

Newsletter for the Presidential Endowed Scholars Program

THE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

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MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

JUDY AND BOBBY SHACKOULS
HONORS COLLEGE

Sally White

Presidential Scholar • Class of 2016

Scholars Making the Interim Theirs

Dear Friends,

This year, we graduate seven scholars who have been leaders on campus, scholars in the classroom and mentors to the group of Presidential Scholars that follow in their footsteps.

Matt Blair will attend graduate school in civil engineering at Virginia Tech; Jane Walton is heading to Ole Miss to study communications and public relations; Kate Thompson has accepted an offer from NC State to begin her doctorate of veterinary medicine. Faith Smith is taking her considerable talents to South Carolina to begin working at Intel; Zack Brown accepted a position with Entergy in Louisiana to work in nuclear energy; Emily Epps is in the second year of her CyberCorps Scholarship at MSU, and Eddie Mac Huddleston plans to apply to medical school in 2016.

This class of exceptional students has two Goldwater Honorable Mention recipients, two Rhodes Scholar nominees, a Student Association Attorney General, a Maroon Band leader, and students who have studied or interned in England, Italy, Chile, South Africa, Nashville, Knoxville, Berkeley, and Memphis. They truly have made the interim theirs. As we say good-bye to these seniors, the program welcomes 15 new scholars to the class of 2019.

In this issue of *The Presidential Scholar*, we share the stories of some remarkable students poised to make a difference in the world. Sally White's undergraduate research on infectious disease establishes her as one of the top student-researchers in the nation; Jamie Aron is our first Harry S. Truman Scholar in nine years. She is interviewed by Roxie Raven and Jack Bryan, two scholars already committed to leadership and public service at the local and national level. Eric Stallcup's work in aerospace engineering and as part of MSU's Space Cowboys has him on a trajectory to make a significant impact with the DOD as a summer intern.

Roxie Raven reports on the Scholars' ill-fated, snowy and memorable spring trip to Washington, D.C.

In my third year as mentor to the Presidential Scholars, I have had the opportunity to see graduates of the program find new homes in places like California, Mississippi, Texas, Washington, D.C., Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina. I also have met many of you who graduated well before I arrived. My hope is that the Presidential Scholars Program is one of those MSU experiences that makes State special to you. The program changes over time—it may get a little bigger, its mentor might change, and scholars come from new and far away places—but it continues as a community that values commitment to academic excellence and service to the university, state and nation.

Dr. Thomas Anderson

Mentor, Presidential Endowed Scholars



Jamie with President Mark E. Keenum celebrating the Truman announcement and her induction into the Society of Scholars.



2014 Freshman Presidential Scholar Class

*Bottom, L-R: Nia Sims, Meredith Hilliard, President Mark E. Keenum, Betty Thomas, Emily Turner
Middle, L-R: Charles Boyd, Laura Herring, Nicholas Cobb, Mary Ann Smith
Top, L-R: Robert Frey, Bobby Buntyn, Trey Wallace*

Sally White | MSU's Renaissance Scholar

By Jamie Aron. *Presidential Scholar. Class of 2016*

Arriving in the Presidential Scholar community as freshmen, neither Sally nor I really knew what defined a Presidential Scholar. Little did we know, merely three years later, Sally would be the definition of a Presidential Scholar.

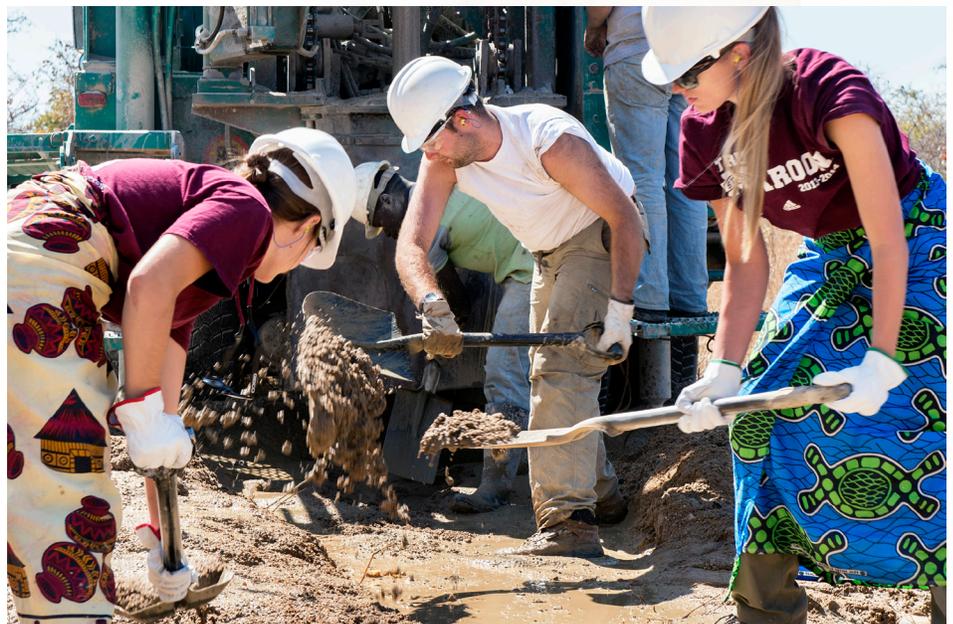
The journey of Sally White, like most scholars, began in Griffis Residence Hall, where she made friends, studied for the Quest Courses and ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in her dorm room. As a student of the Cursus Honorum, the rigorous, innovative honors track, Sally discussed J.R.R. Tolkien with Dean Chris Snyder in her honors seminar. She researched prokaryotes in Harned Hall, pondered the role of a leader in today's society with President Mark E. Keenum in Lee Hall, and erected snowmen on the Drill Field on snowy white February days. Her undergraduate journey soon became poetic and accomplished.

Sally exemplifies the definition of a Presidential Scholar because she demonstrates the ability to master various roles as leader, academic, researcher and activist. The microbiology and biology double-major also minors in English, specifically focusing on British literature. Her love for British history and literature grew stronger after her study-abroad at the University of Oxford. There, she transitioned into a Renaissance woman, analyzing medieval history and mastering Shakespeare. As an enthusiastic researcher, Sally presented "Bile Resistance of *Listeria Monocytogenes* is Influenced by Oxygen Availability" in Washington, D.C., for our

nation's leaders at Posters on the Hill, and in Tuscany, Italy, at the International Conference on Gram-Positive Microorganisms. Her ability to marry academia with praxis evolved into two trips to construct wells in the African village of Simwatachela in Zambia. In order to make this annual journey, Sally aids in planning and grant writing during the academic year as vice president of MSU's Engineers Without Borders. An Honors Council student recruiter, she engages prospective students with the opportunities of the Shackouls Honors College. Furthermore, her commitment to advance local initiatives through the Dean's Student Advisory Committee and as vice president

of the American Society of Microbiology demonstrates Sally's deep impact in her multiple communities.

Ultimately, Sally defines the role of a Presidential Scholar because she has taken advantage of every opportunity the program offers—rigorous curriculum, study abroad, research, leadership and service. Remarkably, she still finds time to frequent Starkville coffee shops for a cup of hot tea with friends (a side effect of living in the UK). She embodies scholarship, maintaining an avid love for books and the quest for knowledge. To me, Sally White—a true Renaissance woman—defines the Presidential Scholars best.



Sally White, as part of Engineers without Borders, helping to install a water well in a small rural community in Zambia, Africa.

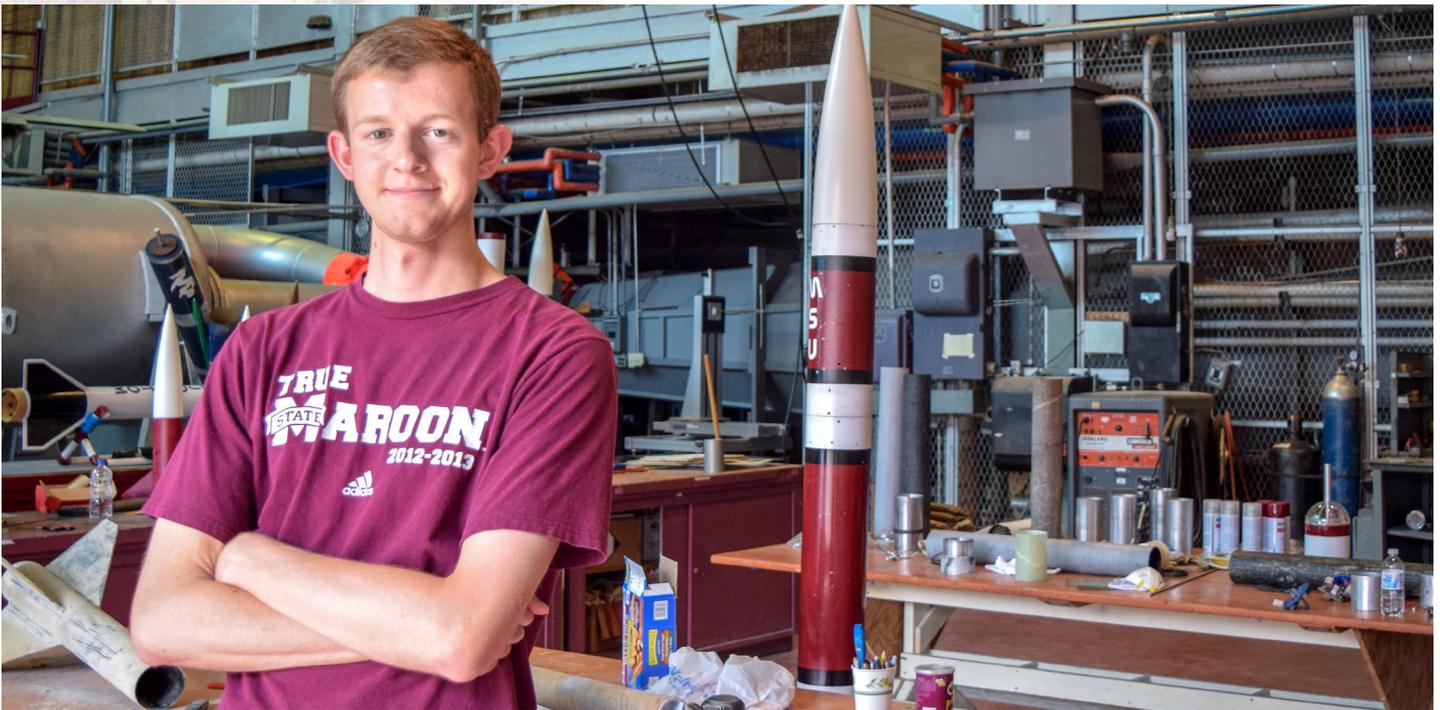


Meet Abigael, Our Adopted Scholar in Africa

By Kimberly Kelly, *Class of 2017*

Abigael, age seven, and her family are prospering in their village of Bandaptai, Kenya. Because of the support of the MSU Presidential Scholars that adopted her in 2014, Abigael graduated from pre-school and was just promoted to the first grade of primary grade school. Her favorite subject is science, and she loves to learn about the environment and her best subject is mathematics. Abigael and her family recently have participated in child rights training, awareness on common illness prevention and hygiene and sanitation training.

By Charles Boyd. Presidential Scholar. Class of 2018



Eric Stallcup, a senior studying aerospace engineering, is leading Mississippi State to national recognition in aeronautics innovation.

Eric's interest in aerospace engineering began in ninth grade when he joined his school's rocketry team. His skill earned an internship after his junior year of high school with the U.S. Army's Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center laboratories on Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. There, he analyzed helicopter performance with top engineers and chose to pursue an aerospace degree at Mississippi State, the alma mater of his mentor.

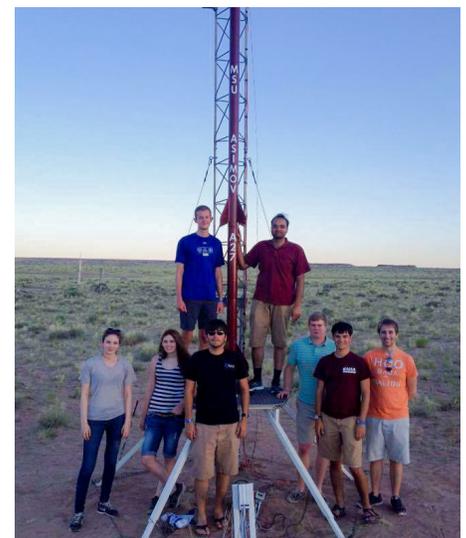
At the university, Eric not only excels in his coursework, but also leads the acclaimed rocket team, Space Cowboys, as captain. Many evenings, Eric may be found in the Patterson Laboratory on Hardy Rd., where he and his team tirelessly research, design, construct and test new rocket designs to prepare for competitions.

In June, Eric and the Space Cowboys traveled to Utah to compete in the Intercollegiate Rocket Engineering Competition, the largest of its kind in the world. A nearly flawless launch earned the team the coveted first-place award,

defeating 70 teams from other prestigious schools. Their latest innovation was a rocket more than one-story tall that traveled 4.5 miles into the atmosphere at Mach 1.5. The cutting-edge rocket carried a research payload designed to test advanced aerodynamic theories. This latest victory is only the most recent this year. In April, under Eric's leadership, the team won first place for a design presentation at an American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics conference in Savannah, Georgia.

Each summer, Eric builds practical knowledge on the foundation laid by challenging coursework by making valuable contributions to various projects in the aerospace industry. Eric worked for U.S. Army contractor Simulation Technologies in 2013, researching solutions for a laser radar-tracking project. In 2014, he innovated, designed, and tested methods for ensuring the survivability of the Mars-bound Orion human-crew capsule at the NASA Langley Research Center in Virginia.

After receiving multiple offers to work on advanced research this summer, Eric chose to work on a study for the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency with Dynetics, Inc. in Huntsville. This cutting-edge project focuses on solving



Top: Eric in an aerospace engineering lab at MSU. Above: The Space Cowboys in Utah in 2015.

aerodynamic challenges associated with launching and recovering unmanned aerial vehicles from an airplane in flight. Eric's research involves performing and analyzing flight simulations for the docking process. "It has been fascinating to work on a project for the most advanced research agency in the Department of Defense," Eric observed. "I have the opportunity to listen in on discussions about how war will be fought 20 to 30 years from now and then go run numbers to see if it will work."

Jamie Aron Leads a Truman Roundtable

In 2015, Jamie Aron was selected as a Truman Scholar, the nation's most prestigious scholarship for undergraduates committed to a career in public service. Before Jamie left for the Woodrow Wilson School Junior Summer Institute in Public Policy and International Affairs, Roxanne Raven and Jack Bryan—two Scholars interested in public policy—sat down with MSU's newest Truman Scholar to discuss the national scholarship.

Roxanne: What compelled you to try for a Truman Scholarship?

After the mentor for the Presidential Scholars program, Dr. Thomas Anderson, introduced Truman Scholarship to me, I realized that this application allowed me to discuss my accomplishments, opinions on the current state of society and future goals, all while intertwining my passion for international relations and women's leadership. The Truman naturally fit my interests!

Jack: What advice do you have for incoming freshmen to start preparing for the Truman Scholarship?

If preparing for the Truman as a freshman, you may find yourself resume-building for the wrong reasons. The interview committee will see straight through this. The Truman is for individuals dedicated to serving through leadership and academia in their communities, universities and around the world. If you follow your passion to serve, the Truman application process will be much less daunting—I dare say, enjoyable.

Jack: What was the hardest part of the application process?

The policy proposal was the most difficult portion of the application because it requires you to address an issue within society or law and propose a viable, bi-partisan plan. My proposal involved amending Mississippi Codes 95-3-1 and 95-3-2 in order to allow an individual to be granted a divorce based



Jamie Aron leading a discussion about the Truman Scholarship.

on “irreconcilable differences” without consent of the other party.

Roxanne: After meeting the other Truman winners, what would you say the common thread was between all of them? How were they all different?

Every Truman winner has a passion for service and people. We are a motivated, open-minded group from across the nation with different political beliefs, religions and pasts looking to advance the future of America in areas such as international relations, public health, education and city planning.

Jack: After going through the application and interview process, what do you feel the Truman selection committee is looking for most in a candidate?

In my opinion, the interview committee is most looking for students genuinely committed to furthering their public service career.

George Dunn, Honors College outreach coordinator: What did you learn about yourself?

The application taught me to critically contemplate and discuss who I am and how I hope to better my world. The interview introduced me to brilliant students who have a common goal, showing me that our country's future will be in capable hands. The Truman Scholars Leadership Week (TSLW) taught me about myself rather than teaching me a set of skills. During TSLW, I realized that I, like many of my other Truman classmates, was exhausted. Through the whirlwind of college, volunteering, study abroad and internships, I had lost the spark—the one I most coveted—the one that said I could make a difference. TSLW gave me the courage to honestly evaluate myself and it gave me the support system to talk about my confusion with a group of like-minded people. I am so grateful to be a part of a community where service, respect and friendship are common qualities. I can only hope that I can give as much back to the Truman community as it has given to me.

A Scholar's Memoir of the Spring Trip to Washington, D.C.

By Roxie Raven. Presidential Scholar. Class of 2017



The Presidential Scholars with Senator Thad Cochran.

For our annual “Spring Break Getaway” this year, the Presidential Scholars were looking forward to making the 900-mile journey from Starkville to Washington D.C. Due to the “Blizzard of 2015,” however, our journey was fraught with flight delays and cancelations. As the majority of scholars scrambled to catch flights in other cities or rebook for the following day, #TeamRoadTrip and those who left from Huntsville were the only scholars to make the first event of the trip, a comeday entitled *The Metromaniacs* at the Shakespeare Theater Company. The play featured hilarious, rhyming dialog outlining the various misunderstandings of love in 18th century France. Through the ice and snow, we started the second day with a tour of Georgetown University’s beautiful campus. The tour was inspiring and we learned about the rich history of the campus, as well as the history and purpose of its prestigious graduate school programs.

After a quick walk through the shopping areas of Georgetown (highlighted with a few cupcake tastings), we made our way to the esteemed Milken Institute School of Public

Health at George Washington University. Despite the inclement weather, most of the scholars made it to D.C. and were able to join a discussion with graduate students and administrators on a wide range of topics. These ranged from applying to graduate school to life in D.C., and the controversy surrounding healthcare currently in the U.S.

It was not the weather that kept us from the White House on Saturday, just a bomb threat. Many of us spent the extra time at the various museums such as the Natural History Museum or National Archive. There was so much to do and see that it was hard to stay in one museum long. Many of us made trips to the various monuments in search of the perfect social media photo opportunity. The weekend included a visit to the Holocaust Museum, an amazing but somber reminder to never let the past repeat itself. Some students joined MSU professor, Dr. Shu-Hui Wu, an expert on ancient history, at the Sackler Museum’s ancient Chinese art exhibit.

On Monday, the Stennis Center organized opportunities to meet both local and

national leaders. We had brunch with a former mayor of Arlington, Virginia. Hours later we toured the Pentagon, where we were able to meet the Navy Secretary and former Mississippi governor Ray Mabus in his private conference room. At the Capitol that evening, we met many other Mississippi politicians, including Senators Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker. It also was great to be joined at the Capitol by former Presidential Scholars Lindsay Linhares, Shelby Balias and Kelsey LeSaicherre.

Tuesday was our departing day, and those with late flights attended “Mississippi Morning,” a policy breakfast with our state senators to discuss important issues affecting life in Mississippi. The sights that D.C. offered, the knowledge that I soaked in from each of the spectacular museums, and the networking I was able to do with those currently working in our nation’s capital made this Presidential Scholar trip particularly memorable and exciting—even with the “Blizzard of 2015.”

Transforming Communities | One Summer at a Time

Last year, we told stories of Mississippi State Presidential Scholars who spent their first summer as university students engaged in high-impact activities across the globe, in places such as Honduras and Peru and in research programs in Texas and Mississippi. For these students, their second summer proved even more transformative. **Allie Brown, Rodney Kipchumba, Natalie Jones** and **Sallie Lin** conducted undergraduate research at Virginia Tech, University of Texas-Austin, Baylor University Medical School and MSU. **Kim Kelly** traveled to China for missionary work; **Aalaap Desai** returned to Honduras with Global Brigades; **Emily Damm** studied communications in Ireland. **Haley Wilcutt** was an animal-care intern for a private zoo in Missouri. **Jack Bryan, Roxie Raven, Bobby Buntyn** and **Max Moseley** studied at the University of Oxford in England. **Holly Travis** spent the summer in Washington, D.C. as an intern in the public defender's office. This class of rising juniors continues to prove that it's never too early to begin to transform their communities.

IN FOCUS

NATALIE JONES

This summer, I participated in a Research Experience for Undergraduates at a Top 20 institution in my field of study, sociology. While at the University of Texas at Austin, I researched imprisonment rates on a state level, looking at how social characteristics and demographics associate with individual states' imprisonment rates. My summer experience didn't just end when I completed my research at the end of the summer. In November, I will be submitting a paper to the American Society of Criminology's annual conference and participate in a poster presentation at the conference in Washington D.C. I will use the research skills for my honors thesis during my senior year. The city of Austin was gorgeous, has so much character, and there were so many restaurants with such delicious food! Overall, this summer was so constructive and as always, I am so thankful for the support and encouragement I received throughout the process from the Shackouls Honors College and MSU faculty.



Top: Natalie Jones, Bottom: Holly Travis

HOLLY TRAVIS

Interning as an investigator with the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia gave me the opportunity to work closely with attorneys at one of the most prestigious public defender offices in the nation. Each case varies but typical tasks include canvassing crime scenes, interviewing witnesses, serving subpoenas for records and video surveillance, attending court hearings and meeting with our clients, many of whom are incarcerated. Although much of the work I have been doing on cases will not culminate at trial for quite some time, the most exciting experience was watching one of our cases finally reach trial and the client ultimately receive a not guilty verdict. Before interning at PDS, the conversation about racial disparity in courts and prisons, police brutality and the impact of inadequate representation was exactly that—a conversation. My time working in D.C. has given me a first-hand look at the harsh reality of mass incarceration and the brutal cycle of prison and poverty. Yet, working for a well-funded Public Defender Service where attorneys and investigators make each client's case a priority has given me hope for the future of public defense and caused me to take an even closer look at the shortcomings of Mississippi's Public Defender Service.



The Presidential Endowed Scholars Program thanks these friends for their generous support of the Washington, D.C. Trip.

- Business Administration
- Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President
- Bagley College of Engineering
- Department of English
- Department of Biological Sciences
- Department of Computer Sciences and Engineering
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering
- John and Jeanne Marszalek
- Jim and Amy Smith

We want to hear from you!

The "Alumni Update" is a regular feature in The Presidential Scholar. We invite scholars to send us news to share with our more than 150 alumni. Please send professional or personal updates to Dr. Thomas Anderson at tanderson@honors.msstate.edu or call him at 662-325-2522

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Alumni Update

Hello, everyone! My name is Alex McIntosh, and my relationship with MSU began when I accepted a Schillig Scholarship in 2003. Following graduation in 2007, I spent a year in graduate school at the University of Alabama before returning to MSU as student Services coordinator for the Judy and Bobby Shackouls Honors College. After three wonderful years there, I accepted a position with the MSU Foundation as director of development for the College of Arts and Sciences.

I met my wife, Chelsea, when she was on campus interviewing for the scholarship in 2005. She majored in biological engineering and later earned her master's degree in biomedical engineering before moving over to the College of Veterinary Medicine to conduct cancer and parasitology research. In 2013, she started a jewelry company in her spare time. After it experienced rapid growth, she "retired" from research early in 2014, hired employees and devoted her full attention to Love, Poppy (www.lovepoppyjewels.com). Love, Poppy now is sold at more than 100 retailers in 14 states.

Distilling my experience as a Schillig Scholar down to one phrase is easy – life changing. Fleshing out a multi-page description of this scholarship's impact on me would be relatively simple. But whittling it down to a paragraph? Extremely difficult.

The program afforded me tremendous opportunities and the freedom to pursue college and post-graduate life free from financial burdens. Ultimately, it surrounded me with a truly remarkable group of people. The individuals in the group of scholars became great friends who challenged me intellectually and personally (and encouraged me to write a haiku about vienna sausage at Lake Tiak O'Khata). The scholarship also opened doors to build relationships with leaders who would have a significant impact on my path, like Dr. Nancy McCarley, Dr. Lisa Harris, Dr. Donald Zacharias, Dr. J. Charles Lee, Dr. John and Jean Marszalek, and many others.

I believe the primary way we can provide a return on this program's investment in us is by the fruit of our lives: our careers, our families, our successes, and the impact we have on others. I also believe we have an obligation to give back financially according to our capacity. You may designate gifts for specific areas on campus, including the Shackouls Honors College and the Presidential Scholars. Join Chelsea and me in giving back to this program and university that has had such an impact on our lives. I hope to see you on campus sometime soon!

Hail State,
Alex McIntosh

