

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2015**

# CLIMBING HIGHER

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

[ridleyuva.org](http://ridleyuva.org)



# CLIMBING HIGHER A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE



Dr. Walter Ridley walking the Lawn  
Final Exercises, 1953

Ridley's 2015 Annual Report focuses on both the legacy of the scholarship program as well as the heights to which we aspire. Your gifts to any of the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds give scholars opportunities to elevate their sights in inspiring ways. Their academic pursuits at the University of Virginia are stellar; their ambitions to find challenges globally and solve them are remarkable; and their intellectual and social contributions to the University of Virginia are impressive. And all of these things are possible because of your gifts.

As these fellow Hoos graduate, they are poised to make extraordinary impacts in their chosen fields. Your support makes that dream a reality. Thank you.

In this Annual Report, you will find important updates on former Ridley Scholars who are using their University of Virginia educations to impact the arts, law, education, finance, and other fields. In addition, you will read updates from members of the Board of Directors, who are working passionately to advance Ridley's mission.

These stories help show how history informs the future, and how a single man, in the throes of abject discrimination, took the courageous first step toward excellence that Ridley Scholars carry forward today.

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The theme for this year's annual report, "Climbing Higher - A Legacy of Excellence," is both reflective of our growth since the inception of the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds almost 30 years ago, and aspirational for what we hope to achieve in the next 30 years and beyond.

A Legacy of Excellence represents our core. Excellence is one of the pillars on which the Academical Village was established nearly two centuries ago. Excellence also represents the foundation of our unwavering commitment to Learning, Leadership, and Legacy for Ridley scholars - past, present, and future. We stand on the shoulders and legacy of those who came before us. As such, we remain indebted to:

- Every African-American alumnus who has graduated from the University since Dr. Walter Ridley,
- The founders of the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds,
- Board members, university administrators, and donors who supported our growth over the past 28 years, and
- The over 300 scholars since 1988 who exemplify Dr. Ridley's legacy of excellence.

Climbing Higher represents our focus on consistently improving the University's commitment to academic excellence and diversity by attracting the best and brightest African-American students to Charlottesville. With a corpus approaching \$11 million, the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds is a premier merit scholarship program for African-American students among public universities.

We appreciate, acknowledge, and celebrate this success, but remain focused on aggressively pursuing our goal of providing full-ride scholarships to prospective students. Unfortunately and far too often, prospective top-caliber students select other universities based on more attractive financial packages. Facing this reality means that complacency with offering partial merit-based scholarships is not an option. We must strive to constantly improve, improve by growing the corpus and thereby winning the battle to attract more elite African-American students to the University.

Our beloved University is truly a magical place. It's a place where the best and brightest grow intellectually, gain experiences that allow them to soar, and ultimately influence the world. As the Board of Directors for the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds, we humbly serve, are truly inspired by, and are proud of our scholars. We wholeheartedly believe that they will unapologetically assume their place as world leaders after graduating from UVa.

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds and our scholars, we thank you for your loyalty and generosity. With your continued support we commit to Climbing Higher and furthering Dr. Ridley's Legacy of Excellence.



Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Best '85  
Chair, Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds

# DEVELOPMENT REPORT: DONORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

On behalf of the Development Committee of the Ridley Family of Scholarship Funds and its Board of Directors, I want to thank you for your steadfast support of our mission to make the University of Virginia the preferred destination for talented African-American students around the country. It is because of you that we have been able to evolve the Ridley Family of Funds from a small book scholarship fund to an endowed scholarship fund with a corpus approaching \$11 million.

It is an exciting time to be on the Board. As we continue our transition to a governing board structure through our strengthened partnership with the Alumni Interest Groups team at the Alumni Association, we have begun to shift our time and focus from development logistics to development strategy. We have added several talented alumni to the Board to help refine and improve our development strategy and our scholar programming. The most exciting news to report, however, is the recent hiring of our first full-time Director of Development, Matthew Brandon. A lifelong Virginian and a graduate of the College of William & Mary, Matt has over 20 years of professional development experience, and most recently served as the Associate Vice President for Advancement at Lynchburg College. Matt has strong ties to the University as a result of his work as a graduate advisor for the Eta Sigma Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. In just a few short months, he has established himself as a key partner in our fundraising efforts. We are confident that the improvement of our governance structure and the addition of Matt to the Ridley team will improve fundraising in fiscal year 2016.

Improving our fundraising efforts is critical not only to continue supporting our current scholars, but also to our efforts to attract the caliber of African-American students we seek at the University. Competition for these students remains fierce and the University is often at a disadvantage compared to peer private institutions that are able to offer richer scholarship and financial aid packages to African-American students. To remain competitive, we must do more than raise enough money to keep pace with increased tuition rates. We must endeavor to offer full scholarships to prospective students. We cannot achieve this goal, however without your continued support, advocacy, passion, and commitment.

We look forward to engaging with you in the near future as we build the Ridley Family of Scholarship Funds into the premier scholarship fund for African-American students in the nation.



Sincerely,

Doug Smith '87, '06  
Vice-Chair, Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds  
Development Committee Chair

## DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT'S LETTER: RIDLEY'S VISION

The Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds seeks to attract - and help retain - the nation's best African-American students to the University of Virginia. Since its inception in 1987, Ridley has become a premier merit scholarship program for African-American students, thanks to UVa alumni, parents, friends, and other donors.

Ridley has created a unique advantage for the University. And Ridley supporters like you have made it possible. Hundreds of Hoos have invested in student successes that have impacts from Charlottesville to Hollywood, and to points beyond. The vision expressed by Ridley's founders - and its leaders over the last 30 years - puts this university at the vanguard of higher education institutions in its commitment to diversity. Ridley's donors continue to build an ever-stronger position atop the mountain of academic achievement.

Due to increasing educational costs, each Ridley scholarship must grow to maintain its impact on a student recipient. New scholarships must be endowed to allow students to pursue a growing number of academic interests at the University of Virginia.

While we began the ascent to a successful scholarship program before most public universities, our future is only assured by our steady focus on achieving our goals. Your gifts to one or more of the Ridley Scholarship Funds, then, are the best tools to make the University of Virginia the nation's leader in recruiting and retaining high-merit African-American college students. Your support is appreciated.

You have demonstrated your commitment in the past, and I appreciate your continued leadership in giving to this scholarship program in the future. With your gifts, Ridley is assured of excellence and the University of Virginia will retain its appropriate place at the pinnacle of attracting the nation's brightest and most-accomplished African-American students.



Sincerely,

Matthew L. Brandon  
Director of Development, Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds

## TREASURER'S REPORT: STRENGTH IN SCHOLARSHIPS

As of June 30, 2015, the Ridley Family of Funds reached a combined ending asset balance of just under \$11 million, including \$6.97 million in the Ridley funds and \$3.98 million in the Holland-Blackburn funds. Total assets increased 6% from the prior year balance as revenues exceeded scholarship and operating expenses by \$0.6 million. Total expenses were approximately 4% of the average net asset balance during the year. We will continue to focus on prudent management of the endowment funds even as we expand our engagement efforts with renewed focus on development.

Donor contributions of \$0.3 million decreased by 3% when compared to the prior fiscal year. Market gains of \$0.6 million exceeded donor contributions by 130%, but were significantly lower than the prior year. Increasing donor gifts will support our goal of growing the scholarship corpus so that we can be responsive to the increasing cost of education and attract more scholars to the University.

We are proud to report that during the 2015 academic year scholarship awards grew by 12.8 percent! We provided approximately \$240,000 in scholarships and upperclass benefits to assist our scholars and future leaders, split evenly between Ridley and Holland-Blackburn scholars.



Sincerely,

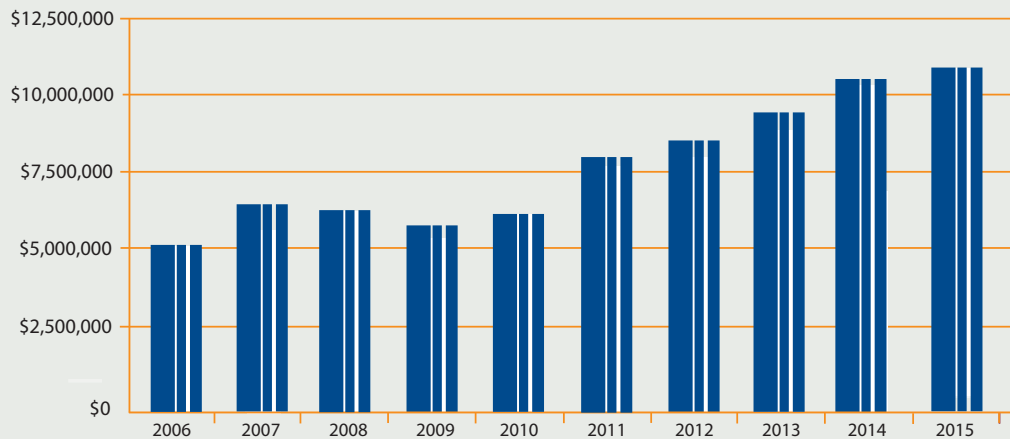
Janice Winstead '87, '88  
Treasurer, Ridley Family of Scholarship Funds

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### STATEMENT OF INCOME AND NET ASSETS

Account Description	Ridley Primary	Holland Blackburn	Batipps	Keller	Andrade	Merchant	Thompson	Guinee	Key Memorial
Net Assets of 7-1-2014	2,106,902	3,856,330	381,554	405,321	231,031	36,770	25,123	107,919	0
Income:									
Contributions	114,816	5,125	1,400	3,475	3,000	0	425	0	62,605
Unrealized Gains+ / Losses-	154,104	256,891	23,151	24,727	14,911	2,002	1,413	6,486	1,364
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>268,920</b>	<b>262,016</b>	<b>24,551</b>	<b>28,202</b>	<b>17,911</b>	<b>2,002</b>	<b>1,838</b>	<b>6,486</b>	<b>63,969</b>
Expenses:									
Scholarships	37,500	120,000	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
Operating Expenses:									
Salaries	27,616	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Service Fees	12,885	19,048	1,949	2,079	1,224	184	126	539	653
Scholarship Accrual	12,297	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Operating Expense	52,338	9	0	7,427	0	0	612	0	0
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>105,136</b>	<b>19,057</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>9,506</b>	<b>1,224</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>653</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>142,636</b>	<b>139,057</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>14,506</b>	<b>1,224</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>653</b>
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>126,284</b>	<b>122,959</b>	<b>22,602</b>	<b>13,696</b>	<b>16,687</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>5,947</b>	<b>63,316</b>
Net Assets as of 6-30-2015	2,233,186	3,979,289	404,156	419,017	247,718	38,588	26,223	113,866	63,316

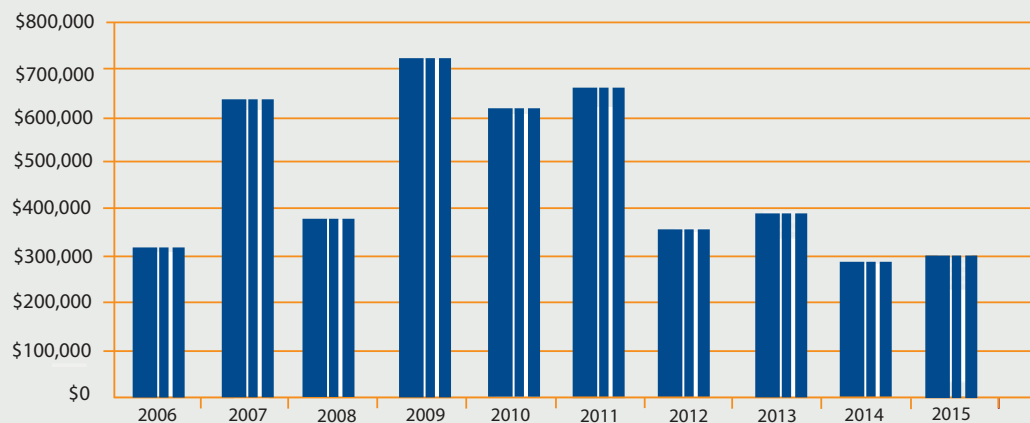
### ENDING FUND BALANCE - RIDLEY FAMILY OF FUNDS



## YEAR TO DATE THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015

Richmond	McGill	Terry	Graves	Bryce	Kirby	Reid	Ledford	New York	Maryland	Grand Total
1,086,242	22,306	289,787	132,954	204,770	217,411	656,361	368,534	188,632	37,039	10,354,986
52,983	0	3,075	500	50,000	0	604	1,250	125	325	299,708
72,580	1,203	18,081	7,707	9,897	15,666	43,612	25,988	10,442	1,901	692,126
125,563	1,203	21,156	8,207	59,897	15,666	44,216	27,238	10,567	2,226	991,834
37,500	0	0	0	0	0	12,500	12,500	0	0	225,000
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,616
5,663	111	1,527	677	1,023	1,086	3,384	1,863	969	191	55,181
0	0	0	0	0	0	(12,376)	14,722	0	0	14,643
10,621	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71,007
16,284	111	1,527	677	1,023	1,086	(8,992)	16,585	969	191	168,447
53,784	111	1,527	677	1,023	1,086	3,508	29,085	969	191	393,447
71,779	1,092	19,629	7,530	58,874	14,580	40,708	(1,847)	9,598	2,035	598,387
1,158,021	23,398	309,416	140,484	263,644	231,991	697,069	366,687	198,230	39,074	10,953,373

## RIDLEY FAMILY OF FUNDS CONTRIBUTIONS





## IN MEMORIAM: RIDLEY HONORS THE LIFE OF GLYNN KEY



In November of 2014, the University of Virginia and Ridley family unexpectedly lost an icon and trailblazer, Glynn D. Key.

“Glynnie” was instrumental in helping to establish the Walter N. Ridley Scholarship Fund in the late 1980s. She was one of the earliest members of the Ridley Board of Directors, and one of the architects of the first Black Alumni Weekend. At the University, she was an avid Ridley supporter, member of the Seven Society, member of the Board of Visitors (appointed by then Governor Mark Warner), member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and former chair of the Honor Committee.

She was a “Double Hoo,” earning both her Bachelor’s (1986) and Juris Doctor (1989) degrees from the University.

She served as general counsel for General Electric (GE), overseeing a global team that provides support for a broad portfolio that includes chemicals, technology, heavy equipment, services, and large-scale capital projects. Prior to joining GE, Glynn was a partner in the Corporate Department at WilmerHale, a top legal firm that maintains offices in 12 cities across America and around the world.

From 1993 to 1996, she served in the first Clinton administration at the Department of the Interior, as counselor to Secretary Bruce Babbitt. At Interior, she was the lead negotiator of the \$700 million groundbreaking Everglades restoration settlement among environmentalists, local Indian tribes, the farming industry, and the federal and state governments. Glynn began her legal career as an associate at Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C.

Active in the community, Glynn served on the governing council of the Miller Center for Public Affairs - a think tank devoted to the study of U.S. national governmental institutions, policies, and programs - as well as the advisory board for the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business’ Initiative for Global Environmental Leadership (IGEL), and the board of trustees of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

Glynn published many articles, including “The Global Business of Law” in the *Bloomberg Corporate Law Journal* (March 2012).

In memory of Glynnie’s passion for the University of Virginia and education, the family established the Glynn D. Key Memorial Fund, care of Ridley at the University of Virginia, P.O. Box 400314, Charlottesville, VA, 22904.

In honor of Glynn’s legacy, it is our hope that through donor support we will establish the Glynn D. Key Memorial Scholarship as the first full-ride scholarship under the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds umbrella for prospective African-American students attending the University of Virginia.

We will forever miss her exuberant enthusiasm for the University.



## SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: “NO LESS THAN AMAZING”

This past academic year, Ridley was pleased to sponsor scholarships for 11 outstanding students. I have no shortage of things to brag about with this group. Over 80% of our scholars were Echols or Rodman Scholars (this is true for the current academic year as well). Their academic interests include physics, environmental science, neuroscience, theater, actuarial science, French, and government. They participated in extracurricular activities like Ultimate Frisbee, the University Guide Service, and the Judiciary Committee. If you returned to Grounds for Black Alumni Weekend this year and attended the panel on student leadership, two of our scholars were featured speakers. In short, these students are no less than amazing!



The scholars who joined their ranks this summer are equally impressive. The First Years are interested in engineering and comparative literature. And our inaugural Sylvia Terry Scholar has distinguished himself as a peer advisor, fraternity president, and all-around leader on Grounds. I have no doubt that these scholars and their peers will continue to excel as students, leaders, and servants.

Your support is crucial to continuing this tradition of excellence. The types of students we recruit for Ridley scholarships are among the most heavily recruited students in the country. With the costs of college rapidly increasing (UVa tuition, fees, room, and board for 2015-2016 totals approximately \$27,000 for in-state students and \$58,000 for out-of-state students), we need your support. As the student bios demonstrate, this is a sound investment.

On a personal note, I must note that this letter is a bittersweet one for me, as it marks the end of my term as a Ridley Board member and Scholarship Committee Chair. It has been my pleasure to serve Ridley's mission for the last eight and a half years and to serve the students as a Scholarship Committee Chair for the last seven years. While I will miss the students and am so sad that I won't get the chance to work with them (especially the first and second years) as closely anymore, I know that they are in good hands under the leadership of the new Scholarship Committee Chair, Ashante Smith. I hope that you will support her as much as you have supported me.

Again, thank you so much for your support. Words cannot express how much it means to our scholars.



Sincerely,

Andra Gillespie '99  
Outgoing Scholarship Chair, Ridley Family of Scholarship Funds



### **NENA EVANS, Richmond Ridley Clarence Cain Scholar**

I am a Fourth Year Richmond Ridley and University Achievement Scholar from Mechanicsville, Virginia. I am pursuing a major in Statistics with an Actuarial Finance concentration and a minor in Psychology. On Grounds, I am the Head Program Director at Madison House for English Speakers of Other Languages. I am also a Statistics tutor and a group exercise instructor at the UVa Aquatics and Fitness Center. This summer, I interned at Genworth Financial in the Actuarial Department where I further developed my technical, quantitative, and analytical skills while enhancing my insurance and product knowledge. After graduation I plan to pursue a career that focuses on quantitative business analysis and strategic planning.



### **RAVYNN STRINGFIELD, Ridley Reid Scholar**

I am a Fourth Year Echols, University Achievement, and Ridley-Reid Endowed Scholar from Suffolk, Virginia. I am a double major (French in the Distinguished Majors Program and Comparative Literature) and a Foreign Affairs minor. Through Ridley, I was able to travel to France to study twice, the second time to begin researching francophone “bande-dessinee” (graphic novels), which are the subject of my thesis. I seek to understand how this art form, in France specifically, enables authors from different countries, specifically the Ivory Coast, Syria, and Iran, to express political unrest and social justice issues. I work as a volunteer intern with the Office of Admission Outreach Team and am involved in the Language Houses community. I am the RA of the French House, where I have lived as a resident for the past two years.



### **KIERA GIVENS, Holland-Blackburn Scholar**

I am a Third Year Echols and Holland-Blackburn Scholar from Takoma Park, Maryland, where I attended the International Baccalaureate Program at Richard Montgomery High School. At UVa, I am double majoring in Environmental Sciences and Anthropology. This past summer, I conducted salt marsh research at the UVa Anheuser-Busch Coastal Research Center, and am continuing that research this year on Grounds in one of the Environmental Sciences labs. Outside of class, I play for Hydra, the Women’s Club Ultimate Frisbee Team, and am the Outreach Chair for the University Guide Service. Additionally, I am a Peer Advisor for the Office of African-American Affairs and a Chair on the Echols Council. Upon graduation, I hope to work for a year and then attend graduate school in Marine Science and Marine Policy.



### **JACOB USKAVITCH, Inaugural Sylvia V. Terry Scholar**

I am a Third Year Echols and Sylvia V. Terry Scholar, pursuing a degree in Chemistry and African-American & African Studies. As an Office of African-American Affairs Peer Advisor, I aid in the transition of incoming students. Through the Luther P. Jackson Black Male Initiative, I facilitate discussion at our monthly book club meetings. I am the President of the Iota Beta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., in which we encourage the youth to pursue higher education as we mentor at a local elementary school. At UVa, I will continue to develop my leadership and mentoring skills. Upon graduation, I plan on attending medical school as well as graduate study in the field of biomedical informatics, where I hope to improve the efficiency of health care through the implementation of future clinically operative technology.



### **DOMINIQUE WILLIS, Gregory Ledford Scholar**

I am a Third Year student from Baltimore, Maryland. I study at the McIntire School of Commerce where I plan on concentrating in Finance and Accounting. During my time at UVa, I have participated in the costume department of First Year Players, volunteered at a local preschool through Madison House, and joined Smart Woman Securities. In the fall semester of my second year I had the privilege of studying abroad on Semester at Sea, and most recently studied abroad for three weeks in China learning about Chinese economics, business, and culture. Additionally, I interned at Facebook this past summer on the Global Marketing Solutions team. In regards to my future professional pursuits, I hope to either intersect business and technology or finance and real estate.



### **TYLER AMBROSE, Ridley Flagship Scholar**

I am a Second Year Echols and Ridley Scholar from Roanoke, Virginia, where I attended William Fleming High School and the Roanoke Valley Governor’s School. I am a Government major and History minor. Over the past summer, I interned at Coleman & Massey, P.C. Attorneys-at-Law. On Grounds, I am a Resident Advisor and an active member of the Academic and Career Development Committee of the Black Student Alliance. I also serve as an educator in the University Judiciary Committee. Upon graduation in 2018, I plan to pursue a law degree.



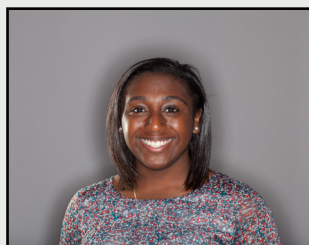
### BIANCA DECATUR, Holland-Blackburn Scholar

I am a Second Year Echols and Ridley Scholar from Durham, North Carolina, where I attended Northern Durham High School. I am currently undeclared, but am hoping to study either Neuroscience or Cognitive Science. I spent my summer working as an Orientation Leader for incoming first year and transfer students. I am involved in Sustained Dialogue, the Outreach Student Admission Committee, the Black Women's Initiative, and the University Guide Service. I also work as a Student Information Session Leader and a volunteer in a Psychology lab.



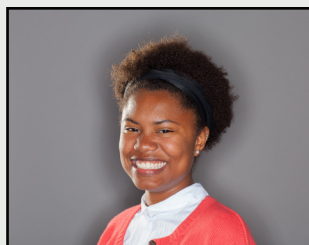
### STEPHANIE DURHAM, Ridley Flagship Scholar

I was raised in McLean, Virginia, and am a Second Year College Science, Echols, and Ridley Scholar pursuing a double major in Physics and Environmental Science. I am a volunteer in the French immersion preschool class at the International School of Charlottesville. I am a member of the Society of Physics Students and a mentor for a first year student, as well as a member of the Green Corner Committee of Green Grounds, which aims to implement sustainable practices in restaurants on The Corner. During the winter, I enjoy my time on the slopes with the Virginia Alpine Ski and Snowboard Team. This past summer, I attended the Global Technology Practice Study Abroad Program in Stuttgart, Germany, and investigated the role of lobbying in the development of wind energy in Germany as compared to the United States.



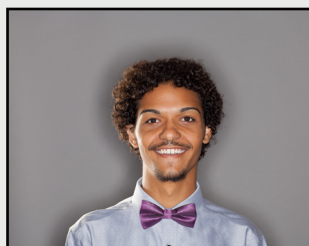
### MICAH WATSON, Holland-Blackburn Scholar

I am a Second Year hailing from Wichita, Kansas. I intend to major in African-American and African Studies and Drama with hopes of having a career in the film and television industry, particularly as a screenwriter. Additionally, I am a Miller Arts Scholar. Outside of my coursework, I am the producer and director of the Black Monologues, as well as a small group leader for OneWay Intersarsity Christian Fellowship.



### JASMINE ZOLLAR, Richmond Ridley Clarence Cain Scholar

I am a Second Year Echols and Ridley Scholar from Mechanicsville, Virginia. I intend to double major in Global Development Studies and African-American & African Studies. Over the summer, I conducted research on the University in its early years and served as an Orientation Leader. On Grounds, I serve as a Resident Advisor (RA), a Peer Advisor in the Office of African-American Affairs, the coordinator for Black Student Alliance community service, and a small group leader in OneWay Intersarsity Christian Fellowship, among other activities. Upon graduation in 2018 I hope to either attend law school or pursue a career in the nonprofit sector.



### TRISTON SMITH, Ridley Flagship Scholar

I am a First Year Ridley and Echols Scholar from Keysville, Virginia. While there, I studied at the Governor's School of Southside, Virginia and Hampden Sydney College, and was valedictorian of Prince Edward County High School. At UVa, I plan to double major in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Modern Languages. In high school, I was president of the National Honor Society, was part of the Debate Team and Scholastic Bowl Team, and participated in an exchange program in which I spent two weeks in Germany. For the past two summers, I have done mission work in Mexico. I plan to do work in Honduras during winter break this year, and to utilize many more opportunities to travel abroad to study and volunteer. Once I graduate, I hope to attend graduate school, possibly in a foreign country.



### MICHAEL THOMPSON, Richmond Ridley Clarence Cain Scholar

I am a First Year from Midlothian, Virginia and a graduate of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School in the City of Richmond. In high school I was an officer in the Red Cross Club and also worked closely with the Youth Philanthropy Project for two years. I was also elected captain of my varsity basketball team. This past summer, I participated in the Bank of America Student Leaders program, where I interned at the Midlothian YMCA and spent a week in Washington, D.C., during which I visited Capitol Hill and spoke with several Virginia legislators. I am planning to major in biomedical engineering with an engineering business minor, and am looking forward to taking advantage of the many opportunities UVa has to offer.



## ANDRA GILLESPIE, HOLLAND SCHOLAR, CLASS OF 1999



Holland Class of 1999, L to R:  
Andra Gillespie, Ph.D., Pamela Brown Bosley  
J.D., Erica Johnson M.D.

Ending my term as Scholarship Committee Chair for Ridley in 2015 was certainly difficult. Not only had I grown close to the students, but I had also developed close relationships with many of my fellow board members. I couldn't imagine not spending my late Januaries and Octobers with them. Nor did I know what I would do if I didn't have an official reason to crash everyone's reunion anymore, as the Ridley Board meets regularly in January, October, and during Reunions Weekend.

These relationships epitomize what Ridley is all about. Its whole purpose revolves around creating and strengthening community. Whether we are creating intellectual community for talented students or creating opportunities for alumni to strengthen their ties to UVA and to the current generation of scholars, the message Ridley hopes to convey is that UVA has a strong black community, ready and willing to support new students in their quest to succeed.

Without a scholarship like the ones we offer now, I would not have come to UVA. However, through the efforts of people like Mike Mallory and the generous support of benefactors like Tony Pilaro, not only did I come to UVA, but I was able to graduate debt-free. I had plum admission offers from Ivy League schools, but I have never regretted my decision to attend UVA.

UVA offered me so many things—things that I would not fully appreciate until years later. I got a first-rate education. I developed lasting friendships with people who have gone on to distinguished careers in academia, law, business, medicine, and public service. And I benefitted from the mentorship of professors who invested in me and set me on my current career path.

Since graduating from UVA, I've had the chance to meet people who could have been my classmates at those other schools. They too have distinguished themselves professionally. But I'm not sure they love their schools as much as I love mine. Had there not been a scholarship like Holland available for me, I'm pretty sure I would have tried to go someplace else. And if I had succeeded in convincing my parents to pay for me to go elsewhere (I was in-state, and UVA was still cheap back then), I'm not sure I would have been as pleased with my decision.

This spring, I had the privilege to interview candidates for the Holland and Ridley Flagship awards. I realized that it had been 20 years since I had come to UVA to interview for my scholarship. No one could have told me as a 17 year old that I would be interviewing high school seniors for my scholarship as a UVA alumna 20 years later. And no one could have told me then that I would love UVA as much as I do now (okay, Corky Conyers '76 tried, but I refused to listen to him back then).

One of the best things about selection weekend is that it provides prospective students with an opportunity to create community before they even arrive on Grounds. I'll never forget arriving for my interview in 1995. The first person I met was Leila Santos. She was a Cape Verdean diplomat's daughter with hair like mine. I instantly felt at ease—seeing another smart black girl with hair like mine let me know that I fit in, that it was okay to be, in the words of Lorraine Hansberry, “young, gifted and black.”

That year, Leila, three other women, and I accepted the Holland Scholarship. On move-in day, the other Hollands in my dorm and I ate our first dinner together at O-Hill. Two years later, we (along with nearly all the black Echols Scholars) walked the Lawn together for Intermediate Honors. We all had different interests and ran in different social groups, but there was something comforting about knowing that I was surrounded by talented black people.

I still count many of that group of talented black people as friends. This past summer, one of my UVA friends held a birthday party. She happened to invite three members of my Holland class to the festivities. It was so good to be together again. Had it not been for the Holland Scholarship, I might not have met these wonderful women.

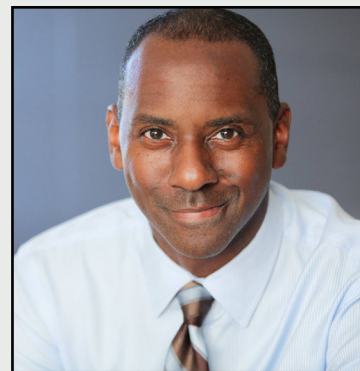
Current Ridley scholars have the opportunity to build that same community, and many of them are serious about being collegial. It warms my heart to see the Second Year class look out for each other the way that they do. And I love how Ravynn Stringfield, a Fourth Year and the designated mother hen of the group, organizes social activities and sends encouraging notes to her fellow scholars.

That is the essence of the college experience. Yes, college is about academic learning. But most people gain just as much from the communal experience as they do from the classroom experience. Scholarship programs like Ridley help to provide a positive communal experience for talented students—one that affirms their intelligence, one that invests in their personal, professional and intellectual development, and one that sets a standard of excellence.

Current Ridley Scholars (with help from the board) are blazing their own path and creating community on their terms. Twenty years from now, I hope that at least one of them has had the opportunity to serve on the Ridley Board, maybe even as Scholarship Committee Chair. And once they've become the doctors, lawyers, physicists and professors that they're destined to become, I hope they run into each other at parties and take selfies, too.

## RODNEY HOBBS, HOLLAND SCHOLAR, CLASS OF 1994

First and foremost, without being a Ridley-Holland Scholar in the first place, as an out-of-state student, I would not have been able to afford and enroll in UVa. Now having said that, being a Holland scholar impacted my experience primarily by providing a built-in community of fellow students who became some of my closest friends while on Grounds. These friends were a strong support network, along with the faculty members and school administrators who availed themselves readily to serve as my mentors and guides during my time on Grounds. We were a tight-knit group, and we shared many educational and social experiences so that as a Ridley-Holland Scholar, I always felt a sense of belonging and importance in the University community. Being a scholar gave me a sense of pride and ownership in UVa that I may not have felt otherwise, and this was very important to me as one of the few African-American students in the McIntire School of Commerce.



The sense of pride that comes with being a Ridley-Holland scholar, and now a UVa alumnus, also continues. It makes me happy to know that I'm a part of a distinguished community of scholarly individuals who still value lifelong learning and personal development. My being a Wahoo and a Ridley-Holland alumnus gives me confidence to know that I can pursue any endeavor I choose in life, and pride to know that I have just as much right as anyone else to do so. Such confidence and pride have been invaluable in pursuit of my lifelong dream as an actor in Los Angeles.

My vision for Ridley's future impact is for the program to continue to attract and spur interest in UVa for the most outstanding students in the country. Just as I had never considered UVa until I heard about the Ridley-Holland program, I envision that this will still occur for high school students and their parents who are researching college opportunities. By attracting the best and brightest students, the Ridley program will continue to develop strong, intelligent individuals who will leave UVa to make an important impact in our world.

Supporters can maintain and elevate Ridley's standard of excellence by giving, giving, giving. Every contribution goes toward enhancing and impacting the life of an African-American student at UVa, making it possible for them to thrive during their time on Grounds, and to lead impactful lives after graduation.

We can also elevate the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds by informing others about its existence. Check with employers to find out if they may offer matching contributions for donations to Ridley; inform our families and friends who have college-bound students about the opportunities that Ridley provides; and publicize the excellent educational experience that attending UVa provided us that continues to this day. We can also remember Ridley in our financial and estate planning, which is not something that we as a community consider often.

Donating to the Ridley Scholarship Family of Funds is an important way for us to maintain our ties to UVa. Since its founding, African-Americans have always played an important part in the University community; of course, our contributions haven't always been recognized. But today we are front and center in the fabric of Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village, and it is imperative that we honor those who came before us by doing what we can to continue the legacy of excellence of which we are all a part.

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