stockton undergraduates for eight-week internships at RUMFS and Stockton’s Marine Science Field Station. To date, \$37,500 has been awarded to 15 students.

“This makes me feel so honored to have been selected for such a valuable position and so blessed to be a part of a legacy paved by the Hagan family,” said Johnson.

Ed and Doris Moore, Stacy’s parents, met Johnson at the dinner. Seeing a student succeed on a path that his daughter also took “is a thrill and it fills my heart,” said Ed.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better son-in-law,” who is helping aspiring scientists in Stacy’s honor, he said.

His wife added, “Stacy’s life is being relived. She was so dedicated to the field station and marine science. She was amazing.”

Leo Schoffer, vice chair of the Stockton Board of Trustees, said, “Tonight is all about students. That’s why we are here. I’m a big supporter of public education and making it available and affordable. That happens through scholarships.”

“I enjoy this dinner because when you hear the students speak about their experiences, it makes you realize that your volunteer time is valuable and worthwhile. Often, in state schools, students are the first college graduates in their family, and it’s a new beginning for their families that will carry on.”

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