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**AFE Awards More than $42,800 in 2018 Scholarships**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA – September 14, 2018 –** The [**American Floral Endowment (AFE)**](http://www.endowment.org) has awarded 21 students with scholarships totaling $42,800. Eighty- seven applications were received for this 2018 scholarship cycle.

"We had many outstanding students apply for scholarships this year, which is why some scholarships were awarded to two recipients," said Dwight Larimer, AFE Chairman and Education Committee Chair.

"I'm proud to see the high quality of students each year and I enjoy granting scholarships to these well-deserved students to help them 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://www.endowment.org/scholarships).

**American Florists' Exchange Scholarship — $2,500**  
**Recipient: Helena Dondero - California Polytechnic State, San Luis Obispo**

A junior majoring in agricultural science with an emphasis in ornamental horticulture and a minor in agricultural business, Dondero grew up in the floral industry. She works at her family-owned shop, Fiore Floral and Gifts in Linden, CA, and Bigileri Farms in Clements. After completing her bachelor's and master's degree she will seek her credential in agricultural education, hoping to secure a position as an agricultural teacher. “I want my students to understand how to operate and care for greenhouse horticulture corps and greenhouse and field floriculture crops,” said Dondero.

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. This 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.

**Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship — $2,300**  
**Recipient: Kelly Pohlman, University of Kentucky**

A sophomore majoring in horticulture, plant and soil science and minoring in agricultural economics, Pohlman is interested in a career path in floriculture marketing. She was a 4-H member as a young child and hopes to study abroad in Amsterdam to learn about specific aspects of the floriculture and horticulture industries while experiencing a different culture. “From my time in 4-H, raising and entering plants in the county fair, I have been devoted to horticulture. My degree in horticulture will enable me to have a career in the marketing industry for flowers and plants,” said Pohlman.

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Julio "Toots" Armellini is 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, where he learned the skills he used 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**  
**Recipient: Ruqayah Bhuiyan, University of Georgia**

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| **Ruqayah Bhuiyan University of Georgia**  *Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship* |

A senior majoring in horticulture with a science emphasis, Bhuiyan is interested in water delivery and lighting, and manipulating these two systems for floricultural crops. She was an intern with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida where she worked on the New Crop Selection Experiments, which are experiments designed to test the growth habits of selected food crops for space flight. “I hope to continue to expand my knowledge on water delivery systems and the manipulation of light to grow crops,” said Bhuiyan.

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.

**Harold Bettinger Scholarship — $2,100**  
**Recipient: Megan Haresnape, Kansas State University**  
Haresnape is a senior, majoring in horticulture-production and minoring in agribusiness. She is planning for a career as a horticulturist, working with herbaceous, ornamental, and perennial plants. “Every time I walk into a greenhouse, or even see one, my stomach fills with butterflies, my eyes light up, and a huge smile spreads across my face. My dream is to be a small producer where I can take the time and effort to produce specialty crops, whether they be ornamentals or cut flowers and provide those unique plants for the community in which I reside,” said Haresnape.

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| **Megan Haresnape**  **Kansas 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 Bettinger Scholarship is intended for horticulture students, sophomore through graduate levels, who have a major or minor in business and/or marketing with the intent to apply their education to a horticulture-related career business.

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| |  | | --- | |  | | **Leala Machesney University of Maine**  *BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship* | |
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**BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship — $1,300**

**Recipients: Leala Machesney, University of Maine**

Machesney is a senior obtaining her bachelor's degree in sustainable horticulture, focusing on the sustainable production of edible native plant species and their utilization in edible landscapes. She plans to complete her master’s degree and open a nursery specializing in native plants with a large selection of edible native plants and to implement biological controls as opposed to pesticides whenever possible. “The promotion of native plants is an exciting prospect to me, as I believe a stronger awareness and appreciation for our surrounding plant community is critical in order to protect the earth for future generations,” said Machesney.

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

**James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship — $500**  
**Recipient: Armando DeLoera Mejia, City College of San Francisco**

A senior in floriculture, DeLoera Mejia is majoring in general business/marketing. His studies focus on the retail sector. He hopes to establish a successful floral business, promoting eco-friendly growing and sustainable practices while helping individuals and communities interested in the floral and environmental industry. “I hope to put my knowledge, expertise, and continuing education to use by starting a movement to educate and inform the general public about the benefits, values, and qualities of eco-floral designs. This includes implementing reduce, reuse, recycle and repurpose values,” said DeLoera Mejia.

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| **Armando DeLoera Mejia City College of San Francisco**  *James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship* |

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 Bridenbaugh Scholarship is for sophomore, junior or senior students who are pursuing a career in floral design and marketing of fresh flowers and plants.

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**CalFlowers Scholarship — $2,000**

**Recipient: Roame Thatcher, City College of San Francisco**

A sophomore in floriculture, Thatcher is majoring in horticulture. A volunteer in the nursery at the San Francisco Botanical Gardens, she is interested in different seed treatments, stratifying and scarifying seed and interested in plant propagation. “I have been gardening since I was seven years old when I planted a fairy garden. My interest and passion for plants increased, and I planted a community garden in the alley behind my house in high school. I hope to one day own a wholesale plant nursery that specializes in ancient and medicinal plants,” said Thatcher.

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 the state and 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 — $2,100**  
**Recipient: Emily Teng, University of Hawaii at Manoa**

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| **Emily Teng University of Hawaii at Manoa**  *John Carew Memorial Scholarship* |

Teng is obtaining her Ph.D., and plans on working in floriculture production and variety improvement research after obtaining her Ph.D. She wants her work to connect scientific research with practical industry applications in either extension work or in floriculture production. "I would like to obtain a position at a university as an educator and concentrate on research improving ornamental production," said Teng.

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 Carew Scholarship is open to graduate students in horticulture with an interest in greenhouse crops.

**Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Nontraditional Students — $1,200   
Recipient: Matt Witemyre, Merritt College**

Witemyre is a sophomore majoring in nursery management. He has a personal interest in tropicals and cannabis and companion plants. “Since California legalized cannabis cultivation for recreational use in 2016, my goal is to open a licensed storefront cannabis nursery, helping to bring best practices and legitimate horticultural knowledge to this previously underground industry,” said Witemyre.

Barbara Carlson and her husband Will were instrumental in the establishment of BPI. Fran Johnson enjoyed a long, productive career with the John Henry Company, a horticultural printing firm in Lansing, Mich. Johnson also made many significant and practical contributions of time and talent through BPI to advance the greenhouse industry. The Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Nontraditional Students is awarded to students re-entering school after a minimum five-year absence who have an interest in bedding and/or floral crops.

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**Earl Dedman Memorial Scholarship — $2,100**  
**Recipient: Kimberly Cooper, University of Georgia**

A senior majoring in horticulture, Cooper is exploring various internship and work opportunities in both commercial and botanical garden settings. “With all the advancements the industry has been able to make in the past few years, I see a new, higher level of quality being established despite the growing demand for quantity. I believe quality does not have to be sacrificed in favor of quantity. There is a balance, and the green industry has the inventive power to make it happen,” said Cooper.

Earl Dedman owned and operated Mountainview Greenhouses in Woodinville, Wash., and was a former president of BPFI. In addition to his participation with BPFI 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.

**Long Island Flower Growers Association (LIFGA) Scholarship — $1,400   
Recipient: Sarah Snow, New York Botanical Garden School of Professional Horticulture**

Snow is a senior majoring in horticulture and is especially interested in landscape maintenance/design, sustainable horticulture and pruning. “I have dedicated the past five years of my life to learning different aspects of horticulture and look forward to learning more and informing others through employment at a public garden,” said Snow.

The LIFGA Scholarship was established in 2010. LIFGA members represent growers and retailers promoting research, education and sales of ornamentals in the local market. The scholarship is intended for students in the Long Island/New York area studying ornamental horticulture at a community college or a four-year institution.

**Long Island Flower Growers Association Bob Gunther Scholarship – $1,000  
Recipient: Jesse Friel, Farmingdale State College**

A sophomore in horticulture technology management, Friel is majoring in landscape development. He presently designs and installs sustainable permaculture and ornamental landscapes in residential yards. “Upon completion of my horticulture management degree program, I hope to offer ornamental horticulture, olericulture and fruticulture design, installation and management to suit my customers’ needs and desires,” said Friel.

This 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 who are 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 courses of study related to ornamental horticulture. One student will be awarded this scholarship annually.

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| **Shea Keene University of Florida**  *Richard T. Meister Scholarship* |

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**Richard T. Meister Scholarship — $4,300**  
**Recipient: Shea Keene, University of Florida**

Keen is currently obtaining her Ph.D. in environmental horticulture. Her research has focused on several crops, both edible and ornamental. “Following completion of my Ph.D., I intend to obtain employment at a land-grant university and conduct research in several areas, including consumer preference for horticultural products, improving greenhouse production of ornamental and edible crops with the use of technology such as LED lights and plant-specific light regimens, and analyzing and characterizing the flavor and fragrance of edible and ornamental plants and evaluating the genetics underlying these traits,” said Keen.

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 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 — $600**  
**Recipient: Sean Tarr, Michigan State University**

Tarr is majoring in horticulture and minoring in environmental sustainability. He is interested in sustainable production/practices (IPM, organic and conventional merging, passive solar greenhouse use, etc.), floriculture, and herb production. “I see organic and conventional practices merging together, reducing the polarization between the two and increases,” said Tarr.

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 — $2,800   
Recipient: Lianna Smith, Tulane University**

Smith is a junior, completing a dual major in ecology/environmental biology and plant sciences with a minor in architecture. “I hope to find a position domestically or internationally that will allow me to research and deploy green spaces and new plant technologies in urban areas, for the purpose of plant-based bio-remediation,” said Smith.

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. Their 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.

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**Lawrence "Bud" Ohlman Memorial Scholarship — $500   
Recipient: David Figueroa, Texas Tech University**

Figueroa is a senior, majoring in plant and soil science and minoring in landscape studies. After he earns his undergraduate degree he plans to enroll in a master’s program studying tropical, temperate and fruiting plants in Hawaii, South America, California or Florida. “I hope to work in the nursery industry, learning about wholesale and commercial greenhouse production systems and methods geared for the customer,” said Figueroa.

Bud Ohlman was a hands-on grower in his family business, expanding the truck gardening operation to include greenhouses, bedding plant 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. This scholarship goes to students with the career goal to become a bedding plant grower for an established business.

**James K. Rathmell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship for Horticultural Work/Study Abroad — $3,600**   
**Recipient: Ariana Newton, West Virginia University**

Newton is a senior, completing her agricultural science with a major in horticulture and a minor in entrepreneurship. She hopes to be a greenhouse grower after graduation and would like to eventually own her own business. “I have loved plants ever since I was a kid. In fact, I used to carry around a potato instead of the usual blanket or stuffed toy. So it was no surprise when I decided to major in horticulture,” said Newton.

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 Rathmell Scholarship is awarded to junior or senior level undergraduates or graduate students who have a specific plan for horticulture work/study outside of the U.S.

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| **Erin Pfarr, Rutgers University**  *Seed Companies Scholarship* |

**Seed Companies Scholarship — $2,600**  
**Recipient: Erin Pfarr, Rutgers University**

Pfarr is completing her Ph.D. in the plant science, plant breeding and genetics track. After having worked on several research projects during her undergraduate and graduate studies, she is particularly interested in breeding for disease and insect resistance, drought tolerance, cold tolerance, noninvasiveness, novel flowering traits such as repeat blooming, and edible ornamental plants. “I would like to work as a private sector ornamental plant breeder developing beautiful and functional ornamental plants,” said Pfarr.

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 this scholarship, which requires students to have a career goal within the seed industry and be junior or senior undergraduates or graduate students.

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**John L. Tomasovic Sr. Scholarship — $1,100**   
**Recipient: Jennifer Desormeaux, Virginia Tech**

Entering her senior year, Desormeaux is completing her B.S. degree in horticulture, majoring in environmental horticulture and minoring in plant health sciences. She is interested in ornamental annuals and perennials. She hopes to become a propagative grower of annuals and perennials in a large scale commercial greenhouse. “I had a spring internship where I spent a month each in propagation, finished annuals, finished perennials, and research and development. I found propagation to be the most challenging and most rewarding,” said Desormeaux.

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 Tomasovic Scholarship offers special consideration for sophomore, junior or senior undergraduate students with financial need and GPAs between 3.0 and 3.5.

**Edward Tuinier Memorial Scholarship — $4,900**   
**Recipients: Sean Tarr, Michigan State University**

A senior majoring in horticulture and minoring in environmental sustainability, Tarr is interested in sustainable production/practices (IPM, organic and conventional merging, passive solar greenhouse use, etc.), floriculture, and herb production. “My goal is to increase the sustainability in the horticulture industry, assisting in bridging conventional and organic practices, and spreading knowledge through various channels to educate and develop the sustainability in our industry,” said Tarr.

Owner of Post Gardens Ed Tuinier 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. A graduate of MSU, Tuinier was a major benefactor of the MSU horticulture program and demonstration gardens. The Tuinier Scholarship is awarded to sophomore, junior or senior undergraduate students enrolled in the floriculture program at MSU.

**Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship — $1,200**  
**Recipient: Cole Rider, Mt. San Antonio College**

A sophomore majoring in agri-technology, Rider has a special interest in California native plants and ecological restoration. “My career goal is to become an expert restoration ecologist in order to contribute, enhance, mitigate, and restore the natural ecosystem,” said Rider.

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.

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**Vocational (Bettinger, Holden and Perry) Scholarship – $1,600**  
**Recipient: Matt Witemyre, Merritt College**

Witemyre is a sophomore majoring in nursery management. He volunteers with the Solidarity Seed Initiative, which promotes gardening’s community, physical, and mental health benefits by providing free plants and seeds. “Since California legalized cannabis cultivation for recreational use in 2016, my goal is to open a licensed storefront cannabis nursery, helping to bring best practices and legitimate horticultural knowledge to this previously underground industry,” said Witemyre.

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 awards a scholarship in honor of: 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; 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.

***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://endowment.org)*.*

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