Message From the President

Attaining twenty years of age is a noteworthy landmark in the growth of a young adult as well as in the maturity of a program dedicated to the success of young, highly impressive future leaders. The Scholars, staff, Board of Trustees, Advisory Board, donors, volunteers, mentors and friends of the Ron Brown Scholar Program cheerfully and gratefully mark our 20th year! We celebrate with a mixture of pride, humility, and ever-greater hopes for an even more impactful future. Without Tony Pilaro’s idealistic and absolutely accurate vision based on the belief that opportunity eclipses hardship, the Ron Brown Scholar Program would not have come to be. Tony’s unshakeable faith in the potential of underserved but innately dynamic, highly intelligent and focused young people to overcome hardships and succeed at the highest levels was our springboard.

Growing this Ron Brown family has been a very large team effort. So many good people have worked hard, volunteered, donated, spread the word, mentored the Scholars, advised the staff; so many heartwarming acts of kindness and generosity over the last twenty years underlie all that we have accomplished and bode well for expansion and the significant changes yet to come. Thank you to all who have been and continue to be the wind beneath our wings as well as the forces that keep us moving forward. This year we will be publishing a retrospective look at the first twenty years of the Ron Brown Scholar Program. The Value of One, the Power of All: The Story of the Ron Brown Scholar Program 1997-2017. Updates about our book will be detailed in forthcoming newsletters.

Obviously, we celebrate our Ron Brown Scholars whose individual stories, struggles and achievements inspire everyone who meets them. In choosing our first class of Scholars in 1997, we were blazing a trail. This type of endeavor was new and we were trying to find a way to make it work for the new scholarship recipients and for all who would follow them. Our first class did the hard part—they succeeded at America’s most prestigious colleges and universities; their victories and their challenges showed us what was right about our Program and what we needed to work toward in order to be better. Each year, and in fact every day, we have continued to learn from our Scholars. Twenty years in, Ron Brown Scholars have found professional success in every field of endeavor. Our undergraduate family studies and attains their degrees at America’s top colleges and universities (we still boast a 99% graduation rate). Our postgraduate family includes artists, educators, engineers, physicians, business people, scientists, writers—the span of human accomplishment. But there is one trait that the entire RBS family shares—a belief in serving their community and in paying it forward. Their penchant for generosity is reflected in the fact that at least 82% of Scholars donate financially to the Program once they are in a position to do so. Thank you, Scholars, for striving, achieving, moving forward, and giving back—for all that you have done, all that you are, and all that you are continuing to make possible as we enter our third decade.

Finally, on a personal note, being able to spend twenty years of my life (the essence of my career) working with, learning from, being inspired by, and sharing so many wonderful times with fascinating, truly good and capable people has been an unbelievable honor and privilege. On behalf of everyone connected with the Program—present and past—thank you, and please stay with us and support our Scholars as they continue to engage in activities that improve and influence society.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Mallory
President & CEO
About Anthony M. Pilaro

Anthony M. Pilaro earned his undergraduate degree (1957) and his law degree (1960) from the University of Virginia. He is an attorney, investment banker, and philanthropist with a straightforward, encompassing faith in a free society and especially in the ability of young people to be highly effective agents (for social betterment). Tony serves as Chairman of the CAP Charitable Foundation and the CAP Advisers Limited of Dublin. His professional career includes the development of business initiatives, including Duty Free Shoppers, the world’s largest duty free retailer; VEIX, the laser vision correction company that invented the LASIK procedure for vision correction; and Britte Smile Inc., a leading tooth whitening company.

Tony’s philanthropic initiatives have also been wide-ranging and impressive. In 1996, he founded the Ron Brown Scholar Program. He envisioned a growing family of young leaders of extraordinary ability who would, with proper mentoring and financial support, succeed at the highest levels while remaining committed to helping others as they had been helped. Time has proven the vision: “The Value of One and the Power of All” to be both realistic and correct. The success of Ron Brown Scholars over the past 20 years is the result of their innate grit coupled with the efforts and beneficence of countless good people who have counseled, donated, and provided a wide range of opportunities to them. It, all began with Tony, our founder and initial and generous benefactor.

Tony did not start out wealthy; he was a student on an athletic scholarship at the University of Virginia. Thus, he has always personally understood how important financial assistance can be for students with economic need. In 1984, he decided to support need-based scholarships for law students (the scholarship program was named for Hardy Cross Dillard, U Va.’s Dean of the Law School during the 1960s). In 1987, Tony started and generously funded the Jerome Holland Scholarships for African-American undergraduate students—his signature philanthropic program at U Va. and the model for the Ron Brown Scholar Program.

To date, 396 Ron Brown Scholars have directly benefited as a result of Tony Pilaro’s efforts. The vast majority of RBS volunteer for the Program and donate to it as soon as they are financially able to do so. Ron Brown Scholars will always be the heart of Tony’s vision; the impact of his generosity continues to grow as we serve ever-increasing numbers of promising young African American students. More than 1,500 Ron Brown Captains (highly qualified finalists for the RBS scholarship who did not receive financial support) currently receive the same internship and career advice advantages as our Scholars.

In the summer of 2016, the Guided Pathway Support (GPS) Program, a community outreach venture designed to increase student success in college admissions as early as the junior and senior year of high school, was launched. GPS will reach hundreds of underserved students each year and will feature RBSP’s high-tech and high-touch approach. Details about this new initiative that will assist 500 promising African American high school students each year and will exponentially increase the name recognition of the Program and its association with doing good are presented elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Tony’s generosity is inherent in everything we have accomplished to date as well as in the vision we are making to serve an even-larger number of deserving young people as time goes on. What will the next twenty years bring? We know that there is much to be accomplished and we are realistically hopeful that great things will happen for many of us. We look forward while we acknowledge the man who first gave us our wings. Thank you, Tony! •

She described Ron Brown as a man who, as chair of the Democratic National Committee at the time, believed in lost causes; a visionary, and, most of all, “an optimist at heart.”

The 2016 American Journey Awards gala provided a perfect opportunity to reflect upon the life of Ronald H. Brown and the lives he touched as we honored the 20th anniversary of his passing. Certainly, a highlight of the evening was comments from keynote speaker Penny Pritzker, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce who spoke passionately about her first interactions with the late Ron Brown.

Secretary Pritzker gripped the audience that evening as she reflected on her many memories of the late Secretary Brown. She began by telling a personal story of meeting Ron Brown and his influence on her early exposure to Presidential politics. They met in 1992 when she was 31 years old—‘at a time when, as she reminded everyone, many of the Scholars in the crowd were not yet born or were in grade school. She described Ron Brown as a man who, as chair of the Democratic National Committee at the time, believed in lost causes; a visionary, and, most of all, “an optimist at heart.” She Secretary Pritzker spoke of being a “Chicago political rookie” impressed by Brown’s understanding of human dynamics, his charm and ease with people regardless of their political leanings, and about the chain of events that ultimately led to Bill Clinton being elected President later that year. The Secretary summarized the important lessons she learned from her mentor and friend. She described Ron Brown as someone who saw “shining lights in other people” and believed that regardless of experience, age or circumstance, everyone has the innate capability and capacity to give back.

The room wasushed through-out the Secretary’s speech as she emphasized the importance of setting an example and also of allowing young people a stake in shaping the future. Perhaps most memorable was the Secretary’s saying that nowhere is Ron Brown’s legacy more evident than in today’s Ron Brown Scholars. He spoke of having met many powerful people in her life but stated that a planning meeting with Michael Mallory and several Ron Brown Scholars a few weeks earlier, “…blew me away. They are so dynamic and have accomplished so much in their young lives—it is extraordinary and it is compelling.”

Secretary Pritzker’s words re-introduced the audience to the history and the dynamic personality of the man whose name our Scholars carry as they forge their own legacy of leadership. At her conclusion, the large audience gave the Secretary explosive applause. •
The Ron Brown Leaders Network is celebrating another successful year of programming that would not be possible without support from our corporate partners. Seeing the rapid growth of this program and the enthusiasm of our young leaders confirms that we are on to something: talented young African Americans and companies with a strong commitment to diversity shouldn’t struggle to find each other. We are proud to report that every corporate partner recruiting through the Ron Brown Leaders Network this year hired at least one intern or full-time employee. Over 40 Ron Brown students and young alumni secured competitive career opportunities through our Network in the 2015-2016 academic year. In June, the Ron Brown Leaders Summit assembled an audience of over 115 students and young alumni from across the country at the offices of Google in New York City. Over the two-day event, our young leaders connected with representatives from Capital One, Deloitte, Goldman Sachs, Google, Lockheed Martin, RTI, Siemens, Wake Forest School of Business and Weber Shandwick. Relationship building was powerful and evident throughout the Summit as our partners shared their stories and tips for navigating the career landscape to new professionals. Attendees were led through a series of breakout sessions on topics related to problem-solving and understanding the essential skills needed in today’s job market. Ample networking time allowed attendees to learn about summer internship opportunities and full-time positions with the companies represented while cultivating deeper relationships with their peers. With our eye to 2017, the Ron Brown Leaders Network is setting ambitious goals for bridging even stronger connections between our students, alumni and partners. We are grateful for your commitment and confidence to keep us moving forward.

Students strategize during a problem-solving activity led by partner Capital One.

Leaders Network partners discuss “Essential Skills in Today’s Job Market”, moderated by Deloitte Executive Lacy Blalock, with participants from Wake Forest, Lockheed Martin, Sikorsky, RTI and Goldman Sachs.
Dr. Travis Gayles graduated from Duke University (BA, 2001) and from The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (PhD, 2006) and (MD, 2009). He credits his parents with teaching him his most important life lesson: as you seize opportunity and gain access to positions of influence, you must remember where you come from and seek to give back to your community.

Dr. Gayles remained at Northwestern where he completed his residency in pediatrics followed by a fellowship in adolescent medicine and HIV medicine at the National Institutes of Health. He was a medical professor at the Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine Institute of Health Policy and at the DePaul University College of Health Sciences. Dr. Gayles also served as a member of the board of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s LGBT Health Advisory Council and the Chicago House Social Service Agency. Currently, he is the Chief Medical Officer and Division Chief for the D.C. Department of Health, Division of HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis, STDs and Tuberculosis (HAHSTA).

Dr. Gayles is a social change agent who believes that working to level access to quality healthcare is both a form of protest against the way things are and a way to express hope in the future. He believes that by being present and gaining a seat at the table, you can ask the questions that others can’t and eventually change peoples’ ideas.

After completing his undergraduate studies, Travis worked for the Institute of Medicine in Washington, DC on a study to improve palliative and end of life care for children. His observations of likely but undocumented (at the time) discrepancies in the quality of end-of-life care for low-income children motivated him to seek training and conduct research in this area as part of his PhD work in Community Health and Health Policy. After completing medical school, Dr. Gayles remained at Northwestern where he completed his residency in pediatrics followed by a fellowship in adolescent medicine and HIV medicine at the National Institutes of Health. He was a medical professor at the Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine Institute of Health Policy and at the DePaul University College of Health Sciences. Dr. Gayles also served as a member of the board of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s LGBT Health Advisory Council and the Chicago House Social Service Agency. Currently, he is the Chief Medical Officer and Division Chief for the D.C. Department of Health, Division of HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis, STDs and Tuberculosis (HAHSTA).

The focus of the home visits wasn’t to talk about academics at all. It was an opportunity for me to learn from the parents and families what they know and believe to be true about their child. As I did all of this, I felt that my teaching became more effective. I was more believable as their child’s teacher. And all of this made me a better educator and solidified my understanding that communities are the cornerstone unit of change for education. I formed deep bonds with my students and families. Even when I left my school to attend graduate school, I continued to visit them.

Casandra Woodall attended Harvard University (AB, 2010), George Mason University (MEd, 2012), and the U.V.A. Darden School of Business (MBA, 2016). She began her postgraduate career as a Teach for America educator with the goal of being a change agent dedicated to achieving equitable outcomes. Her belief that attainment of sustainable change is dependent on family/community engagement in deep and meaningful ways led her to emphasize family involvement in the education of their children.

When I was a teacher, it could be a scary asking families about their opinions on the classroom, it’s culture, their opinions on homework, and more. I often would invite my parents to come to the classroom—come see your students learn. Observe what is happening! I went on home visits at the beginning of the year: It was an organizational challenge, but we made it work. The focus of the home visits wasn’t to talk about academics at all. It was an opportunity for me to learn from the parents and families what they know and believe to be true about their child. As I did all of this, I felt that my teaching became more effective. I was more believable as their child’s teacher. And all of this made me a better educator and solidified my understanding that communities are the cornerstone unit of change for education. I formed deep bonds with my students and families. Even when

RBS Impact 2016

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The GPS Program Helps Students Defy the College Access Gap

GPS Facebook by the Numbers

In the two calendar weeks since the GPS Program was launched:

- **750+** high school students, Ron Brown Scholars, Ron Brown Captains, education experts college admissions professionals and volunteers have been invited to the hub
- **5,100+** posts, comments, reactions and messages have been generated on the site
- **150+** users are active on the site each day engaging each other and GPS information

Benefits of the GPS Program

GPS Workplace by Facebook site is an invaluable tool that facilitates access to peers, mentors and college admissions scholarship information any time of day to any place that a Wi-Fi connection can reach. Every year, top African American students graduate high school with high grades and high test scores -- but do not apply to top colleges for which they are not only qualified, but can likely get generous financial aid. Notably, it is at the college application stage where the access gap is most pervasive. The GPS Program intervenes during this crucial period with a research-driven approach focusing on three areas: high-tech and high-touch mentorship, access to information and social network support.

**High-Tech and High-Touch Mentorship**

- Guidance and motivation from the Ron Brown Leaders Network
- Invitation to an exclusive and customized Workplace by Facebook college information hub where students can find answers and pose college and career questions anytime of day from any place on the globe
- Peer and Near-Peer Mentorship

**Access to Information**

- Access to comprehensive and reliable college application information
- Access to information on thousands of scholarships and college prep programs with frequent deadline reminders and advice from previous winners and participants
- Financial aid advice
- Monthly Webinars
- Newsletters

**Social Network Support**

- Access to a national leadership community of 1,200 African American undergraduates, graduate students and young professionals from top colleges and universities
- Invitations to leadership conferences where students can explore college major and career options; learn practical life skills; and engage with executives, community leaders and admissions professionals

Given the near-ubiquitous usage of Facebook among high school juniors and seniors, we have partnered with the social media titan to transform it from a social site into a college information hub. Although the site has only been live for a few short weeks, it has generated such an incredible amount of activity that Facebook has already expressed interest in using the GPS Program as a case study. On the GPS Workplace by Facebook site, high school students with college application and financial aid questions post them and get them answered almost immediately. Students under stress and in academic distress vent and receive support from the entire GPS community. GPSers who are planning to apply for specific scholarships and college prep programs interact with Ron Brown Scholars and Captains who have already won those scholarships and participated in those programs. Those planning campus visits make arrangements to meet with Ron Brown Scholars and Captains who are currently students on those campuses. Frequent deadline reminders for scholarships and prep programs are used to nudge targeted students. Students collectively celebrate their college admissions accomplishments, share strategic information and engage each other in a true leadership community.

Not only is the platform a leadership forum, it is a haven as a safe space for a dialogue on racial identity in higher education. One GPS student was inspired to start a black student union at his high school but did not know how to jumpstart the process. He was able to connect with other high school students who have started black student organizations on their campuses to learn best practices, how to kick-start his organizing drive and what hurdles to anticipate.

Many GPS Students:

- Have never considered applying to a selective college.
- Have never known anyone who attended a selective college.
- Have never known anyone who attended college out-of-state.
- Falsely believe that they could never afford or earn scholarships to selective colleges.
- Have never spoken directly with a college admissions professional.

"Thank you for creating this page!"
— GPS Participant

"Just wanted you to know that I did meet up with [a Ron Brown Scholar] and she gave me some amazing advice."
—GPS Participant

"We’ve all been there. I’m here if you ever need anything!"
—GPS Participant

"I’m so excited to start this journey with everyone."
—GPS Participant

A Guided Pathway Support Program (GPS) participant reflects on the impact of the platform in her life. Social network support.

Winter 2016
2016 Annual Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association Leadership Conference

The 2016 Annual Ron Brown Scholar Leadership Conference was hosted by our partner Deloitte LLP at their offices in Arlington, Va. It was wonderful to see and catch up with so many Ron Brown Scholars, Captains and friends of the Program during the course of the weekend in early August.

The conference theme was Take the Lead: Transforming Tomorrow Today, where Scholars and Captains shared their passions for leadership and social change and had the opportunity to learn from each other and a network of professionals in various fields.

We were honored to hear from a host of speakers, including:

• Dr. Amanda Alexander (RBS, 2000, Soros Justice Fellow and Attorney) Justice, Policing and African American Community. Dr. Alexander led a thought-provoking seminar on the role that race plays in modern criminal justice and how Scholars and Captains can support the effort for more just communities.

• The Honorable William Euille (former Mayor of Alexandria, VA) The Importance of Public Service in our Communities. Mr. Euille shared life lessons from his remarkable career, which spans over thirty years of public service in local, statewide and national capacities.

• Dr. Gabrielle Marzani (Faculty, University of Virginia School of Medicine) Resiliency - Moving Forward Through Challenges. Dr. Marzani moderated a touching discussion on overcoming failures and the importance of resiliency to success.

• The Honorable Mr. Michael Blake (New York State Assemblyman). Mr. Blake delivered a keynote inspiring Scholars and Captains to take the lead during election year and beyond.

The GPS Program Helps Students Defy the College Access Gap

GPS leverages the invaluable resource of the Ron Brown Leaders Network to change the college-going attitudes and college application behaviors of GPS students. Anchored by the Ron Brown Scholars and Captains, GPS students will be integrated into a national leadership network with shared culture of community service and mentorship that facilitates college matriculation, persistence, graduation, and success.

Like traditional college access programs, GPS provides students access to comprehensive information on college admissions, college majors and careers, scholarships, financial aid and college enrichment programs. Yet unlike other programs, GPS aggregates students through a teen-friendly platform, GPS Facebook, that connects students and their parents to college admissions professionals, uniquely qualified Ron Brown Scholar and Captain mentors, and each other through a robust online college admissions community.

Most importantly, under GPS model the messengers complement the message. The first-hand testimonials and strategic advice of other aspiring African American undergraduates, graduate students and young professionals—who have already successfully been admitted to and/or graduated from top colleges—are used to change college application outcomes.

Scholar Profile: Caroline Haoud

My lab as a whole, found that people with pre-Alzheimer’s disease were losing weight faster than normal. I was trying to see the relationship between the metabolic effects of Alzheimer’s and an over-accumulation of amyloid beta peptide plaques. What advice do you have for other RBS as they are starting their school year? We shouldn’t be thinking about how much time we have, but how much energy we have that day and how we want to expend it. You have to be stra-tegic about how you spend your time. Also, finding mentors who really click with you. Don’t just struggle along with the advisers you are assigned.

Would you encourage other Schol-ars and Captains to volunteer in the Charlottesville office? Hhh… yeah! It’s really nice to see everyone at the conferences, but there’s not enough time to really talk with everyone in the office. This was a great way to do that.

Scholar Update: Despite it being her first lab experience, this fall Caroline has been invited to present her Alzheimer’s research at two national science conferences based on her work last summer.

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GPS aggregates excellence among academically-prepared African American youth, Ron Brown Scholars and Ron Brown Captains to build a far-reaching social support and professional network.
The Ron Brown Scholar Program Wishes to Thank All of the Foundations, Organizations and Friends Who Have Supported Our Mission. 
Financial November 1, 2015 – October 13, 2016

Scholarship Sponsors: Scholarships are very special and generous people who have provided the funding to fully support a Ron Brown Scholar and without whom we could not award the number of scholarships we do, nor support our young Ron Brown Scholars in the unique way that is the foundation of our mission.

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Kathy Thornton-Bias
Maria Tildon
Sonserea Toles
Michael B.S. Treisman
Jonice Gray Tucker
Thomas Anthony Waller
R. Kenly Webster
Kim Wendel
Tom Werner
Christine Whyld
Jennelle Widerman
Aaron S. Williams
Anthony Wilkins
Michael A. Williams
Tyrone Woodyard
Bethany Dickerson Wynder