

Twenty-One Students Awarded AFE Scholarships

ALEXANDRIA, VA – October 13th, 2021 – The [American Floral Endowment \(AFE\)](#) has awarded 21 students with scholarships totaling \$54,500. In this 2021 scholarship cycle, 57 applications were received and reviewed.

AFE is aware the floral industry faces significant challenges to our labor force. Now more than ever, these programs are imperative in helping support new professionals enter the industry and launch a successful career.

“With the pool of high-quality candidates that AFE receives every year, it is inspiring to see the passion these scholars demonstrate in their work, study, and research,” said Greg Royer, AFE Treasurer/Secretary and Education Committee Chair. “AFE takes great pride in providing scholarships for these promising industry members, and we look forward to seeing where they will lead us.”

American Florists' Exchange Scholarship — \$3,000

Recipient: Erin Dobbe, California Polytechnic State University

Entering her senior year at California Polytechnic State University, Erin Dobbe is majoring in Agricultural Communications with a minor in Agribusiness. “My crop focus is mainly what I grew up farming with my family; peonies, tulips, freesia, ranunculus, lilies, and assorted greens,” said Erin. She is active in Cal Poly Crops Club and, since 2014, has worked in a variety of positions at her family’s business, Holland America Flowers in Arroyo Grande, CA. She has acquired two different sales positions in the agribusiness world, taking over her father, the head of sales at her family farm. Erin also was a sales intern in the horticulture division of Driscoll's Berries last year. “One thing that I believe COVID-19 has brought to the surface is the importance of home improvement and the need to communicate it. This can be in the form of buying fresh flowers for a dinner table or simply just putting in new shrubs in the front yard,” said Erin. “My vision for the future of the green industry is to spread awareness of the ‘Power of Flowers,’ that being the importance of beautifying a home through plants, cut flowers, and ornamentals. I truly believe they make all the difference!”



Erin Dobbe
California Polytechnic State University
American Florists' Exchange Scholarship

The Original Los Angeles Flower Market was established in 1921 and is now part of the largest wholesale flower district in the United States. 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 United States.

Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship — \$2,400
Recipient: Virginia McChesney, Huntington University

Virginia McChesney is a Sophomore at Huntington University in Huntington, IN, seeking a degree in Agri-Business Management. Virginia is most interested in greenhouse production, specifically ornamental horticulture, and has held leadership positions in FFA and the Collegiate Farm Bureau. She was a greenhouse worker/farmhand at Sweet Hill Farms in Gales Ferry, CT, and volunteered at the high school greenhouse and coordinated the seed library. This past summer Virginia worked at Agape Fields in Nicholasville, KY. Virginia was responsible for bed maintenance, including weeding, mulching, watering, and pest care. Virginia’s career goal is to own a greenhouse production system that is community-oriented. “I hope to invite the community into my growing space for a variety of workshops and informational sessions promoting the value of ornamental horticulture and offer a spring seedling sale. My experience as a greenhouse manager and greenhouse worker will help me in achieving this goal,” said Virginia. “The future of the green industry is a dynamic and ever-changing future in the face of agriculture today, and I am passionate about it.”



Virginia McChesney
Huntington University
Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship

Julio "Toots" Armellini was the founder of Armellini Express Lines, the largest flower carrier service in the United States. Armellini enlisted in the Navy as a "Seabee" and was stationed all around the globe as a mechanic. He used the 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 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 — \$1,200
Recipient: Regan Jacoby, South Dakota State University

Presently seeking her degree in Horticulture with a Botany Minor at South Dakota State University, Regan is especially interested in cut flowers and associated production with an emphasis on small business management. Regan did seasonal work at SoDak Labs, working with the planting team, which initiates various germination and herbicide tests. Regan attributes her career goals in horticulture to growing up on a family farm. “Numerous years of farm work have taught me the value of investment and passion in your career,” said Regan. “I have sought opportunities to further my knowledge in horticulture and business so that I can own and operate my own floral store.” Regan worked at Munsinger-Clemens gardens in St. Cloud, MN, before she returned to school. Now in her Junior year, she is working for a local florist near campus. “These contrasting experiences broaden my perspectives on the overlapping fields of floriculture and horticulture,” said Regan. “Those experiences will be helpful as I seek to incorporate unique educational opportunities to the community to spread the joy and value of plant care.”



Regan Jacoby
South Dakota State University
Ball Horticultural Company 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

worldwide for the retail and landscape markets. **The Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship** is intended for junior or senior students pursuing a career in commercial floriculture.

Harold Bettinger Scholarship — \$2,300

Recipient: Madison Roger, California Polytechnic State University

A junior at California Polytechnic State University, Madison Roger is majoring in Agricultural and Environmental Plant Science with a minor in Agricultural Business. Madison is involved in two green clubs at Cal Poly, the Zero Waste Club and the Poly-nator Protection Program, which supports her work with the Riparian Insectary Project. As a landscape research project funded by The Green Initiative Fund at the University, it utilizes native shrubs, wildflowers, and herbaceous perennials to provide habitat for green lacewings to enhance biological control of aphids in the adjacent cropland. “I wish to support the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. The impact of choosing the right flowers goes well beyond the joy of watching them bloom. Additionally, the joy of meaningful conservation work lasts longer than a fresh flower does. Finding the right methods, funding, and motivation to get started can be a hurdle to greenhouse and land managers interested in adopting sustainable practices,” explains Madison. “Put simply, I hope to see the green industry become greener.”



Madison Roger
California Polytechnic State University
Harold Bettinger Scholarship

Harold Bettinger was a partner in Bettinger Farms of Swanton, Ohio. In the mid-'50s, he was one of the first progressive growers to convert his bedding plant production from wooden to plastic flats. Bettinger Farms now grows greenhouse and field vegetables. **The Harold Bettinger Scholarship** is for sophomore to graduate horticulture students with a major or minor in business and/or marketing who intend to apply their education to a horticulture-related career business.

BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship — \$1,800

Recipient: Connor Goodwin, The University of Florida

Connor Goodwin is a junior at The University of Florida, where he majors in Plant Science - Soil Management & Plant Productivity and minors in Teaching English as a Second Language. His particular interest is environmentally sustainable organic matter/fertilizer production, specifically the decomposition of organic molecules through insect composting systems. Post-graduation, Connor hopes to continue his honors program research on the optimization of worm and larvae composting efficacy while using his research in worm/larvae farms. He was a horticultural program mentor while at Santa Fe College, where he was also active in student government and president of the Organic Growers Club. He was also employed as a plant nursery associate at Green Market Nursery & Landscaping. “As a member of the University of Florida's Plant Science program, I have learned valuable practical knowledge regarding plant physiology, plant productivity, and soils,” said Connor. “I envision innovative research and development that focuses on synergizing productive yields with environmental rehabilitation. I expect creative solutions for replicating unsustainable materials in more sustainable ways and upcycling waste back into the production cycle in an environmentally healthy manner.”

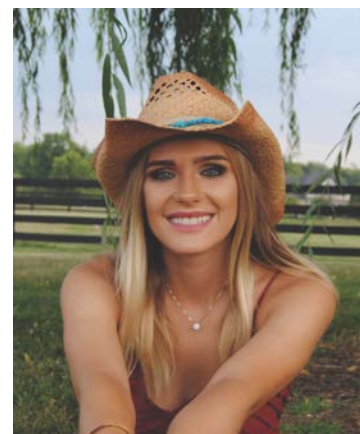


Connor Goodwin
The University of Florida *BioWorks*
IPM/Sustainable Practices
Scholarship

The BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship is 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.

James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship— \$500
Recipient: Jordan Crigger, James Madison University

Jordan Crigger is entering her junior year at James Madison University Honors College and majoring in Biology with a minor in Honors Interdisciplinary Studies. Jordan has worked for two years at Sweet Piedmont Farms, where her work covers everything from planting, marketing, designing, and selling. She especially enjoys floral design through selling bouquets at local farmers markets and delivering subscriptions bouquets. During the COVID pandemic, Jordan has delivered leftover bouquets to nursing homes and families struggling financially or with their health. “Opening up my own floral business was inevitable after the moment I volunteered to deliver a free bouquet to a woman in my neighborhood that worked two jobs. She burst into happy tears after accepting such a small but beautiful gift,” explains Jordan. “I want to continue making designer-quality florals accessible and affordable. Whether one is looking for a bouquet to brighten their home, or a whole plan for their wedding, my goal is to offer the highest quality blooms, inspired designs, and friendly, approachable service.”



Jordan Crigger
James Madison University
*James Bridenbaugh Memorial
Scholarship*
Earl Dedman Scholarship

Jordan is also the recipient of the **Earl Dedman Scholarship — \$2,200**. See page 6 to read more.

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 pursuing a career in floral design and marketing fresh flowers and plants.

CalFlowers Scholarship — \$6,400
Recipient: Kiara Benavides, California Polytechnic State University

Kiara Benavides is a senior at California Polytechnic State University, majoring in Agriculture Science with an Ornamental Horticulture emphasis and minoring in Agribusiness. Kiara is a leader in multiple organizations at her school. She clearly supports her goal of teaching floral design and ornamental horticulture in high school and being a Future Farmers of America career coach. While in school, Kiara works at Poly Plant Shop located at Cal Poly's Horticultural Unit. In this position, she produces custom floral pieces and arrangements for retail and sells custom bouquets and cut flowers at San Luis Obispo Farmers Markets. She is also employed as a field research assistant at the Cal Poly Strawberry Center that partnered with the California Strawberry Commission to increase the sustainability of the California Strawberry industry through research and education that addresses industry needs. Following graduation, Kiara plans to enroll in Cal Poly's Master of Agriculture Education program. Through this program, graduate students complete their master's degree, student teach, and receive their teaching credentials in one academic school year. “My absolute dream job is to become an Agriculture Teacher back home in the Central Valley. Teaching agriculture curriculum will allow me to teach floriculture courses,” said Kiara. “I aspire to



Kiara Benavides
**California Polytechnic State
University**
CalFlowers Scholarship

introduce students to the industry and hopefully encourage some to pursue personal floriculture and horticulture endeavors!”

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 CA and 47 other states across the country. **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 United States.

John Carew Memorial Scholarship — \$2,200
Recipient: Shannon Rauter, Utah State University

Shannon Rauter is a 2019 graduate of Iowa State University and expects to complete her master’s degree in Plant Science at Utah State University in December 2022. Her current research is focused on ranunculus and anemone cut flowers, specifically looking at season advancement techniques and high tunnel production for urban and small farms in Utah. As a member of numerous horticulture clubs, including the American Society of Horticultural Science, Shannon also has a diverse range of non-horticulture job experiences where she was introduced to fruit, vegetable, and floral supply chains and quality requirements. “I love learning about horticulture and sharing this knowledge with others. Upon completion of my master's degree, I’d like a career in agricultural extension where I have a lot of one-on-one interaction with farmers,” said Shannon. “Through my work, volunteer experiences, and research work, I have come to realize that my true passion is combining science and communication in a way that can empower growers and benefit their livelihoods, as well as potentially advance the industry of horticulture.”



Shannon Rauter
Utah 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.

Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Nontraditional Students— \$1,300
Recipient: Alysah Pasquerilla, Oregon State University

Entering her junior year at Oregon State University, Alysah Pasquerilla is majoring in Horticulture, where her crop focus is herbaceous ornamental plants. She was a horticulture intern at Winterthur Museum and Gardens and employed by Ivy Acres as a traveling garden center merchandiser, where she managed five high-volume stores. Alysah hopes to have a career at a botanical garden. “Ideally, I will work in the greenhouse of a botanical garden growing and propagating plants for onsite plant conservation of rare and endangered species as well as for garden displays. I am highly interested in growing and conserving Indoor tropical foliage plants, herbaceous garden



Alysah Pasquerilla
Oregon State University
Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Nontraditional Students

plants, annuals and perennials, and succulents,” shared Alysah. “I hope to inspire the next generation to become gardeners.”

Along with her husband Will, Barbara Carlson was instrumental in establishing the Bedding Plant International (BPI) trade association, which served hundreds of growers. Fran Johnson enjoyed a long, productive career with the John Henry Co., a horticultural printing firm in Lansing, MI. Through BPI, Fran also made many significant and practical contributions of time and talent to advance the greenhouse industry. **The Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Nontraditional Students** is awarded to students interested in bedding and/or floral crops and are re-entering school after a minimum of a three-year absence.

Earl Dedman Scholarship - \$2,200

Recipient: Jordan Crigger, James Madison University

Earl Dedman owned and operated Mountainview Greenhouses in Woodinville, Washington, and was a former president of BPI. In addition to his participation with BPI 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 interested in becoming greenhouse growers and maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA.

Jordan Crigger is also the recipient of the **James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship — \$500**. Read her bio on page 4 above.

Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship — \$2,100

Recipient: Hayden Stecker, University of Wisconsin River Falls

Hayden Stecker is a senior at the University of Wisconsin River Falls, majoring in Professional Horticulture. His crop focus is bedding plants associated with flowers, vegetables, and ornamentals. Hayden worked at Fox Valley Technical College as part of their greenhouse and landscaping crew, at Harrington's Greenhouse, and City of River Falls Public Works, where he conducted general maintenance and was involved in a special project designing flower and perennial beds. Hayden also runs a small general landscaping company. He shares his career goals, “From here, I would love to have the opportunity to work for a larger greenhouse production farm as one of their lead growers. After working for a company in the horticulture field for at least 15 years, I would love to start up my own greenhouse, producing many different annual vegetables, flowers, and ornamentals.”

Hayden is also the recipient of the **John L. Tomasovic Sr. Scholarship — \$1,500**. See page 11 to read more.



Hayden Stecker
University of Wisconsin River Falls
Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship
John L. Tomasovic Sr. Scholarship

The Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship is awarded annually to an undergraduate student entering their junior or senior year majoring in Horticulture or Plant Sciences, with a career interest in herbaceous ornamental plants and the floriculture industry. Preference is 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 — \$1,500

Recipient: Phoebe Austerman, Oklahoma State University

Entering her senior year, Phoebe Austerman is majoring in Public Horticulture with a minor in Plant Biology at Oklahoma State University. Her particular interest in horticulture is in the research, propagation, tissue culturing, and greenhouse production of tropical plants for use in interiorscapes and as houseplants. Her internship at Calvert’s Plant Interiors turned into a job where she helps with plant maintenance, retail sales in the greenhouse, making succulent and orchid arrangements for clients, and installing indoor plants in public spaces. “My career goal is to be in charge of a tissue culture lab within a tropical greenhouse production operation, where we would clone and mass-produce rare, unknown species of plants and make them available to the public,” said Phoebe. “I would like to work somewhere where cutting-edge technology and facilities are utilized to create a premier environment for the development of horticultural products. “



Phoebe Austerman
Oklahoma State University
Garcia Family Scholarship

The Garcia Family Scholarship Fund is 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®.

Long Island Flower Growers Association (LIFGA) Scholarship — \$1,600

Recipient: Victoria Zeng, Cornell University

Victoria Zeng is A senior at Cornell University studying plant breeding and genetics under the Plant Sciences major with a special interest in breeding ornamental crops. Victoria is active in Cornell's undergraduate horticulture club, Hortus Forum. This past summer, Victoria started working in Cornell University's Plant Tissue Culture & Micropropagation Laboratory. She is helping advance a long-term ornamental impatiens breeding program and conducting research on the in vitro induction of polyploidy, gynogenesis, and callogenesis in impatiens. She is also doing a historical search of the Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center (LIHREC) at the university libraries. The LIHREC will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year, and the material Victoria is compiling will be used for its anniversary booklet. “By learning the skills involved in developing novel ornamentals, I have formed a foundation for future success in the breeding field by applying modern breeding techniques,” said Victoria. “These skills will help me adapt to the future needs of the floriculture industry.”



Victoria Zeng
Cornell University
Long Island Flower Growers Association (LIFGA) Scholarship

Long Island Flower Growers Association Bob Gunther Scholarship – \$1,300
Recipient: Giovanni Bevacqua, State University of New York Cobleskill

Giovanni Bevacqua is a junior pursuing his Bachelor of Technology degree in Plant Science at the State University of New York Cobleskill. His crop focus includes but is not limited to ornamental flowers, vegetables, and fruit crops. At SUNY Cobleskill, Giovanni is a greenhouse assistant, where he maintains crops by trimming, training, transplanting, fertilizing, irrigating, and applying biocontrol. He has volunteered at a Christmas tree farm near his hometown and helped harvest five acres of hemp on campus, cutting down the plants in the field by hand and bringing them to the debunking station, where they trimmed the cola (flowers/buds) and removed them from the stems. Giovanni plans to pursue his master’s degree at Cornell University. “I would like to specialize in sustainable growing in both outdoor and controlled greenhouse environments. I hope to have my own farm, growing vegetables, ornamental flowers, and fruit crops on a smaller scaled operation, focusing on using sustainable farming techniques,” said Giovanni. “My goal is to be able to successfully produce food while having a very minimal carbon footprint. Growing up in my family garden and working on local farms has inspired my passion for farming, and participating heavily in FFA while in high school has given me my drive to be a catalyst in the future of agriculture.”



Giovanni Bevacqua
State University of New York Cobleskill
Long Island Flower Growers Association
Bob Gunther Scholarship

The Long Island Flower Growers Association Bob Gunther Scholarship was established in memory of the late Bob Gunther, owner of Gunther’s Greenhouses & Florist in Oceanside, New York. It is intended for students from Long Island and New York studying ornamental horticulture at a community college or four-year institution in New York - this includes floriculture, landscape maintenance, landscape design, turf, and any other related course of study to ornamental horticulture. One student will be awarded this scholarship annually.

Richard T. Meister Scholarship — \$4,500
Recipient: Rebekah Maynard, University of Georgia

Rebekah Maynard completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry at the University of Georgia in 2019. She is now pursuing a master’s degree in Horticulture, also at the University of Georgia. Over the past three years, her research interest has been breeding ornamental plants that are also beneficial to pollinators. She is now working with the genus *Salvia* and has previously worked with the genus *Asclepias*. Rebekah was selected for the HortScholar program through American Hort and attended the 2020 Cultivate conference. Additionally, she has served as a teaching assistant for eight undergraduate classes, creating course materials, delivering lectures, designing laboratory exercises, writing exam questions, and grading student assignments. This experience is part of Rebekah’s work towards earning her Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching offered through UGA that she will receive upon graduation. “As a scientist and a leader, I am fascinated by horticulture and have a passion for teaching. I hope to share my love of floriculture with future students and have made it a priority to complete a certificate in university teaching with my degree,” said Rebekah. “I believe the university is an essential way for students to move into professional positions in the green industry, and I want to have a positive influence on their education.”



Rebekah Maynard
University of Georgia
Richard T. Meister Scholarship

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 has worked closely with many horticultural and floricultural leaders through the years. 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 a career in the land-grant university system with interest in research, extension, or teaching.

National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association (NGMA) Scholarship — \$500

Recipient: Fisher Ries, University of Idaho

Fisher Ries is a junior at the University of Idaho majoring in Horticulture and Urban Agriculture with a second major in Biotechnology and Plant Genomics. This past summer, he worked as a research assistant at the University of Idaho Plant Virology Program, where he propagated and maintained greenhouse stock, tissue culture, molecular analysis, produced viral solutions used in experimental procedures, and analysis. He is involved in various horticulture and green clubs on campus and looks for opportunities to discover the most significant impact in the field. “I envision a greener future for the green industry. I believe that many new horticultural practices will be developed soon to be more sustainable and profitable to growers than current trends. I want to play a role in these changes,” said Fisher.



Fisher Ries
University of Idaho
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 — \$3,100

Recipient: Nital Vadalia-Kakadia, Temple University Ambler

A senior at Temple University, Nital Vadalia-Kakadia is majoring in Horticulture. She is especially interested in cut flower production using regenerative farming practices, perennial, and annual flowers. She is vice president of Pi Alpha Xi (PAX), a national horticulture society at Temple University. Nital volunteered for two years at the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show. At her summer internship at PHS Meadowbrook Farm, she assisted with planting and growing a wide variety of plants. Overcoming earlier hardships in her personal life, Nital restarted her educational journey at the age of 36. “I overcame my struggles with hard work and determination. I continue to work towards my future goals, and with the responsibilities of being a parent and a homemaker, things can get a little challenging. I want to be a role model for my kids and persevere toward my goals. Being an unconventional student and having these experiences, I am confident that, with continued education, I will be able to accomplish my personal and career goals in the horticulture field, using my knowledge and passion to help others,” explains Nital. “In addition to my bachelor's degree, I am pursuing a certification in horticulture therapy; my long-term goal is to be a registered horticulture therapist working primarily with adolescents with learning disabilities. I will use my education and



Nital Vadalia-Kakadia
Temple University Ambler
Mike and Flo Novovesky Scholarship

training to start a small organic flower and vegetable farm that truly enriches the community and brings the value of locally grown flowers and food into their busy lives.”

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 their way through school with financial needs and family obligations. Requirements also include a strong interest in horticulture and financial need.

James K. Rathmell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship for Horticultural Work/Study Abroad— \$4,100
Recipient: Alyssa Steele, University of Maryland

Alyssa Steele is a senior at the University of Maryland majoring in Landscape Architecture and completing her 2-year certification in Ornamental Horticulture from the Institute of Applied Agriculture. She has worked at the University of Maryland Research Greenhouse and had internships at Deep Creek Lavender Farm Agritourism & Horticulture, Washington National Cathedral, and Wentworth's Nursery. Last summer, she was a horticulture intern at Berkshire Botanical Gardens & Naumkeag in Stockton, MA. “I have been gaining experience in the horticulture field for more than four years and see a future career in public horticulture,” said Alyssa. “In my landscape architecture coursework, I have discovered many places around the world that are innovating the way we think about horticulture. I would like to contribute to that innovation. Upon graduation, I hope to continue working in public horticulture and travel across and outside the United States.”



Alyssa Steele
University of Maryland
*James K. Rathmell, Jr. Memorial
Scholarship for Horticultural Work/Study
Abroad*

Jim Rathmell was a horticulture extension specialist at Penn State University who promoted communication and cooperation with horticulturists in other countries. A widely published author, he worked with commercial growers to implement many outstanding educational programs. **The James K. Rathmell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship for Horticultural Work/Study Abroad** is awarded to junior or senior level undergraduates or graduate students who have a specific plan for horticulture work/study outside of the United States.

Seed Companies Scholarship — \$2,700
Recipient: Adam D’Angelo, University of Wisconsin, Madison

A graduate of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Adam D’Angelo is 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. He was an undergraduate research assistant at Rutgers in the plant science department. At the University of Wisconsin, he is a graduate research assistant in the Goldman Breeding Lab. His research is focused on improving flavor and eating quality in the table beet, *Beta vulgaris*, through the genetic control of endogenous geosmin and oxalic acid production. “Upon graduation, I plan to pursue a career as a horticultural plant breeder, using modern technology to help develop crops that are bigger, more aesthetically pleasing, and perform



Adam D’Angelo
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Seed Companies Scholarship

better under heavy biotic and abiotic stress. I believe that plant breeding is the perfect combination of meaningful, impactful science and creative problem-solving. I also believe that the future of agriculture is deeply intertwined with cultivar development and emerging research in plant biology,” said D’Angelo.

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

John L. Tomasovic Sr. Scholarship — \$1,500

Recipient: Hayden Stecker, University of Wisconsin River Falls

Past president of BPFI, 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 needs and a GPA between 3.0 and 3.5.

Hayden Stecker is also the recipient of the **Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship — \$2,100**. Read his bio on page 6 above.

Edward Tuinier Memorial Scholarship— \$5,200

Recipient: Michael Ozolins, Michigan State University

Michael Ozolins is a junior majoring in horticulture at Michigan State University. His particular interest is succulents/cacti, their physiology, and how growers can induce succulents to flower. As a member of the MSU Student Horticultural Association and Model United Nations, Michael is now a research assistant at the Roberto Lopez Lab in MSU Floriculture. “I want to go to graduate school to study succulent physiology and flowering or studying herbicide use in floriculture,” said Michael. “Last semester, I took graduate-level courses on herbicide mode of action and environmental plant physiology. These courses have taught me the importance of plant physiology in optimizing plant production.”



Michael Ozolins
Michigan State University
Edward Tuinier Memorial Scholarship

Ed Tuinier, the owner of Post Gardens, loved the greenhouse business, building his firm to one of the top 50 U.S. companies and inspiring his children, all of whom work in one of the two Post Gardens locations. Ed was a graduate of Michigan State University and a major benefactor of the MSU horticulture program and demonstration gardens. **The Edward Tuinier Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to sophomore, junior, or senior undergraduate students enrolled in the floriculture program at Michigan State University.

Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship — \$1,400
Recipient: Brenna Heavin, University of Missouri-Columbia

A junior at the University of Missouri – Columbia, Brenna Heavin is pursuing her degree in Plant Sciences with an emphasis in horticultural science and design. Her special interest is in Floriculture/marketing and small business management and Landscape Architecture/Green Roofs, and sustainable architecture. She has worked at retail florists and volunteered with the Rolla FFA chapter. “My goal is to work in Europe in the tulip fields or in a floral shop to get a more global education in floristry. I hope to partake in a study abroad program next year to Holland,” said Brenna. “I would also like to pursue a master’s degree and licensure in Landscape Architecture, specializing in Green Roofs. I plan to promote sustainable landscapes that increase biodiversity and lessen carbon emissions.”



Brenna Heavin
University of Missouri-Columbia
*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 sophomore, junior or senior students to have a career interest in agribusiness marketing and distribution of floral products.

Vocational (Bettinger, Holden, and Perry) Scholarship — \$1,700
Recipient: Rebecca Cornish, Pennsylvania College of Technology

A senior at the Pennsylvania College of Technology, Rebecca Cornish is pursuing an associate degree in Horticulture with a Plant Production Emphasis and a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration Management. Her crop focus and particular interest area is edible plant production using organic methods. Rebecca works full-time, and despite her busy work schedule, Rebecca has been on the Dean’s List each year. Her future career goals include owning and operating a farm and restaurant utilizing organic, sustainable, and regenerative methods. “When I graduate with dual degrees in May, I will use my business degree to create a business plan and apply for grants so that I may get funding for a small farm. The horticulture degree will help enable me to offer sustainable and regenerative agriculture on this farm, which will include pasture-raised chickens, orchards, crops, gardens, and greenhouses, to offer year-round fresh produce to my community as well as provide the food that will be served in the restaurant. I want to offer a true farm-to-table experience in an environmentally responsible way,” explained Rebecca.



Rebecca Cornish
Pennsylvania College of Technology
*Vocational (Bettinger, Holden, and
Perry) Scholarship*

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 three industry champions; 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.

More details on AFE scholarships are available at endowment.org/scholarships. AFE awards these scholarships annually, and all applications are due by **May 1** of each year.

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.

