

## AFE Awards More than \$38,500 in 2020 Scholarships

ALEXANDRIA, VA – September 21, 2020 – The [American Floral Endowment \(AFE\)](#) has awarded 15 students with scholarships totaling \$38,500. Fifty-nine applications were received for this 2020 scholarship cycle.

"We had many overachieving students apply for scholarships this year, which is why some scholarships were awarded to more than one recipient," said Greg Royer, Chairman of the Education Committee. "I'm proud to see the high quality of students each year, and I enjoy being a part of granting scholarships to these well-deserved students encouraging them to continue their education and become passionate industry leaders."

AFE awards scholarships annually and applications are due by **May 1** of each year.

Scholarship descriptions are available at [endowment.org/scholarships](http://endowment.org/scholarships).

**American Florists' Exchange Scholarship — \$2,400**  
**James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship — \$500**  
**Recipient: Jordyn Silva – Modesto Junior College**

Entering her freshman year at Modesto Junior College, Jordyn Silva is majoring in agriculture business with a minor in environmental horticulture. Silva was active in FFA throughout high school and served as vice president in her senior year. "My main crop focus is different types of flowers, foliage, and greenery," said Silva. "My career goal is to have my own floral business and have a farm to grow all the flowers that would be used in my designs."



**Jordyn Silva**

*American Florists' Exchange Scholarship and  
James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship*

The Original Los Angeles Flower Market was established in 1921 and is now part of the largest wholesale flower district in the U.S. Scholarship recipients are juniors or seniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, majoring in agriculture with an emphasis on a future in floriculture. The **American Florists' Exchange Scholarship** provides tuition assistance to students attending a college or university in California or student residents of California attending a college or university in other areas of the U.S.

Jim Bridenbaugh was a specialist in fresh flowers and plants, designing and commentating at design shows and seminars. His floral industry knowledge, comedic storytelling, and audience rapport made him a favorite. He served as President of OFA from 1989 to 1991. The **James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship** is for sophomore, junior or senior students who are pursuing a career in floral design and marketing of fresh flowers and plants.

**Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship — \$2,200**  
**Recipient: Meghan Bundick – West Virginia University**

Seeking a degree in Horticulture with a minor in agribusiness, Meghan Bundick is a sophomore at West Virginia University. She interned at Foxborough Nursery, Inc. in Street, Maryland, and volunteered at West Virginia University Greenhouse last year. Before COVID-19, Bundick had planned to work at the university, planting and growing basil for the university dining service and growing different herbs on the school green roofs to be used in their design program to dye cloths. “Ever since I was little, helping my mom in the garden, I knew I would work with plants for a living. I was involved in a plant science magnet program in high school where I discovered my passion for plants,” explained Bundick. “Through my college coursework, I have discovered my passion for production. I love the idea of being able to provide beautiful flowers and fresh produce to the community.”



**Meghan Bundick**  
**West Virginia University**  
Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship

Julio "Toots" Armellini is the founder of Armellini Express Lines, the largest flower carrier service in the U.S. Armellini enlisted in the Navy as a "Seabee" and was stationed all around the globe as a mechanic. He used skills he gained as a mechanic to modernize refrigerated trucking. When he began expanding his lines in the early 1950s, refrigeration was new and underdeveloped, so he established a more effective way of cooling his supplies using a system of constant airflow. ThermoKing eventually made his contributions to refrigeration systems standard. Today, Armellini has almost 70 years of experience in the industry, and Armellini Industries, Inc. encompasses many businesses: Armellini Express Lines, Inc., J.A. Flower Service, Inc., Fresco Service, Inc., and NorthStar Transportation, Inc. The **Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship** is intended for sophomore, junior or senior students with a career interest in the marketing or distribution of floral products.

**Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship — \$1,100**  
**Earl Dedman Memorial Scholarship — \$2,000**  
**Recipient: Renata Goossen, Kansas State University**

Presently seeking her degree in Horticulture Production at Kansas State University, Renata Goossen is interested in commercial ornamental floriculture and horticultural marketing. “Through my career, I desire to expand people's minds, revealing how horticulture is a global industry that impacts their everyday lives. I want to be a part of discovering new ways to strengthen and improve our industry,” said Goossen. An active member of 4-H, in 2012 Goossen created “Renata's Garden,” a micro-greenhouse business recognizing the need for high quality and unique varieties of plants for local gardeners. Goossen served as an intern grower at Loma Vista Nursery and Green Circle Growers. She also worked remotely for the marketing department for Green Circle Growers. While there, Goossen spoke with customers about plant care concerns. “Through this experience, I am learning how to connect with the end consumer of the products that I am used to growing behind the scenes,” explained Goossen.



**Renata Goossen**  
**Kansas State University**  
*Ball Horticultural Company  
Scholarship and Earl Dedman  
Memorial Scholarship*

Ball Horticultural Company is a leading international breeder, producer, and wholesale distributor of floriculture products. Ball brings the beginnings of color, foliage, fruit, and form to professional growers around the world for the retail and landscape markets. The **Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship** is intended for junior or senior students pursuing a career in commercial floriculture.

Earl Dedman owned and operated Mountainview Greenhouses in Woodinville, Wash., and was a former president of BPF. In addition to his participation with BPF and BPI, he was involved with the Montana State Flower Growers, the Puget Sound Flower Growers, and the Washington Floricultural Association. Educated in rural Montana in a one-room schoolhouse, Dedman had a strong commitment to education. He considered education and hard work to be the keys to success in life. The **Earl Dedman Scholarship** is awarded to junior or senior students maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA who are interested in becoming greenhouse growers

**BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship — \$1,200**  
**Recipients: Nicholas Dzurenda, Virginia Tech**

Dzurenda is a senior at Virginia Tech where he majors in environmental horticulture and minors in civic agriculture and community food systems. He has worked in landscaping for several years and summer planned to work this summer for Sheridan Landscaping in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Unfortunately, these plans were canceled due to the pandemic. “I want to own my own greenhouse growing operation that brings Virginia native species to market for residential, commercial, and public landscapes,” said Dzurenda. “I also hope to be involved in research that improves the environmental sustainability of horticultural production.”



**Nicholas Dzurenda**  
**Virginia Tech**  
*BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship*

The **BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship** is intended for sophomore, junior or senior students pursuing a career in floriculture. Students are selected based on sound academic performance and a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

**CalFlowers Scholarship — \$5,800**  
**Recipient: Nicole Davidson, City College of San Francisco**

Nicole Davidson expects to graduate in December, with an associate degree in Nursery and Garden-Center Operation and Commercial Cut Flower and Greenhouse Production. Following graduation, Davidson will seek a career in greenhouse and nursery management. For the past two summers, Davidson has interned in Italy at Cascina Borgofrancone in Colico, and at Villa Boccanegra in Ventimiglia. She has served as a lab aide at the City College of San Francisco for three years. “My next step in education is to find and attend graduate school for ethnobotany. I am also writing a book on the edible and medicinal plants of the bay area and where to find them and how to grow them,” said Davidson. She plans for this to be the first of a series featuring various travel destinations.



**Nicole Davidson**  
**City College of San Francisco**  
*CalFlowers Scholarship*

The California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers (CalFlowers) was founded in 1941 by a small group of flower shipping companies to foster the success of the California floral industry. Today, CalFlowers is the leading floral trade association in California serving growers and the entire supply chain in 47 states across the U.S. The **CalFlowers Scholarship** is for undergraduate students attending an accredited California college or university or an undergraduate California resident attending an accredited college or university elsewhere in the U.S.

**John Carew Memorial Scholarship — \$2,000**  
**Recipient: Caleb Spall, Michigan State University**

Caleb Spall expects to complete his master’s degree program in horticulture at Michigan State University in August 2022. His focus is on sustainable greenhouse production of specialty cut flowers. In addition to his involvement in student horticulture groups as an undergraduate, Spall most recently worked as an undergraduate research assistant, responsible for daily data acquisition and analysis for several hundred floriculture crops. After completing the ornamental horticulture program at MSU, Spall plans to enter the specialty cut flower industry. “I want to apply my horticultural knowledge to improve the production of specialty cut flowers internationally,” said Spall. “It is my hope that by helping to establish greenhouse culture as a viable method of cut flower production internationally, the quality and availability of harvested stems will increase.”



**Caleb Spall**  
**Michigan State University**  
*John Carew Memorial Scholarship*

John Carew, former head of the Department of Horticulture at Michigan State University, dedicated his career to encouraging and guiding young horticulturists. He was instrumental in establishing Bedding Plant International (BPI) in 1969. The **John Carew Memorial Scholarship** is open to graduate students in horticulture with an interest in greenhouse crops.

**Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship — \$2,000**  
**Recipient: Emily Kolbe, University of Wisconsin, River Falls**

Emily Kolbe is entering her senior year at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, where she is majoring in horticulture and minoring in Spanish. With a special interest in the breeding and cultivation of ornamental roses, Kolbe is also focusing on the breeding of floricultural crops for hardiness in USDA zones 5 and below. This summer she has been researching the impact of node number on the doubleness of roses in the landscape at the McNair Program. “My career goal is to enter the world of academia to increase the number of women in the horticulture field after I receive my Doctorate,” said Kolbe. “I would like the opportunity to influence and help the future of horticulture in any way possible.”



**Emily Kolbe**  
**University of Wisconsin**  
*Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship*

The **Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship** is awarded annually to an undergraduate student entering their junior or senior year who is majoring in Horticulture or Plant Sciences, with a career interest in herbaceous ornamental plants and the floriculture industry. Preference will be given to students who have a demonstrated interest in commercial greenhouse production of herbaceous ornamental or floriculture crops (i.e., non-edible, non-medicinal crops), research related to the production, physiology, or breeding of herbaceous ornamental and floriculture crops, and/or the sales and marketing of herbaceous ornamental and floriculture crops. The applicant should have a cumulative GPA of 2.6 or greater.

**Garcia Family Scholarship — \$1,200**  
**Recipient: Keller Shemwell, University of Missouri, Columbia**

Entering her junior year at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Keller Shemwell is majoring in plant science and minoring in agriculture economics. While in school, Shemwell worked at Tiger Garden, where she cared for and maintained plants, designed floral arrangements, and helped with store operations. She has volunteered in her high school greenhouse and recently with the Mizzou Student Institute of Floral Designers. “I hope to work in a greenhouse as a grower or to work in the sales/marketing of plants in wholesale or retail operations,” said Shemwell. “I hope to one day open my own greenhouse business and raise bedding plants, vegetables, etc.”



**Keller Shemwell**  
**University of Missouri**  
*Garcia Family Scholarship*

The **Garcia Family Scholarship Fund** is intended for students attending a two-year college, or Junior or Seniors attending a four-year institution with a career focus on the marketing or distribution of floral products, including retail, wholesale, manufacturing, and/or floral business ownership/operations. The Garcia Family has proudly served the floral industry since 1965. Owned by the Garcia family, Garcia Group, Inc. operates six different divisions: Floral-Pak® Company; Plus One Imports™; Garcia Group Glass—Floraglas® and G3® brand products; Vase D’Lite®, and Premium Wood Picks. All are represented exclusively by the Pete Garcia Company™ THE BEST LINES IN THE WORLD®.

**Richard T. Meister Scholarship — \$4,000**  
**Recipient: Ranjeeta Adhikari, Purdue University**

Ranjeeta earned her master’s degree in agriculture from College of Agriculture, Dapoli, Maharashtra, India and her undergrad from Tribhuvan University in Kirtipur, Nepal. where she majored in horticulture. She is now pursuing her doctorate in horticulture, majoring in plant physiology (Controlled Environment Agriculture). Her crop focus is poinsettias, bedding plants, nursery crops.



**Ranjeeta Adhikari**  
**Purdue University**  
*Richard T. Meister Scholarship*

“I have been involved in agriculture throughout my life including my background on farming as well as my education (BS, MS, and Ph.D. in horticulture). My goal is to develop a career as a faculty and focus my

research and extension in optimizing resources including water, light, fertilizer, and temperature or sustainable production of better quality crops for the greenhouse industry,” said Adhikari. “I am devoted to the transfer of technology developed through research via active extension work involving small and large scale growers in the greenhouse industry. Moreover, I am interested in training next-generation scientists for the improvement of controlled environment agriculture through a sustainable approach.”

Dick Meister built a family business in publishing for specialized growers in commercial horticulture. He is a strong supporter of the land-grant college system and through the years worked closely with many horticultural and floricultural leaders. This scholarship is dedicated to the outstanding accomplishments of those in university extension. The **Richard T. Meister Scholarship** is open to graduate students in floriculture intending to pursue their career in the land-grant university system with interest in research, extension, or teaching.

**National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association (NGMA) Scholarship — \$500**  
**Recipient: Annabelle Caswell, University of Connecticut**

Annabelle Caswell is a junior at the University of Connecticut seeking a degree in sustainable plant and soil systems, majoring in environmental horticulture. She is presently employed as a manager at Sweet Hill Farm in Gales Ferry, Connecticut, and has a seasonal job at the Department of Environmental and Energy Protection in Waterford, renovating historical gardens and maintaining the park grounds. “My career goal is to work for the state of Connecticut's Department of Environmental and Energy Protection in the maintaining of state parks and eventually retire to open my open greenhouse operation,” said Caswell. “By working for the state, I will become more aware of commercial growing and then use this knowledge to use some aspects that are sustainable for my own business. In my business, I want to focus on local growing and buying while also teaching the community about the importance of sustainable horticulture.”



**Annabelle Caswell**  
**University of Connecticut**  
*National Greenhouse  
Manufacturers Association (NGMA)  
Scholarship*

NGMA is a professional trade organization for the manufacturers and suppliers of greenhouses and greenhouse components built to codes designed for a grower's needs. The **NGMA Scholarship** targets students majoring in horticulture and bioengineering or the equivalent and are at least a junior at an accredited four-year college maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

**Mike and Flo Novovesky Scholarship — \$2,700**  
**Recipient: Josey Darby, Texas A&M University**

A sophomore at Texas A&M University, Josey Darby is majoring in horticulture and floriculture. Growing up on her family's beef cattle farm in northeast Texas, Darby developed a passion for agriculture and an appreciation for the American farmer and rancher. Active in FFA, she earned her Texas State Florists' Association High School Floriculture Certification while in high school. “It is my dream to one day own an upscale events venue in the North East Texas, possibly at my family's



**Josey Darby**  
**Texas A&M University**  
*Mike and Flo Novovesky Scholarship*

ranch,” said Darby. “I will use my talents in the floral field to bring smiles to people everywhere.”

Mike and Flo Novovesky have enjoyed more than 30 years of active participation in the floriculture industry. The Novoveskys understand the hardships a young couple must overcome when balancing a career and a family. The **Mike and Flo Novovesky Scholarship** fund aims to help young married students who are working to put themselves through college and have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. Depending on the availability of married applicants, the scholarship may also go to an undergraduate working his or her way through school with financial need and family obligations. The keys are a strong interest in horticulture and financial need.

**Lawrence "Bud" Ohlman Memorial Scholarship — \$2,500**  
**Vocational (Bettinger, Holden, and Perry) Scholarship — \$1,500**  
**Recipient: Brian Curley, University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

A sophomore at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Stockbridge School of Agriculture, Brian Curley is majoring in Sustainable Horticulture focusing on greenhouse production and retail garden center operations. Curley has been active in FFA and has worked for five years at Wolf Hill Home and Garden Center, Ipswich, Massachusetts. “I would like to work in a commercial greenhouse producing ornamental nursery crops to be sold at retail garden centers. I have an opportunity to do this with my current employer, and hope to do this as my career,” said Curley. “Later in my career, I would like to work as a horticulture teacher at my former high school, Essex Tech, where I would teach students about the green industry and help train the next generation of professionals.”



**Brian Curley**  
**University of Massachusetts**  
*Lawrence "Bud" Ohlman  
Memorial Scholarship and  
Vocational (Bettinger, Holden,  
and Perry) Scholarship*

Bud Ohlman was a hands-on grower in his family business, expanding the truck gardening operation to include greenhouses, bedding plants, and flowering annuals production. He coached expansion projects even into his 70s. His work ethic was second to none, inspired by God, his family, and the industry. The **Lawrence "Bud" Ohlman Memorial Scholarship** goes to students with the career goal to become a bedding plant grower for an established business.

The **Vocational (Bettinger, Holden, and Perry) Scholarship** requires students to be in a one or two-year program with the intent to become a grower or greenhouse manager. The Vocational Scholarship honors Leonard Bettinger, who was a successful greenhouse grower in the Bettinger Farms family business in Toledo, Ohio, and was President of BPI from 1974-76; John Holden, who had a long, helpful career at Ball Seed Company and was active in BPI since its inception, attending the very first "pre-BPI" conference in 1968; and Jim Perry, who was a respected wholesale nurseryman and grew Perry's Plants of La Puente, Calif. into one of the largest bedding plant operations in the U.S. and was President of BPI from 1972-74.

### Seed Companies Scholarship — \$2,500

**Recipient: Adam D’Angelo, University of Wisconsin, Madison**

A graduate of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Adam D’Angelo is presently studying for his Ph.D. in plant breeding and plant genetics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. D’Angelo grew up working at his family’s garden center and nursery, D’Angelo’s Garden World in Newton, New Jersey, and Christmas tree farm, Hidden Spring Tree Farm in Fredon, New Jersey. While studying at Rutgers he was an undergraduate research assistant in the plant science department. In August at the University of Wisconsin, he will start a position as a graduate research assistant in the Goldman Breeding Lab. “I am interested in preparing myself for a career in plant breeding, utilizing technology and modern methods to accomplish breeding objectives such as increased stress tolerance, disease resistance, resource allocation efficiency, nutritional quality, yield, marketability, and other factors that influence the stability and economic viability of growers and their communities,” said D’Angelo.



**Adam D’Angelo**  
**University of Wisconsin**  
*Seed Companies Scholarship*

The seed companies Ball, Pan-American, Goldsmith, and Syngenta are leaders in the seed production and breeding industry, providing new and improved varieties. These seed companies cooperatively sponsor the **Seed Companies Scholarship**, which requires students to have a career goal within the seed industry and be junior or senior undergraduates or graduate students.

### John L. Tomasovic Sr. Scholarship — \$1,200

**Recipient: Elaina Eberz, Oregon State University**

Elaina Eberz is a junior at Oregon State University majoring in horticulture - sustainable horticultural production with a second major in studio art. She worked as a horticulture technician at the Chemeketa Community College Horticulture Program in Salem, Oregon, until closures brought on by COVID-19. “I have an interest in the sustainable, year-round greenhouse production of widely-used vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce, providing my community with a close, steady supply of food. I have a secondary interest in the product on of hanging baskets such as fuchsias, and bouquet flowers such as carnations,” said Eberz. “My ultimate goal is to start my own greenhouse operation, ideally close to or within city limits to maximize accessibility, especially for those with disabilities. I want to have a facility similar to Detroit, Michigan’s “agrihood,” a hybrid of an indoor farm and an outdoor garden that’s open for the public to use. It provides a sustainable, local source of food, as well as a safe, accessible garden space to those without a yard, or with disabilities such as chronic pain or autism.”



**Elaina Eberz**  
**Oregon State University**  
*John L. Tomasovic Sr.*  
*Scholarship*

Past president of BPFJ, John Tomasovic has grown his family business, John L. Tomasovic, Sr. Florist Inc., in St. Louis, Mo., which includes a greenhouse from the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. They produce geraniums, pot mums, hardy mums, bedding plants, ground covers, poinsettias, Easter lilies, bulb crops, and foliage, carrying on the business his father began in 1931. The **John L. Tomasovic Sr. Scholarship** offers special consideration for sophomore, junior, or senior undergraduate students with financial need and GPAs between 3.0 and 3.5.

**Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship — \$1,200**

**Recipient: Helene Dondero, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo**

Having graduated in June with a degree in agricultural science with an emphasis in ornamental horticulture and a minor in agricultural business, Helene Dondero is now pursuing her master’s degree in agricultural education at California Polytechnic State. She has grown up in the floral industry. Dondero works in her family’s business, Fiore Floral, and Gifts in Linden, California. In addition to working as a buying assistant for Fiore and making weekly trips to San Francisco Flower Market, Dondero also works at Biglieri Farms. Dondero has been active in numerous student and industry organizations with CalPoly and FFA. “My goal is to be an agricultural science teacher and FFA Advisor. I will be able to share my overall general knowledge of agriculture with my students, plus knowledge from my hands-on experience working in floral, wholesale, and growing operations,” said Dondero. “I strongly feel that from this hands-on experience -- and relationships I have built in the industry -- I have a greater understanding of the vastness of the horticulture industry, and I look forward to sharing that with my students.”



**Helene Dondero**  
**California Polytechnic State University**  
*Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing  
Scholarship*

The **Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship** was established in January 1997 and was named for Jacob Van Namen, a true entrepreneur who built a multimillion-dollar business in wholesale floriculture. This scholarship is intended to develop knowledgeable, creative individuals who will improve the floriculture industry. The scholarship requires students to have a career interest in agribusiness marketing and distribution of floral products and be a sophomore, junior or senior.

**About AFE**

*The American Floral Endowment is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the floriculture and horticulture industry through funding research, educational grants, and scholarships. Since 1961, more than \$15 million has been funded in research and educational projects, and more than \$2 million has been funded in scholarships and internships designed to attract and retain the future leaders of the industry. To learn more about AFE or make a tax-deductible contribution, visit [www.endowment.org](http://www.endowment.org).*

