

College Scholars Newsletter

FALL 2012

From the Director

It has been several years since a College Scholars Newsletter was published, but we are back this year. One important development is that College Scholars has a new director. After more than seven years, Dr. Chris Craig stepped down in the fall of 2011 to become Head of the Department of Classics. The new Director is Dr. Jeffrey Kovac, Professor of Chemistry who has been a member of the faculty of the University of Tennessee since 1976.

I received my education at Reed College (B.A. Chemistry 1970) and Yale University (M. Phil 1972, Ph.D 1974 Theoretical Chemistry) and have become an interdisciplinary scholar in the true spirit of the College Scholars program. Over the years I have done scholarly work in chemistry, chemical education, philosophy and history. You can find more about my career and publications at http://www. chem.utk.edu/faculty/kovac .html. Being Director of College Scholars is a wonderful job because it allows me to work closely with some of the most talented and interesting students at the University of Tennessee.

Are there changes in store for College Scholars? Of course I will look for ways to improve an already excellent program, but my

main focus in the immediate future is to raise the profile of College Scholars on campus so that every student who should be a College Scholar knows about the program. College Scholars must remain the premier honors program at the University of Tennessee which means that we need to continue to attract the best students, pair them with outstanding mentors, provide them with the support they need to achieve academic success and then publicize those successes.

Putting together this newsletter has been a real delight because I can highlight some of the remarkable accomplishments of our current scholars and also feature a few alumni who have gone on to interesting careers. I am eager to hear from alumni and would like to include your stories in a future newsletter. Please send me an e-mail at scholars@utk.edu, or write to this address:

Jeffrey Kovac Professor of Chemistry Director of College Scholars Department of Chemistry 1420 Circle Drive University of Tennesse Knoxville, TN 37996-1600



2012 College Scholars Graduate and Goldwater Scholar Britta Johnson and new Director, Dr. Jeffrey Kovac

2012 Graduate Britta Johnson

Britta Johnson was the **Outstanding Graduate in College Scholars** in 2012. Britta's concentration was Mathematical and Chemical Physics. As a freshman, Britta won the C. W. Keenan Prize given to the best student in Honors General Chemistry and in 2011 she was one of three UTK students to be awarded the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship. Britta began research in computational quantum chemistry with Professor R. J. Hinde in the Department of Chemistry as a freshman. Her work has resulted in one peer-reviewed publication to date: B. Johnson and R. J. Hinde, "Pairwise Additive Model for the He-MgO(100) Interaction," Journal of *Physical Chemistry A*, 2011, 115, 7112-7119. During the summers Britta worked as a resident advisor for the Governor's School for the Sciences and Engineering while carrying on research in chemistry or mathematics. In the fall of 2012 Britta began graduate study in theoretical chemistry at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

2012 Graduates

Luke Waring was one of the **Top Collegiate Scholars in the College** of Arts and Sciences. Luke's concentration was religion and the environment with a pre-law interest. His senior project was directed by Dr. Sherry Cable of the Department of Sociology. Luke's senior project was entitled "American Evangelical **Christianity and Opposition** to Environmentalism: Thematic Analysis of Resisting the Green Dragon and Semi-Structured Interviews." During his years at UT, Luke has been involved in more worthwhile activities than we have room to list. Close to his senior project was his service on the Chancellor's Committee on the Campus Environment. As a senior he was President of the Honors Ambassador Program and the Managing **Editor for Humanities and** Social Sciences for Pursuit. the Journal of Undergraduate Research.

Banquet Luke received the Chancellor's Citation for Extraordinary Academic Achievement. He graduated as top student in the College in the Humanities. Luke plans to attend law school.

Jayanni Webster was named one of the 2012 Torchbearers, the highest honor given to undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee. In 2011 Jayanni was selected to participate in PBS's fiftieth-anniversary reenactment of the 1961 Freedom Rides. Her senior project, carried out under the direction of Dr. Rosalind Hackett of Religious Studies, was entitled "Peace Education and Its Discontents: An **Evaluation of Youth** Violence and Peace Programs in Northern Uganda. "To pursue this research Jayanni has spent a significant amount of time in Uganda. On campus, she has been

involved in Jazz for Justice, a non-profit organization that raises funds and awareness of the plight of war-affected youth in Northern Uganda. She has also been a leader in the UT student chapter of Amnesty International. One of the most dynamic College Scholars, Jayanni has been a significant figure at UTK. It has been said of her that "all of us on campus are richer because she is here." After returning to Uganda this summer, she is now back in the USA, deciding which NGO (nongovernmental organizatiotion) she will join.

Elizabeth Williams

developed a concentration in Sociology and Policy in Education. Her senior project entitled "Educational Apartheid: The Dismantling and Resurrection of Educational Inequality in the US and South Africa, Studies in Critical Sociological Theory" was carried out under the direction of Dr. Bob Kronick. This project grew out of her experience in a service learning course in a local Title 1 Elementary School, work that she continued for the rest of her college career. She followed up with a summer internship at the Netter Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the premier program in the country for campus-community involvement, and a studyabroad program at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Elizabeth has been a tireless worker for educational equality wherever she goes. She once had to excuse herself from the weekly College Scholars Seminar because she was leading a group of 60 volunteers to local elementary schools. For the first step of her graduate career in educational policy, Elizabeth finally chose the Big Apple over Harvard and Penn; she is pursuing her master's at Teacher's College, Columbia University.

Current Scholars



At the Chancellor's Honors

Hannah Durick and Dr. Rosalind Hackett on Lake Victoria

Since summer 2011 **Hannah Durick** has delved into the study of anthropological perspectives on international human rights, peace and conflict studies. In the summer of 2012 she traveled with Dr. Rosalind I. J. Hackett, her College Scholars mentor Dr. Tricia Hepner and her husband Dr. Randall Hepner to Northern Uganda with UT's Gulu Service and Study Abroad Program. The program seasons students to critically engage with post-conflict development and peacebuilding initiatives in a region shaken by two decades of armed conflict. They traveled from Kampala to Gulu where they took courses at Gulu's Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, followed by four week internships. Hannah interned with the The Centre for Reparations and Rehabilitation (CRR). Spearheaded by four Ugandan female lawyers, CRR is a locally operated and externally funded non-governmental organization in Gulu that addresses two integral components of the post-conflict environment: land disputes, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and pervasive domestic violence. Although their time was short, it articulated the nuanced challenges of post-conflict development wrought by decades of humanitarian and military interventions, bare-faced violence, structural violence, displacement and trauma in a way that cannot be captured in a lecture or a book.

Current Scholars

Boren Scholarship - Elliot Bertasi

Senior Eliot Bertasi is the first College Scholar to hold a Boren Scholarship. Boren Scholarships provide funds to U.S. undergraduate students to study abroad in areas of the world that are critical to U.S. interests and underrepresented in study abroad, including Africa, Asia, Central & Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Elliot was admitted to College Scholars as a sophomore interested in studying governance, politics, and society in Africa, and in examining international relations between the US and African countries but has subsequently narrowed his study to eastern Africa, and in particular, northern Uganda. Elliot has now designed a senior project that examines the challenges of political and social post-conflict transformation, focusing on the relationship between the government and the community members in northern Uganda.

To begin his project, in the summer of 2011. Elliot studied abroad in northern Uganda with the Gulu Study and Service Abroad Program led by two University of Tennessee professors, Dr. Rosalind Hackett and Dr. Tricia Hepner. Determined to return to Uganda to conduct field research for his senior project, Elliot applied for the Boren Scholarship and to the School for **International Training (SIT)** program, Uganda: Post-**Conflict Transformation in** Gulu. Elliot was soon accepted to the SIT study

abroad program in Uganda, and a few months later he received notice that he was to be one of the 2012 Boren Scholar recipients. The study abroad program is scheduled to last from September to December 2012.

Elliot spent the summer of 2012 in Uganda as a McClure Scholar, a program that offers UT students financial awards to support study/research/creative projects aimed at enhancing and promoting education for world responsibility. Elliot is the primary investigator for a research project which focuses on the challenges of post-conflict transformation in Uganda, and the role of political leaders and government programs in assisting war affected communities in the north to reach selfsustainability. His research mainly consists of interviewing civil servants, religious leaders. cultural leaders. community representatives, and beneficiaries to see how these government programs are working and also to examine the relationship between the local government and the community members.

As a Boren Scholar, Elliot will take classes in Gulu, Uganda, during the fall semester: Contextualizing Conflict in Northern Uganda, Post-Conflict Transformation, Acholi Language Study, and Research Methods and Ethics. His classes will be taught by various



local academics, political leaders, religious leaders, war affected victims, and peace and conflict experts. Towards the end of the program the students will have several weeks to work on a self-designed Independent Study Project through which Elliot plans on continuing to work on his current and ongoing field research.

When Elliot returns to the United States in December, he will have one semester left at the University of Tennessee before graduation in May, 2013. After graduation, Elliot plans to move to Washington D.C. and work for a law firm dealing with international human rights or fulfill his Boren year of service by working for the Department of State. Elliot is then planning to apply to law school at Georgetown University, American University, or George Washington University. Elliot hopes to continue his studies abroad throughout law school and eventually pursue a career in international human rights law.

Marissa Landis was the first recipient of the Cleaver Initiative with the School of Art. This program was created by Creighton Michael, an established artist, a professor at Hunter College and an alumnus of UT who wanted to provide an art history student at UT with the opportunity to experience the art world of New York City firsthand. Marissa visited New York City for approximately two weeks and visited numerous art museums and artists' studios. Shee was introduced to collectors, gallerists, and artists and was essentially immersed in the workings of contemporary art. The time greatly expanded her understanding of art and artists.

After returning from New York Marrisa was an observational assistant for Creighton Michael as he curated a show at UT's **Ewing and Downtown** Galleries. The show, "Pencil Pushed." revolved around the re-imagining of drawing. She is wrote the artist introductions for each of the show's 15 artists, many of whom are internationally known. The show opened September 17, 2012.

Current Scholars

Brianna Rader, junior College Scholar and Haslam Scholar from Halls High School in Knoxville, was invited to speak at the monthly "Literary Rounds: Where Medicine Meets with the Muse" at the Preston Medical Library at the UT Graduate School of Medicine on July 11, 2012. It was an unusual honor for an undergraduate to be invited to speak in this series, but Brianna's College Scholars program, Holistic Approaches to Healthcare with an Emphasis on Doctor-Patient Relationships and the Human Experience, made her a natural fit. The program was well

attended with an audience of about 25 people.

Brianna is spending the fall semester in Pune, India, studying public health. To help support her study abroad she won a \$5,000 scholarship from the Fund for Education Abroad.



Paolo Vignali represented the University of Tennessee. **Knoxville and the College** Scholars Program at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in the Pediatric **Oncology Education (POE)** Program this summer. The POE program provides an invaluable translational, summer research experience for students preparing for careers in biomedical science. medicine, nursing, pharmacy, psychology, and public health. The primary goal of the program is to encourage students to pursue careers in cancer research. Paolo returned from the POE program motivated to take a wholehearted, new direction not only in his thesis, but also in his future career. At St. Jude, Paolo worked under Dr. Doug Green in the Department of Immunology, studying the effects of nutrient deprivation in cancer by mimicking the intratumoral hypoxic microenvironment. Cancer cells present with an altered metabolism of nutrients, most notably with an "addiction" to glucose

and glutamine. Cancer metabolism is becoming a topic of increased interest within cancer research because many studies have linked a tumor's viability and metastatic potential to its extracellular microenvironment.

Paolo's participation in the POE program has inspired him to write an academic review of cancer and chemotherapy. His thesis will investigate the history of chemotherapy, the mechanisms cellular transformation, and the current evolution of chemotherapeutic interventions to treat the "undruggable" cancers and to reduce the deleterious effects of current interventions. Most significantly, Paolo's experience at St. Jude has motivated him to pursue an MD/PhD in oncology and immunology. Paolo looks forward to returning to St. Jude to participate in the POE Program in the summer of 2013.



During the summer of 2012 Olivia Jones participated in a Language and Cultural Immersion program sponsored by the American Middle East Institute and the Omani Ministry of Higher Education. The program was a nontraditional exchange where fifteen American students lived with fifteen Omani students for seven weeks. The group spent three weeks in Pittsburgh, the Americans learning Arabic and the Omanis learning English. Then, the group traveled to Oman for four weeks to continue their education. They attended

classes at Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat and toured the country. By the end of their stay in Oman, they had been to all but two of the country's nine regions.

Some personal reflections from Olivia:

To say that Oman is a beautiful country is an understatement. That being said, the country is underdeveloped compared to its other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) neighbors. To me, this is the appeal and beauty of Oman. I interacted with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, Beduin cultures, city-life, mountain cultures, and coastal cultures, yet they were all Omanis and all eager to show our group their traditions. One would be hard pressed to find a people as welcoming as Omanis.





Alumni Profile – Kevin Burdette

On the evening of March 23, 2012, my wife and I were in the audience at the George Mason University Center for the Arts in Fairfax, VA, to see the Virginia Opera production of <u>The Mikado</u> with College Scholars alumnus Kevin Burdette playing KoKo, the comic lead. As the review in the Washington Post said,

(It) was a rollicking funny, energetic and cheerful production. Much of the credit goes to bass Kevin Burdette . . . Burdette has a wonderfully resonant voice and splendid diction, but in this role his vocal talents were eclipsed by his acrobatic clowning and miming skills. He groveled, quivered and danced his way through the ever-more convoluted plot with exquisite abandon, bringing the whole cast along with him.

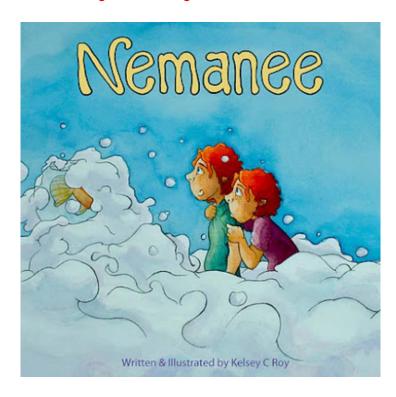
As a College Scholar, Kevin Burdette developed a program in Music and History with an emphasis on opera, culminating with a senior thesis entitled "Drawing Circles around Society: Societally Marginalized Groups and their Treatment within Opera." He was accepted by both Columbia University Law School and The Juilliard School; Columbia was willing to defer his enrollment, so he went to Juilliard first, for its two-year masters program, ultimately splitting his two years up with a year as a young artist with the Opéra National de Paris. After a handful of years as a full-time opera singer, and after six years of deferral, heattended Columbia Law School, where he was a Kent Scholar and where his College Scholars thesis provided the seed for his major writing assignment, an article entitled "Intertext and Stereotypes in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg: An Examination of the Dialogue over Law and Societal Change in Richard Wagner's Music-Drama". After

earning his J.D., he passed the New York bar exam and began work at a Debevoise & Plimpton, a New York Citybased law firm, all the while trying to juggle law practice with opera. Finally, after practicing for a few years, he resigned from his law firm to pursue singing full time, with great success. He has worked as a soloist with the Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Teatro Colón, Opéra de Montréal, New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, American Symphony Orchestra, and the Spoleto Festival USA, as well as with many regional opera companies and orchestras including Opéra de Québec, Chicago Opera Theater, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Virginia Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, Wolf Trap Opera Company, Toledo Opera, Knoxville Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Lyric Opera of San Antonio, Nashville Symphony, Utah Symphony Orchestra, and Virginia Symphony Orchestra.

In 2011, Kevin married Natalia Lizette Cortez who is associate general counsel at Teach For America in New York. Kevin's father, Dr. Edwin G. Burdette, is Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Tennessee.

More information about Kevin Burdette can be found on his website http://www.kevinburdette.com. You can find his upcoming engagements on the website. If you have an opportunity to hear him sing, by all means take it.

Alumni Profile -Kelsey C. Roy



Alumni Note - Andy Hahn

Andy Hahn graduated from College Scholars in spring of 2011 with a focus on medicinal chemistry. He is now a second year medical student at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Over the past summer, he was a recipient of the UTHSC NIH Medical Student Research Fellowship that allowed him to work at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital with Dr. Michael A. Dyer, Ph.D. The focus of his research was on the development of novel therapies for rhabdomyosarcoma, the most common soft tissue tumor in kids. Andy stated that, "My experience at St. Jude was a natural progression from my bench research at UTK to translational research that can immediately impact patient's lives." Outside of studying, Andy has continued to run road races in Memphis.

Kelsey Roy graduated in 2011 having completed a College Scholars program in "Children's Book Narrative and Illustration." Her senior project resulted in the children's book *Nemanee.* She is currently working as a writer and illustrator and maintains a blog called Kelsey C. Roy Illustrations (http://kelcroyillustrations.blogspot.com)

I contacted Kelsey to ask for information for this newsletter and some reflections on her experience as a college scholar. Her comments are worth reprinting in full because they epitomize the College Scholars program.

I was always an unconventional student. I attended 3 different universities for my undergrad and studied everything from art to exercise science. On the side I was involved with competitive ballroom dance, choir, set painting, kayaking, caricaturing and writing/illustrating an original comic strip for the student paper. In short, I am someone with many passions, and they all seemed to point in different directions. This led me to be rather niche-less in the beginning of my collegiate career. I couldn't find a major that "fit" me. There are so many times that I feel like students get stuck trying to "fit" a major. I refused to do that. Then, someone suggested College Scholars to me. And thus I found my solution.

Suddenly, (well not suddenly, the application took forever) I found myself surrounded by other people living niche-less college existences. It was a niche for the niche-less. In fact, we dubbed College Scholars the "Major of Requirement" in reference to Harry Potter's "Room of Requirement"; it only appears when you need it. Meaning, those who need College Scholars find it. The program allowed me to finally put all of my vast number of interests and passions into one, coherent, exciting direction: Children's Book Narrative and Illustration. Without CS, I would never have been able to graduate in four years. I would still be in school now instead of pitching my book to literary agents and signing contracts with publishers. College Scholars allowed me to get the education I needed and wanted as well as allowing me the opportunity to gain experience in the field I have chosen. Without this program and the help of faculty members who graciously made themselves, their knowledge and their resources available to me, I wouldn't have published my first book before graduating college (before I was 23). In turn, publishing this book has allowed me the opportunity to speak both at local and out of state schools about my work and how UT's College Scholars Program helped me get to where I am now, an author/illustrator. I am continuing to learn more and more about the children's literature market and how the publishing world works, but I am miles ahead of so many others out there thanks to CS. I am currently illustrating my third book, The Banana Police, written by author Katy Koontz, to be published this November.

And as a final comment, it is important to me to say that I couldn't have gotten to where I am without the support of my fellow scholars. I have much to owe to my mentor, Marcia Goldenstein, and the rest of my defense committee for all they have given me, but it is the scholars themselves who really made the program what it was for me. They inspired me, they teased me (after all, all I had to do was 'draw pictures all day'), and they treated me as their over-scheduled, over-stressed, and over-achieving equal. No matter where my career may take me, reading my book aloud to them will always be one of my absolute favorite and most dear memories. I miss them.

Alumni Profile - Dr. Priscilla Frase

Priscilla Frase graduated in August 1994 with a BA in College Scholars and a BS in Biology. For her College Scholars senior project she wrote a casebook entitled "Scientific Ethics for High School Students" which was published by the Institute for Chemical Education at the University of Wisconsin in 1997. Her project also resulted in a peer-reviewed article, L. M. Barden, P. A. Frase and J. Kovac, "Teaching Scientific Ethics: A Case Studies Approach," American Biology Teacher, 59, 12 (1997). After a year working in a research lab at UT-Memphis she entered medical school, earning the M.D. in 2000. During her final year she won the Bland W. Cannon Award given to students who "demonstrate a high degree of respect, empathy, compassion and humanism for the patients on the part of the physician in addition to a high degree of scholarship."

Following her residency in Internal Medicine-Pediatrics, she accepted a position as a Hospitalist at Horizon Medical Center in Dickson, TN. In 2009 she married Thomas Glorioso. They reside in Nashville with a variety of pets.

Priscilla writes: "I am grateful for my days as a College Scholar, because it was during that part of my life that my experiences were the most diversified. I spent time reading classical literature, studying abroad, writing books, taking trips into the Smokies, mentoring others in the Liberal Arts advisory center, going to football games, visiting "The Strip" and basically getting the most out of everything UT had to offer me. . . I am grateful I was able to create a concentration that allowed me to complete my requirements for medical school while exploring other academic fields. I learned how to complete a complex task, my undergraduate thesis, if you like, and am very proud of the publication that resulted. "

In Memorium - Harry C. Jacobson, July 13, 1931 - June 6, 2010

Harry C. Jacobson, who passed away on June 6, 2010, was the founding Director of College Scholars in 1973. Dr. Jacobson, who was Professor of Physics and Astronomy, earned the Ph.D. in theoretical physics at Yale University where he was a student of the distinguished theoretician and philosopher of science, Henry Margenau. In 1964 Physics Department Head Alvin Nielsen personally recruited Dr. Jacobson to add theoretical strength to the infrared spectroscopy program which at the time was the strongest area of departmental research. In addition to his outstanding research Dr. Jacobson immediately established himself as one of the finest teachers in the department in both introductory and upper division courses. He could be counted on to receive outstanding student ratings in any course he taught. Former Department Head Dr. William Bugg indicated that he could "unashamedly assign him to trouble spots in the curriculum where he invariably delivered quality results."

In the 1970s, Dr. Jacobson became Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs in the College of Liberal Arts, now Arts and Sciences, and the Director of College Scholars. Dennis Perkins, who was a College Scholar at the time, writes, "But what was wonderful and sweet about him was his constant excitement about books and ideas. He almost was bubbly when he asked us to read an article by Derek Bok, or when *The Closing of the American Mind*, and *Habits of the Heart* were published. He wanted us to take that kind of intellectual joy, too. He was always proud of the speakers he invited - their variety and the depth of their learning impressed him as a learner, I think, and whether we were listening to a lecture on cantilever barns or the Bhagavad Gita, he was equally excited about making us excited. Of course, he was the best listener."

Dr. Jacobson was one of the founding fathers of the John XXIII University Parish Catholic Center. He was a member of the committee that drafted the proposal to the Diocese of Nashville to establish a University parish and to provide funds to construction of a Catholic center at UT. He was the first president of the parish council and was an active contributor to parish life throughout his time in Knoxville.

Cody Swallows is currently a second-year medical student at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. As a College Scholar, Cody studied the molecular mechanisms of learning and memory with a special emphasis on anxiety and fear. Working in the behavioral neuroscience laboratory of Dr. Matthew Cooper, Cody and colleagues found activation of serotonin 2A receptors is necessary for acquisition of learned fear. Their findings were recently published in Behavioral Neuroscience. As part of his studies, Cody also coordinated with Cole Neuroscience on a clinical research project concerning dementia characteristic of Alzheimer's Disease. He studied under physicians Dr. John Dougherty and Dr. Monica Crane. Cody has continued research efforts in Memphis, spending the summer of 2012 in the Pediatric Oncology Education (POE) Program at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Working under the mentorship of Dr. David Solecki in the Department of Developmental Neurobiology, Cody studied the molecular mechanisms of granule neuron migration. Granule neuron progenitors give rise to medulloblastomas, a collection of brain tumors that are together the second most common cancer in children. Cody found that several gene targets of ZEB1, a transcriptional repressor that is upregulated in many epithelial cancers, are repressed in granule neuron progenitors and actually represent novel markers of granule neuron differentiation. As the molecular biology of these cells is poorly understood, this is a crucial step toward a better understanding of medulloblastomas. Cody is currently reviewing malignant brain tumor resections at St. Jude in an effort to elucidate factors that determine patient outcomes. Cody currently plans to enroll in a medical research fellowship at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in 2013 and begin a career in neurosurgery upon graduation in 2016.



Big Orange. Big Ideas.

College Scholars

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Ensuring the Future

The College Scholars Program acknowledges the generous financial support of our alumni and friends. Your contributions, no matter what size, play a crucial role in supporting the academic achievement and research of these remarkable students. We hope that you will remember us when deciding to make a gift. Gifts will go to the College Scholars Excellence Fund which provides support for student senior projects or other academic activities. For mailed donations, please send a check payable to the UT Foundation to the address below with College Scholars written in the memo line. For online donations, visit www.artsci.utk.edu/give and select College Scholars. For any questions or additional information please contact the Arts and Sciences Development Office at 865.974.7692 or dtippo@utfi.org.

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