



American Foreign Service Association  
**ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION**  
2016





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## THE AFSA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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The first American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) scholarship was established in 1926 by Mrs. Elizabeth Harriman in memory of her son, Oliver Bishop Harriman, a career FSO who passed away in Copenhagen while serving as Charge' d'Affaires that same year.

Originally focused on offering undergraduate financial aid grants, the program expanded in 1976 and began offering academic merit awards in recognition of the many accomplishments of Foreign Service high school seniors. In 1996, the AFSA Merit Awards were expanded and began offering Art Merit, Community Service and Best Essay prizes to the same group of students.

In 2016, AFSA will offer \$45,500 in Merit Awards to 22 students. The AFSA Scholarship Committee and individuals from the Foreign Service community serve as judges. A total of 117 applicants competed for 16 Academic Merit Awards and four Art Merit Awards along with a Best Essay Award and a Community Service Award.

In the last 25 years alone, the AFSA Scholarship Fund has offered 2,200 students with more than \$4 million in college aid. In the 2015/16 academic year the AFSA Scholarship Program was able to provide \$263,000 in assistance. This support would not be possible without the generous bequests and donations from individuals and organizations.



## WINNERS OF THE 2016 AFSA MERIT AWARDS

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### ACADEMIC MERIT AWARD WINNERS - \$2,500

Adele Birkenes  
*Hebert Scholar*

Samir Fierro  
*Martin Scholar*

Karl Keat  
*Embassy Risk Mgmt Scholar*

Isabella Blackman  
*Spigler Scholar*

Helen Froats  
*Becker Scholar*

Sarah Scroggs  
*AFSA Scholar*

George Christensen  
*Cameron Scholar*

Dylan Galt  
*Martin Scholar*

Rachel Silverman  
*Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholar*

Kyle Dominguez  
*AFSA Scholar*

Riena Harker  
*AFSA Scholar*

Alessandra Youth  
*AFSA Scholar*

Agnes Ezekwesili  
*AFSA Scholar*

Peter Huson  
*Blue Cross Blue Shield Scholar*

### ACADEMIC MERIT HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS - \$1,000

Agnes Goldrich

Maria Turner

### ART MERIT AWARD WINNER - \$2,500

Helen Reynolds  
*Visual Arts (Painting/Drawing)*

### ART MERIT HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS - \$1,000

Adriana A. Tejada  
*Music (Guitar)*

Maxwell Kaesshaefer  
*Music (Vocals/Guitar)*

Nina Young  
*Visual Arts (Painting/Drawing)*

### FITZGERALD COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNER - \$2,500

Emily Larsen

### BEST ESSAY AWARD WINNER- \$500

Adele Birkenes

## ACADEMIC WINNERS

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Students receiving named awards were the highest scoring students in the competition.

### **Adele Birkenes**

*Recipient of the AFSA Louis C. and Valeria Hebert Memorial Merit Award  
and the AFSA Best Essay Award.*

Adele, daughter of Robert Birkenes (USAID – FS Active Duty) and Suzanne Polak is graduating from the NIST International School in Bangkok, Thailand. While in school, she was involved in Student Council, Model United Nations, and 2Develop, a group dedicated to development projects in rural areas. Adele plans to attend Vassar College majoring in biology.

### **Isabella Blackman**

*Recipient of the AFSA Donald Spigler Memorial and Maria Giuseppa Spigler Merit Award.*

Isabella, daughter of Brian Blackman (State - FS Active Duty) and Allison Blackman (State – Civil Service) is graduating from James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia. She is a member of the National Science Honor Society, the Octagon Club of Vienna, and Buddies Club. Isabella will attend University of Virginia majoring in biology.

### **George Christensen**

*Recipient of the AFSA Turner C. Cameron, Jr. Memorial Merit Award.*

George, son of Darin Christensen (State – FS Active Duty) and Elizabeth Christensen is graduating from the Radford School in El Paso, Texas. He is a National Merit Scholar, a Level II National Latin Exam Silver Award winner, and the founder of the Robotics Club. George plans to attend Brigham Young University majoring in physics.

### **Kyle Dominguez**

Kyle, son of Stacy Pearce (State – FS Active Duty) and Daniel Dominguez is graduating from American School of London in London, England. He has participated in his high school's Cross Country team, Math Club, Female Empowerment Club, and Recycling Club. Kyle will attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology majoring in engineering and computer science.

## **Agnes Ezekwesili**

Agnes, daughter of Nestor Ezekwesili (State – FS Active Duty) and Ogu-gua Ezekwesili (State – FS Active Duty) is graduating from The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut. She is serving as Club Head in the Africa Club and Science Olympiad and played on her school's Basketball team. Agnes will attend University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

## **Samir Fierro**

*Recipient of the AFSA Joanna and Robert Martin Merit Award.*

Samir, son of Jose Fierro (State – FS Active Duty) and Sharon Fierro is graduating from Millennium High School in Goodyear, Arizona. In high school, he was president of the National Honor Society and Model United Nations. He was also a member of a volunteer group called Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program. Samir plans to attend Arizona State University's Barrett Honors College majoring in physics.

## **Helen Froats**

*Recipient of the AFSA Priscilla and John Becker Family Merit Award.*

Helen, daughter of Daniel Froats (State – FS Active Duty) and Silvia Froats (State – Civil Service) is graduating from McLean High School in McLean, Virginia. She has a particular interest in math, natural science and social science along with being involved in theatre productions. Helen is a Mu Alpha Theta Math Honors Scholar. She plans to attend University of California, San Diego majoring in biology.

## **Dylan Galt**

*Recipient of the AFSA Joanna and Robert Martin Merit Award.*

Dylan, son of Ambassador Jennifer Galt (State – FS Active Duty) and Frederic Galt is graduating from the International School of Ulaanbaatar, in Mongolia. His love for mathematics has led to working with college professors to research mathematics and theoretical physics. He also plays 1st chair tuba in the Festival Symphonic Orchestra. He plans to attend Brown or Princeton University majoring in mathematics.

## **Riena Harker**

Riena, daughter of Bradley Harker (FCS – FS Active Duty) and Megumi Harker is graduating from the International School of Beijing in Beijing, China. She is interested in psychology, orchestra, literature and history.

She won the Elliott Bay Regional Competition for her violin performances and shared that passion for music by giving violin lessons to orphaned children at Sun Village during her high school junior year. Riena will attend Middlebury College majoring in geology or earth science.

### **Peter Huson**

*Recipient of the AFSA CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Program Merit Award.*

Peter, son of Tim Huson (State – FS Active Duty) and Anne Braghetta (State – FS Active Duty) is graduating from the Country Day School in San Jose, Costa Rica. He is the co-founder of Finesse Media Design, a web-design company specializing in website development and modern web-design. During his sophomore year, Peter was the president of his school's Bike Club. Peter will attend Brown University majoring in engineering.

### **Karl Keat**

*Recipient of the AFSA Embassy Risk Management Merit Award.*

Karl, son of Stephen Keat (State – FS Retired) and Dr. Josie Keat is attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia. There he co-founded the Digital Arts Studio Club to address the shortage of art-oriented clubs. His passion for science led to an internship at the National Institutes of Health in the Computational Genomics Unit. Karl will attend University of Edinburgh majoring in computer science.

### **Sarah Scroggs**

Sarah, daughter of Patricia Scroggs (State – FS Retired) and Stephen Scroggs is graduating from T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. She has been recognized as a National Space Club Scholar and received an internship with NASA. Additionally, she founded the X-Stem club, where she worked to promote math, sciences and technology education. Sarah will attend Cornell University majoring in engineering.

### **Rachel Silverman**

*Recipient of the AFSA CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Program Merit Award.*

Rachel, daughter of Robert Silverman (State – FS Retired) and Young-Mi Silverman is graduating from Winston Churchill High School in Potosi, Maryland. She participated in Model United Nations and founder and president of iEarn, a non-profit global, youth network. She is a gifted



musician and has studied both the clarinet and piano. Rachel plans to attend Princeton University with an undeclared major.

### **Alessandra Youth**

Alessandra, daughter of Marta Youth (State – FS Active Duty) and Howard Youth is graduating from American Nicaraguan School in Managua, Nicaragua. Alessandra was a member of the Debate Team and Model United Nations, and participated in community service clubs like Interact and Abandoned Children Club. She also participated in a number of sports. Alessandra will attend Fordham University majoring in computer science.

## **ACADEMIC MERIT HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS**

### **Agnes Goldrich**

Agnes, daughter of Ethan Goldrich (State – FS Active Duty) and Maria Bywater Goldrich is graduating from Cornwall Central High School in New Windsor, New York. She has held positions with Youth in Governments and studied Hebrew. Agnes also volunteers at Chabad of Eastern Orange County, New York and worked in the Health Unit of the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi. Agnes plans to attend Cornell University majoring in biology.

### **Maria Turner**

Maria, daughter of Conrad Turner (State – FS Active Duty) and Susanne Turner (State – FS Active-Duty) is graduating from Pechersk School International in Kiev, Ukraine. Maria was captain of the Varsity Girls Soccer team and was a coordinator for Djerela Center Project which hosted events for individuals with Down Syndrome. She also participated in orchestra playing first violin and won second place in a Kiev violin competition. She will attend University of Pennsylvania majoring in engineering and business.

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## ART WINNER

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### **Helen Reynolds**

*Visual Arts – Painting /Drawing*

Helen, daughter of Scott Reynolds (FAS – FS Retired) and Wuyi Ning is graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Helen is president of her school's Photography Club as well as taking part in many art competitions and organizations. Her art depicts people of different cultures and involves modern world issues. Helen will attend Carnegie Mellon University majoring in visual art.

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## ART HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS

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### **Adriana Arancibia Tejada**

*Music – Guitar*

Adriana, daughter of Paola Tejada (USAID – FS Active Duty) and Jesus Arancibia is graduating from Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan. Adriana has been playing with veteran artists in a jazz ensemble in California. Her goal is to become a professional guitarist and record her own music. Adriana will attend Manhattan School of Music majoring in music.

### **Maxwell Kaesshaefer**

*Music – Guitar/Vocals*

Maxwell, son of Joseph Kaesshaefer (FCS – FS Active Duty) and Scotti Kaesshaefer is graduating from Proctor Academy in Andover, New Hampshire. Maxwell is looking to become a film music composer and has already experienced composing soundtracks for independent student films while attending Sydney Film School. Maxwell will attend University of Puget Sound.

### **Nina Young**

*Visual Arts – Painting /Drawing*

Nina, daughter of Sylvie Young (State – FS Active Duty) and Jeffrey Young is graduating from Southbank International School in London, England. Nina has been a member in Model United Nations and French Club and also participated in community service with Jakarta Animal Aid Network and taking service trips in Cambodia. Nina has also been involved with a

music blog website. She will attend University of California Los Angeles majoring in anthropology.

## **LINDA K. FITZGERALD COMMUNITY SERVICE WINNER**

### **Emily Larsen**

Emily, daughter of Mitchell Larsen (State – FS Active Duty) and Charlotte Larsen is graduating from Seoul Foreign School in Seoul, South Korea. She will attend Biola University in La Mirada, California majoring in cultural studies. Emily has a strong desire to empower individuals and spark change within their communities. With this philosophy in mind, she took initiative and created her own micro-business called, “Scarves for Service.” This business involved knitting and selling scarves to raise funds in support of two women from Latin America, Gloria and Maria. Emily also participated in service trips to Cambodia and was a high school leader for AWANA and Impact Student Ministries; both global, Christian-based non-profits.

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## **BEST ESSAY WINNER**

### **Adele Birkenes**

See Adele’s biography under the “Academic Winners” listing.

## **NAMED AFSA MERIT AWARDS**

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AFSA bestows the following named AFSA Merit Awards:

### **John and Priscilla Becker Family Award**

Established in 2000, the Becker's, whose daughters were past recipients of AFSA Merit Awards, wanted to give back to the Foreign Service community. Mr. Becker was assigned and accompanied by his family to India, Germany, and Austria, Israel, and Canada during his over 30 year career as a Foreign Service Officer.

### **Turner C. Cameron, Jr. Memorial Award**

Mrs. Dorothy Cameron established this award in memory of her late husband, Turner C. Cameron, Jr. in June 2007. Entering the Foreign Service in 1942, Mr. Turner was assigned to Paris, Belgrade, Hanoi, Saigon, Seoul, Colombo, and Stockholm along with his Washington, DC assignments.

### **CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) Federal Employee Program Award (two awards)**

First sponsored in 2012, the CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Program offers medical and dental insurance to the Foreign Service employees. This entity is happy to support the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) Scholarship Fund along with the service and sacrifice of Foreign Service Officers.

### **Embassy Risk Management Award**

Awarded for the first time in 2014, this firm provides property and auto insurance for Foreign Service employees overseas. Embassy Risk Management proudly supports the efforts of those in the diplomatic community, and endeavors to continue that tradition of innovation, security and service.

### **Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Community Service Award**

Newly established award in 2015, this award recognizes a student's community service and volunteerism. Linda's professional career was spent with the United States Information Agency from 1962-1983. Her first post was in Tehran, Iran; her final posting was in Paris, France. She retired in Hamilton, Ohio and passed away in 2013.

### **Louis C. and Valeria Hebert Memorial Award**

Louis had a 35 year career as a State Department FSO in the area of personnel, hiring and wage classification. Retiring in 1990, he passed away 2014. His wife, Valeria, predeceased him. Louis served at posts in Belgium, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Egypt, Russia and China. This award is offered for the first time in 2016.

### **Joanna and Robert Martin Award (two awards)**

Both of the Martins are retired State Department FSOs who reside in California. They established these two awards to be bestowed on students who have applied or will be attending one of Mr. and Mrs. Martin's five alma maters. The award was made for the first time in 2006.

### **Donald S. Spigler Memorial and Maria Giuseppa Spigler Award**

Donald S. Spigler was a retired FSO who, with his wife Maria Giuseppa, established this award in 2001. He served abroad in Germany, Austria, Sierra Leone and South Africa, in capacities including Deputy Chief of Mission, Charge' d'Affaires, First Secretary and Counselor for Economic Affairs. Mr. Spigler passed away in 2005.

# AFSA SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

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**The Honorable Lange Schermerhorn**

*Chairman*

**John Dinkelman**

*AFSA Governing Board Liaison*

**Dr. Alia El Mohandes**

*USAID Representative*

**Jim Golsen**

*FCS Representative*

**Thomas Smitham**

*State Representative*

**Christine Strossman**

*FAS Representative*

**Bess Zelle**

*State Representative*

In addition to the AFSA Scholarship Committee's participation, we would like extend a special thanks to the individuals who participated as this year's judges.

**John Choi**

**Rich Craig**

**Keith Curtis**

**John Dunham**

**Mort Dworken**

**Olivia Hilton**

**David Jones**

**Todd Kushner**

**Erika Lewis**

**Shante Moore**

**Mariel Murray**

**Tania Romanoff**

**Edna Vega**

**Linnisa Wahid**



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