

TNLA GREEN

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Investing in the Future

TNLA Education & Research Foundation 2009-2010 Scholarship Recipients



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2009-2010 Scholarship Recipients

Growing to meet the demands of an ever-changing industry, in 1992 a successful 26-year-old scholarship program was expanded to become the TNLA Education & Research Foundation. A nine-member Board of Trustees plus two staff members manage the business of the Foundation. The main purposes of the Foundation are:

- To award funds to horticulture/landscape students for their continued education; and
- To award funds for research in horticulture/landscape areas of interest in Texas.

How is the Foundation funded?

Funding comes from individuals and companies making special contributions.

No money collected from members of TNLA automatically goes to the Foundation. It is a separate corporation with a separate budget. That is why donations to the Foundation are so important to the Green Industry. Foundation donations can be individual or corporate and are deductible as a charitable gift. The Foundation accepts named scholarships in honor of a person of the donor's choosing on short- and long-term arrangements. TNLA Regions I, II, IV, and V have chosen to support the Foundation by making annual donations to support a scholarship.

Why support the Foundation?

The Green Industry is constantly evolving, presenting more opportunities and challenges to those who work in the industry. Some of the changes that are

affecting the industry and shaping its future are:

- Decreasing support for agricultural research;
- Decreasing public support for educational institutions, the source of progress in plant material, pest management, and maintenance strategies;
- Decreasing number of students who perceive horticulture as a desirable profession.

Investing in the future direction of the Green Industry through the TNLA Education and Research Foundation will:

- Establish a strong tradition of horticultural philanthropy;
- Build the available pool of research dollars;
- Contribute to the education of students;
- Seek the best and brightest of our students and encourage them in their studies.

To learn more about the Foundation, or to make a contribution, call the TNLA office at 800.880.0343 or download a donor card here.

FOUNDATION MISSION STATEMENT

To advance in the broadest sense the environmentally beneficial use of plants, and the interests of the nursery/landscape industry in Texas, through funding education and research.

RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Kayla Bennett

*Patti Willey Scholarship
TNLA General Scholarship*

HOMETOWN: Grand Saline

SCHOOL: Tarleton State University

MAJOR: Horticulture

MINOR: Agriculture Education



Ms. Bennett discovered a real interest in agriculture by joining her school district's Future Farmers of America (FFA) program, where she

was an active member for six years and a chapter officer for three years. Competing in leadership and career development events through FFA taught her how to handle pressure and maintain a strong work ethic. While in high school, Ms. Bennett, a born entrepreneur, began a homegrown blueberry farm, Bennett Blueberries. She recruited students in her community to help market her business and pick, sell, and deliver the blueberries. Along with her Horticulture degree, Ms. Bennett plans to earn a teaching certification in Agriculture Education. After establishing her career in agriculture, she would like to teach in a school that has a greenhouse learning facility, sharing her "love for growing things with others."

Robert Taylor Bever

Harry's Greenhouse Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Richardson

SCHOOL: Richland Junior College

MAJOR: Horticulture

MINOR: Business



Mr. Bever's family has been involved in the nursery industry for more than 20 years, with both of his parents holding TNLA

certifications – a designation that he also recently achieved. He passed the Texas Certified Nursery Professional (TCNP) exam while attending school and working full time this past year. As an employee of Calloway's Nursery in Richardson, Mr. Bever has worked in a number of roles from Carry-out Associate to Departmental Sales, and he was promoted to Nursery Manager in the spring. Mr. Bever was designated the Monrovia Specialist, as well, garnering the attention of the 2009 Calloway's Customer Panel in early May, and his store was awarded "Best Nursery Display 2009" among all Calloway's locations. He plans to continue his horticulture studies and work and hopes to one day own a growing operation in East Texas.

Travis Britt

Mortellaro's Nursery Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Houston

SCHOOL: Texas A&M University

MAJOR: Horticulture



Mr. Britt is currently a Masters candidate in Horticulture at Texas A&M University. He owns and operates a small lawn maintenance

business and is also employed as a student technician at the Texas A&M Pecan Orchard. As an undergraduate at Texas A&M, he was nominated for the College of Agriculture Senior Merit Award and he worked for three years in the University's Holistic Garden. Mr. Britt gained experience in the business world when he served as Head and Vice Chairman for Chilifest, a huge, two-day musical event and chili cook-off that attracts thousands of people to the Bryan/College

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E & R SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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Station area each year. He was in charge of booking entertainment, updating contracts, accounting, and many other tasks which have helped him successfully run his current business venture. His plans after graduation are “to continue in the Green Industry and hopefully, take [his] business to another level.”

Chris Countryman

Calloway's Nursery Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Needville

SCHOOL: Texas A&M University

MAJOR: Landscape Architecture



Mr. Countryman will be the fourth generation of his family to enter the horticulture business. His great-grandmother sold nursery stock

from her backyard greenhouse at an East Texas roadside stand, his grandfather opened a garden center in Cedar Creek Lake in 1970, and his father has owned and operated two different landscaping businesses over the past three decades. Mr. Countryman is the third person in his family to receive a scholarship through TNLA's E&R Foundation, as his father received one in 1983 and his brother received one in 2007. For over ten years, Mr. Countryman worked with his father, learning to identify plants, insects, and diseases, and discovering the challenges of day-to-day operations, such as employee and customer relations, inventory control, and property maintenance. “I started young,” he says, “helping as much as possible watering and cleaning. As time progressed...my responsibilities increased.” This fall Mr. Countryman is entering his freshman year at Texas A&M University, where he will study landscape architecture, and he

hopes to one day own a design/build firm in Houston or Dallas.

Amanda Marie Delgado

TNLA Region IV Opportunity Award Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Slaton

SCHOOL: Texas Tech University

MAJOR: Horticulture and Landscape Architecture



Ms. Delgado is no stranger to the pages of *TNLA Green*, as she is a six-time recipient of a TNLA Education & Research Foundation scholarship. She

currently serves as Vice President of the Texas Tech Horticulture Society, and is a student member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Additionally, Ms. Delgado was selected as a Mentor Tech Protégé Advisory Committee Leader. She is currently employed as a student assistant at the Texas Tech Horticulture Gardens and Greenhouse Complex, where she is instrumental in making the greenhouse more computer-friendly, while having the opportunity to learn the business side of the Green Industry. Upon receiving her degrees in Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Ms. Delgado plans to earn a Master's of Landscape Architecture Degree and specialize in residential garden design.

Joanne Dudley

TNLA General Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Houston

SCHOOL: Houston Community College

MAJOR: Horticulture

Twenty-one years ago, Ms. Dudley took a hiatus from the publishing industry to raise her children. Now that her nest is empty, she is concentrating on her studies and entering a new career in horticulture.



When she first began attending Houston Community College in 2006, she thought that computer science was her calling.

After discussing it with her career counselor, she realized it would be very difficult to vie for jobs in such an extremely competitive, young industry. Ms. Dudley then decided to combine her two interests of computers and horticulture, and she began working toward a Landscape Design Certificate. When she had taken a few more horticulture courses, however, she fell in love with the process of growing and maintaining plants, and in 2008, she changed her degree plan. “The science of growing is challenging and rewarding at the same time. I have not abandoned Landscape Design, just expanded my area of interest. I can see myself owning a full service nursery someday with greenhouses attached and landscaping services offered to the public.”

Amanda Eigler

Anne C. Muscat Scholarship sponsored by TNLA Region II

HOMETOWN: Houston

SCHOOL: Houston Community College

MAJOR: Horticulture



Ms. Eigler is currently employed part-time as a horticulture intern at the Cockrell Butterfly Center in the Houston Museum of Natural Science. In this

esteemed position, she is able to put her studies into practice with horticulture- and entomology-related work including design, installation, maintenance, propagation, greenhouse work, and caring for an established butterfly population.

E & R SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

She plans to continue working part-time within her field while attending school full-time to complete a Bachelor's Degree, and then Master's and Doctoral Degrees, in Horticulture. Ms. Egler has mapped out her future in detail. Upon completion of her studies and working in the industry for five to eight years, she would like to open a small retail nursery and gift shop. When there is enough profit to reinvest, her goal is to establish a small orchard and berry farm, where customers can pick their own fruit, with a cafe showcasing seasonal foods. "Plants are my passion," she says. "I hope to have a long career within the horticulture field, but I first have a long road ahead of me to complete my education."

Tyson Gaspard

Jack Jones Memorial Scholarship sponsored by Southwest Wholesale Nursery

HOMETOWN: Lake Jackson
SCHOOL: Texas A&M University
MAJOR: Landscape Architecture
MINOR: Urban Planning



In high school, Mr. Gaspard won a Biology Merit Award, as well as a Physics and Chemistry Merit Award, and graduated Summa Cum Laude in his class. He not only made the Dean's List at Texas A&M this past year, he also won a top design award in a landscape architecture competition with over 300 entrants. For the past two summers, he has gained hands-on experience working for a landscaping company in College Station which specializes in mid- to high-end residential design and installation. Next summer, Mr. Gaspard plans to intern at a larger landscaping firm that works on a broader scale because he wants

to be involved with projects that deal with commercial public spaces. He says, "Having the opportunity to rearrange, modify, and preserve the landscape is something that I am truly excited about, and I can hardly wait to begin my career doing it."

Valorie Gehman

John & Linda Bracken Scholarship sponsored by Wilson Seay Stout

HOMETOWN: Houston
SCHOOL: Texas A&M University, Kingsville
MAJOR: Agriculture



Working as a Grant Program Manager at Houston Community College (HCC), Ms. Gehman decided that what she really wanted to do was teach horticulture to the students there. With the encouragement of the dean of her department at HCC, she applied and was accepted in the Master's program in Agriculture at Texas A&M Kingsville. Of her current role at HCC, Maya Durnovo, Ed.D., Dean of Economic & Workforce Development, wrote, "Ms. Gehman has done an outstanding job in creating a seamless pathway for high school students to transition into university level studies. She has been highly successful in motivating and inspiring students because she has a magic touch with people."

Mallory Haas

Joe Burks Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Katy
SCHOOL: Texas A&M Blinn Team
MAJOR: Agriculture

Ms. Haas was very active in her high school's chapter of FFA, winning multiple individual and team honors and serving as



treasurer. She started in the organization raising livestock, but then her Agriculture teacher encouraged her to produce plants for a county fair. This opened her eyes to the possibilities of a career in horticulture. Since she has been impacted by not only her high school Ag teacher, but her sister and brother-in-law, who are also Ag teachers, she has decided to pursue a teaching certification in agriculture and impart her knowledge and passion to younger generations.

Micah Elizabeth Hale

Margaret & Sterling Cornelius Scholarship sponsored by TNLA Region II

HOMETOWN: Rosenberg
SCHOOL: Texas A&M University
MAJOR: Agriculture
MINOR: Landscape Horticulture



Ms. Hale has gathered much of her experience working with plants as a volunteer and then an employee at the TAMU Holistic Garden, where she was a plant sales manager for a year. She currently works as a garden manager, horticulturist, and Extension assistant at the TAMU Horticulture Garden. As an undergraduate student at Texas A&M, Ms. Hale received numerous academic scholarships and was on the Dean's List several times. Upon receiving her Master's of Agriculture Degree in Landscape Design and Botanical Garden Maintenance, she plans to work for Texas Extension or a botanical garden and eventually open her own nursery.

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E & R SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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Evan Jones

Paul Stanley Memorial Scholarship sponsored by The LETCO Group

HOMETOWN: Magnolia

SCHOOL: Texas A&M University

MAJOR: Horticulture

MINOR: Landscape Management



Mr. Jones grew up in the horticulture business, as his parents own and operate Spring Creek Growers, a Christmas tree farm in

Magnolia. During his time at Tomball High School, Mr. Jones was active in FFA, serving as chaplain in 2007, in addition to being a member of the tennis team for three years. He has received many scholarships and is a member of the Texas A&M Horticulture Club. Of his interest in horticulture, Mr. Jones states, "My love and commitment for plants keeps me hungry for learning everything I can in the field of horticulture."

Desiree Koehn

Jerry Will Scholarship sponsored by Monrovia Nursery Company

HOMETOWN: Arlington

SCHOOL: Texas A&M University

MAJOR: Horticulture

MINOR: Science and Biotechnology



Upon graduation in December 2009, Ms. Koehn plans to begin graduate school to work on a Master's Degree and then a Doctoral Degree in

Horticulture. Once she has completed her studies, she will be able to call herself a plant breeder. Whether she decides to

work in the public or private sector, Ms. Koehn knows that she wants to breed peppers. "There are so many varieties and the germplasm is so large that the possibilities for breeding in peppers are extremely exciting," she says. Her ultimate goal is to increase nutritional content in grocery store-variety peppers and other vegetables. "I believe that while we have more than sufficient food production in the US, the nutrition of the fresh food that we grow and eat has decreased over the years. I hope to remedy that."

Rebecca Pledger

Bernard A. Grimm Memorial Scholarship TNLA General Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Brenham

SCHOOL: Stephen F. Austin State University

MAJOR: Horticulture



With an impressive GPA of 4.0 in her major, Ms. Pledger has been on the Dean's List and was awarded SFA Academic Excellence Scholarships for the

past four semesters. When she completes her undergraduate work in May 2010, she will begin to pursue a Master's Degree in Horticulture, with an emphasis in Public Horticulture. Since she was in the eighth grade, Ms. Pledger knew what she wanted to do in life. Upon completion of her studies, she will work as a horticulturist in an arboretum or botanical garden. Her goals also include exploring and studying plant life in the North Island of New Zealand and in Australia to further enhance her knowledge. Ms. Pledger also intends to teach classes on Public Horticulture at a university. "Most importantly," she says, "I want to expand

my knowledge and grasp every aspect of horticulture to the highest degree, teach others, and continue to learn and share more about the beauty of our environment."

Abraham Riak

TNLA Region I Scholarship

HOME COUNTRY: Sudan

SCHOOL: Richland College

MAJOR: Horticulture

MINOR: Ornamental Horticulture Technology



Immediately after arriving in the US eight years ago from a refugee camp in Kenya, Mr. Riak enrolled in school to learn English,

and he is now three courses away from completing a degree in Horticulture with a GPA of 3.66. While going to school over the course of the past seven years, he has held landscaping jobs at the same time, first as a landscape assistant at the Dallas Arboretum, and now in grounds maintenance at Southern Methodist University. While working at SMU and attending school, Mr. Riak also holds a nightly and weekend job at Home Depot. His supervisor at SMU, Assistant Director of Landscape Management Ann Allen, says that Mr. Riak shows up every day "...ready to work. This is how he approaches every aspect of his life. He accomplishes more in one day than the normal person would in a week... He works harder than most of us for every single thing he has and he values his education and his work more than most."

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E & R SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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Amanda Spence

North Central Texas TNLA Region V Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Benbrook

SCHOOL: Tarleton State University

MAJOR: Landscape Design

MINOR: Business



Ms. Spence has grown up in the Green Industry, attending TAN and TNLA events, including EXPO, with her father, Bobby Spence, of Harvest

Supply Company in Fort Worth. She participates in horticultural community activities like Benbrook Green Days and Trinity River Trash Bash, as part of an effort to preserve local landscape. Her early exposure to the nursery and landscape industry sparked her interest and held it into her college career. Sam Weger, of Calloway's Nursery, says, "I'm very pleased that Amanda has moved to horticulture as her chosen career path, and I am excited to see the enthusiasm she brings to the table. Her parents have instilled, and she continues to exhibit, a set of core values and work ethic that are complementary to the ideals of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association."

Kaylee Whitehurst

Grady Wadsworth Scholarship sponsored by Greenleaf Nursery Company
TNLA General Scholarship

HOMETOWN: Lawn

SCHOOL: Texas Tech University

MAJOR: Horticulture

MINOR: Business

From her very first class, Ms. Whitehurst developed a great interest and passion for the field of Horticulture. She is currently an



undergraduate research assistant for Dr. Cynthia McKenney, Associate Professor of Horticulture in the Department of Plant Soil and Science at Texas Tech. When she

finishes her Bachelor's Degree in December of this year, she plans to study in the Horticulture graduate program under Dr. McKenney. This past spring, Ms. Whitehurst achieved the Outstanding Student Award in her department and has been on the Dean's and President's lists on numerous occasions. She is currently the president of both the Texas Tech Horticulture Society and the Pi Alpha Xi Horticulture Honorary chapter. "As a student research employee," Dr. McKenney says, "Kaylee has been resourceful enough that I turn over entire projects to her and allow her to schedule the work to be done, as well as direct the workers themselves."

Amy Wilson

In Honor of Ray Haynes Scholarship sponsored by Excel Garden Products

HOMETOWN: Centerville

SCHOOL: Sam Houston State University

MAJOR: Agricultural Sciences

MINOR: Horticulture



Ms. Wilson graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Horticulture and Crop Science with a minor in Secondary Education from Sam Houston

State University this past spring semester. During her last semester, she completed her student teaching at Cinco Ranch High School in Katy, teaching two advanced and one introductory floral design classes. Through this experience, she combined both her passion for horticulture with her passion for educating. "Even though I was

fortunate enough to be able to attend college, I realize that not every child will have that same opportunity. That is why I feel so passionate about educating students on the vocational opportunities in the horticultural industry," says Ms. Wilson. Two of her students applied and received jobs at a Michaels craft store as assistant florists, and she is confident that she had a hand in making those students marketable employees. In the fall, Ms. Wilson will begin her graduate studies in Agricultural Sciences at Sam Houston, as well as a teaching assistantship where she will be conducting the floral design labs for undergraduate classes.

Anna Vogler

TNLA General Scholarship

HOMETOWN: San Antonio

SCHOOL: Palo Alto College

MAJOR: Landscape and Horticultural Science



Ms. Vogler made the President's list at Palo Alto College the past two semesters and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society in the

spring of 2009. Her lifelong dream is to obtain a college degree, and she is finally able to dedicate herself to her studies now that her children are older. She has gained valuable experience in nursery operations working as an intern at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, but she is also interested in pursuing a career in landscaping and maintenance for commercial properties. "I have always had a love for the outdoors and gardening," Ms. Vogler says. "A degree in Landscape and Horticulture allows me to combine my passion with my personal goals." 🌿