The Journey
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RON BROWN SCHOLAR PROGRAM
FALL 2017

Message from the President

There are few greater joys than seeing the fruition of an idea based upon improving the lives of deserving young people. As I look back upon the last 21 years of the Ron Brown Scholar Program, I am in awe of the impact and accomplishments that result when good people work together toward achieving lofty goals. Without Tony Pilaro’s initial vision and belief that lack of opportunity is one of the greatest hurdles for today’s youth, without the ongoing dedication and unwavering support of the late Chris Pilaro, Tom Boggs and so many other friends too numerous to name, the Ron Brown Scholar Program would not have weathered the lean years nor blossomed beyond our wildest hopes in the good ones.

Our work has always been, and continues to be, a team effort. I readily admit that we have been blessed to have the best team of staff, supporters, volunteers, donors and mentors. It is with overwhelming pride that I announce the completion of our latest book, *The Value of One, The Power of All: Ron Brown Scholar Program 20th Anniversary*. This book tells our story, from the choice of our first class of Scholars in 1997 to the welcoming of our latest class of 2017 into the RBS family.

The Ron Brown Scholar Program has touched many lives during its 21 years, and all of us associated with the Program have in turn been influenced and inspired by the young people who comprise this phenomenal family. *The Value of One, The Power of All* will be published and ready for distribution in the upcoming weeks. I cannot wait to share this with you.

The *Value of One, The Power of All* also highlights the ways mentoring has been key to the Program’s success. Scholars have relied heavily on our network of friends. This mentoring from the Ron Brown Scholar Program family is what Scholars mention that they appreciate most.

In the pages of this newsletter we thank the many individuals, foundations and organizations that have contributed financially to the Program over the past year. We cannot thank you enough for your generosity—generosity that provides opportunities for young people, who in turn create opportunities for those who follow.

On behalf of everyone connected with the Program, both past and present, we thank you for your continued friendship and ask that you continue to connect with and support our Scholars as their work and successes touch and change ever more young lives.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Mallory
President and CEO

The *Value of One, The Power of All*, a book celebrating the Ron Brown Scholar Program’s 20-year history, was completed this fall.
T
he Program has been awarded a grant of $2 million from Fund II Foundation to expand its Guided Pathway Support Program (GPS), a free college access program that helps African-American high school students to gain admissions to top universities, and ultimately narrows the college access gap.

Fund II Foundation makes grants to 501(c)(3) public charities in five areas: 1) preservation of the African American experience, 2) safeguarding human dignity by giving a voice to the voiceless and promoting human rights 3) improving environmental conservation and providing outdoor education that enables people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy the numerous benefits of the great outdoors

4) facilitating music education, particularly in primary and secondary schools, to nourish both the mind and the soul and 5) sustaining the uniquely American values of entrepreneurship, empowerment, innovation and security.

“We are so proud of the hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence that the Ron Brown Scholars have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate. And with the development of the Guided Pathway Support Program, even more students will receive the guidance to successfully and confidently navigate the college application process through the mentorship of Ron Brown Scholars who have been there before,” said Linda Wilson, Executive Director of Fund II Foundation.

“"We're thrilled to have received this generous grant from Fund II Foundation, an important partner in promoting social change for African Americans. With this grant, we'll be able to build on our tremendous success with the program, and to continue to prepare African American students for success before, during and after college.”

—MICHAEL MALLORY

Launched in the fall of 2016 and available to African American high school juniors, seniors and their parents, GPS makes the college process more successful by providing these students with the mentorship, tools and resources needed to prepare for, apply for, persist in and graduate from college. Resources provided through the program include:

- Access to an invitation-only GPS Workplace by Facebook college hub platform
- Comprehensive and reliable information on every stage of the college application process
- Direct access to admissions officers, Ron Brown Scholars, Ron Brown Captains and guidance counselors to answer their college questions
- Access to free standardized exam prep resources and information on test-optional institutions
- Connections to one of the country’s largest networks of African American undergraduates, graduate students and alumni of elite and Ivy league schools

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**THE JOURNEY** | The Newsletter of the Ron Brown Scholar Program
The program admits those students facing particular hardship: Some 50% qualify for free lunch, and 20% will be first-generation college students. In addition, as opposed to traditional mentoring programs, Ron Brown Scholars and Captains who provide mentorship are similar in racial identity, age, income and life experiences, which better enables them to meaningfully engage the students.

Ten colleges and universities have enrolled as GPS Educational Partners, including Amherst College, Carleton College, the College of William & Mary, Cornell University, Northwestern University, Swarthmore College, the University of Virginia, Wake Forest University, Wellesley College, and Wesleyan University, with more institutions to come. The first cohort of GPS seniors gained acceptances to Harvard, Duke, Howard, Stanford, the University of Virginia, Spelman, Washington University in St. Louis and a host of other colleges and universities.

For more information on GPS, visit www.rbsgps.com. For more information on Fund II Foundation, visit www.fund2foundation.org.

GPS makes the college process more successful by providing African American juniors and seniors with the mentorship, tools and resources needed to prepare for, apply for, persist in and graduate from college.

Welcome New Program Staff

Danielle Lewis
Danielle Lewis joined the staff this August as a Program Associate working with the Guided Pathway Support Program (GPS). Originally from Jamaica, Danielle is a true believer of and a testament to the power of access to resources and support for underrepresented student populations’ academic success as she recently received her MEd in Educational Psychology from the University of Virginia. Before the University of Virginia, Danielle attended Randolph College where she earned her BA in Sociology with minors in Business and International Relations. Danielle is determined to use the knowledge she’s gained in the classroom along with her personal experiences to empower, challenge, support and motivate the future leaders of tomorrow.

Randy Tripp, Jr.
Randy Tripp, Jr. will join the Program staff in 2018. He currently serves as an Associate Dean of Admission and Director of Multicultural Recruitment at the College of William & Mary. A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Randy received his BS as well as his MEd from William & Mary and has been working in higher education for the past 12 years. The majority of that time has been at William & Mary working in both the Office of Undergraduate Admission as well as three years in MBA Admissions at the Raymond A. Mason School of Business. He also spent some time at the University of Maryland, College Park where he worked with pipeline programs for middle and high school students.
Scholars in Academics
Ten Scholars Serving as Teachers and Mentors in Higher Ed

Michelle Robinson (RBS 1997) had completed six years of post-secondary education—earning her bachelor's and master's degree from Harvard—before she had an African American professor. “Mike Mallory was my north star,” she said as she recalled navigating her path to her current position as Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the American Studies Department at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Michelle and nine additional Ron Brown Scholars either hold or are pursuing professorship positions, ensuring that current African American undergraduates and graduate students see themselves in their teachers and mentors. Here, they share the impact the Program has had on their paths and offer advice to Ron Brown Scholars and Captains.

“As an undergrad, I didn’t realize that graduate school was a track open to me,” Michelle remembers. “But other Ron Brown Scholars held the bar so high, and the idea of taking my education to the next level became something I could see.”

Traci Burch, now a Associate Professor in Northwestern University's Department of Political Science and a Research Professor for the American Bar Foundation, credits the Program for giving her the freedom to pursue her PhD right out of undergrad. “Many people take time off to work because of financial pressures, but because of the scholarship, I felt comfortable moving right to graduate school.”

“The Ron Brown Scholar Program has always been a source of encouragement, mentorship, and connections,” says Kristian Henderson, who is an Assistant Professor at George Washington University and an entrepreneur. “My career path has been a series of taking risks and following my instincts. I went from wanting to be a physician, to a public health professional, to a hospital administrator, to a professor, to an entrepreneur. The Program has been by my side at every twist and turn. I have pitched non-profit ideas that I have since abandoned, but the practice of pitching was invaluable. I was connected to one of my closest mentors and dissertation advisors through the Program.”

Yolanda Covington Ward, PhD (RBS 1997)
Associate Professor of Africana Studies, University of Pittsburgh
BA Afro-American Studies (with Honors), Brown University
MA Anthropology, University of Michigan
PhD Anthropology, University of Michigan

Yolanda focuses much of her research on the relationship between social connections, interpersonal interactions and group identities, and how they impact and are impacted by physical bodies. She has conducted extensive research on the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia, and has been studying how performative encounters can transform social relationships through gestures, dances and spirit possession. Currently, she is examining the adjustment and acculturation experiences of Liberian immigrants in the United States, and their effects on group identity formation and self-perceived health.

Michelle Robinson, PhD (RBS 1997)
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of American Studies
AB English and American Language and Literature, Harvard University
MTS, Harvard Divinity School
PhD, American and New England Studies Program, Boston University

Michelle is a member of the faculty board for the Program in Sexuality Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. She is the author of Dreams for Dead Bodies: Blackness, Labor and Detection in American Literature (U Michigan Press 2016). Her interdisciplinary courses range from “Anti-’Fifties: Voices of a Counter Decade” to “Radical Communities in Twentieth Century U.S. Religious History,” to “The Film Director as Public Intellectual.” Her current research explores the evangelist Billy Graham’s travels across the United States. A selection from this project will appear as a chapter in the edited collection Jackpot: Gambling Throughout American History (U Nevada Press 2018).
Advice for Scholars and Captains Pursuing Careers in Academics

From Kristian Henderson:
I absolutely LOVE being a professor. It allows me complete autonomy and the flexibility to pursue my entrepreneurial pursuits. I created BLK + GRN, a platform that curates Black-owned natural products that use high-quality, ethically sourced, and toxin-free ingredients. My advice, don’t let the dislike of research stop you from pursuing a career in academics. There are a lot of different options on how to structure your contract with a University, and research does not have to be a part of your package. Lastly, it is all about connections. If you know you want to work at a particular University, reach out to the faculty and meet with them. Learn about the culture, make a good impression, and most importantly grow your network.

From Michelle Robinson:
1. Look for mentors in unexpected places—people who want you to go to the next level. I found mentors in administrators.
2. If you are interested in the humanities, pursue a thesis to see if you have the creativity and dedication necessary for research. If you want to go to graduate school in the humanities, it is critical that you’ve worked on a substantial research project.
3. Go to divinity school! Divinity school was the opposite of the competitive undergrad experience. People were there to support one another. Look for this kind of collegiality and community in a program—ask those who are in the program what the culture is like. Look for schools that create social and support spaces for people of color, and those that understand the challenges of being a first-generation student.
4. Choosing a graduate program is different than choosing a college or university for your undergraduate education. Focus on the program, not the school. The best programs are not always at the big name schools.
5. Never pay for graduate school. Make sure your graduate education is full and fairly funded.

From Maria Velazquez:
Build and nurture your support network. Academia is different from other fields in that you’re going to spend several years as a student or a junior colleague, and you’ll need letters of recommendation throughout. Plus, opportunities to collaborate or share writing rely on more informal networks/ friendships than I’ve seen in other fields.

The flipside of this is that you have to keep your messiness to yourself. There’s a temptation in grad school to continue acting like an undergrad, to keep going to class in pajamas, and to very quickly blur the lines between friends and future colleagues. That’ll slow your timeline to your degree. Getting involved in grad student drama is a distraction from your writing and research, and you don’t want a reputation for being petty or a gossip to impact you on your job search.

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Traci Burch, PhD (RBS 1998)
Associate Professor, Northwestern University Department of Political Science
Research Professor, American Bar Foundation
AB Politics, Princeton University
PhD Government and Social Policy, Harvard University

Traci’s research is in the areas of political participation, political inequality and social policy. She is the author of Trading Democracy for Justice (U Chicago Press 2013) and coauthor of Creating a New Racial Order (Princeton U Press 2012). In 2014, Trading Democracy for Justice won the American Political Science Association (APSA) Ralph Bunche Book Award, the APSA Urban Politics Section Best Book Award, and the APSA Law & Courts Section C. Herman Pritchett Award for Best Book in the Field of Law & Courts.

Maleka Donaldson, EdD (RBS 1998)
Assistant Professor of Early Elementary Education, University of Hartford, College of Education, Nursing & Health Professions
AB Biology, Harvard College
EdM Human Development and Psychology, Harvard Graduate School of Education
EdD Human Development and Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Maleka has dedicated her research to examining how teacher feedback on student mistakes affects a student’s orientation towards learning, their educational success and their future life outcomes. Her research explores the nuances of how these findings play out in real-world contexts, and she hopes it will help teachers become more aware of their feedback interactions with students.

Christopher Hunter, PhD (RBS 1998)
Assistant Professor of English, California Institute of Technology
AB Literature, Harvard College
MA Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania
PhD, University of Pennsylvania

Christopher explores the history of the autobiography as a literary genre and how it came to be recognized as a distinctly American genre. One of his projects is co-editing Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography: A Facsimile of the Holograph Manuscript. He is sorting through the recently digitized manuscript of this autobiography, creating one of the first pieces of work written by editors who have accessed the original manuscript written in Franklin’s own hand.

Tristan Ivory, PhD (RBS 2000)
Assistant Professor of Sociology and Black Studies, University of Missouri
BA Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, Stanford University
MEd Secondary Education, University of California, Los Angeles
MA Sociology, Stanford University
PhD Sociology, Stanford University
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Sociology, Indiana University

Tristan’s research centers around issues of international migration, race and ethnicity, inequality and transnationalism. His dissertation examines the resources and strategies Sub-Saharan African migrants use to maximize social and economic outcomes in Tokyo, the results of which are being compiled into a book tentatively called Greener Pastures: Sub-Saharan Africans and the Pursuit of Social Mobility in Japan.

Continued on Page 6
Scholars in Academics


**Kristian Henderson, DrPH (RBS 2005)**
*Assistant Professor, George Washington University*
BS History of Science and Medicine, Yale University
MPH Health and Policy Administration,
Yale School of Public Health
DrPH Health Care Management and Leadership,
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Kristian researches cultural competency in the health care setting, investigating the relationship between patient satisfaction and cultural competency. Her dissertation, titled “Relationship Between Cultural Competency and Quality Indicators in Hospitals,” examined approaches to integrating cultural competency strategies in health care settings.

**Future Professors**

*These Scholars have earned their PhDs and are in the market for or have committed to tenure-track positions.*

**Maria Velazquez, PhD (RBS 2000)**
*BA Philosophy, Smith College*
*MA Gender/Cultural Studies, Simmons College*
*PhD American Studies, University of Maryland*
*Postdoc in Africana Studies, Bucknell University*

Maria is currently a postdoctoral fellow in transnational Black citizenship in The Ohio State University’s Department of African American and African Studies. She describes her research: “My research interests include embodiment as a form of resistance, dance, and cyberculture studies. I am also interested in the role writing plays in subjectivity, and in the intersections of writing, activism, and theory formation. I am now thinking through the ways in which technologies of the self (dance, Facebook, and the creation of virtual selves) draw on racialized discourses in a ‘post-racial’ society.”

**Natalie Davis, PhD (RBS 2005)**
*BA Psychology, Secondary Science, and Education, Columbia University*
*MA Elementary Education (Teaching), Dominican University*
*PhD Educational Studies, Educational Foundations & Policy, University of Michigan—Ann Arbor*

Natalie is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy. She describes her research focus: "Broadly, my work explores teaching, learning and the sociopolitical development of children from non-dominant communities. Of particular interest are the pedagogical practices and cultural processes that facilitate and/or constrain Black youth's critical readings of self, and, of historical and contemporary issues of (in)equity inside and outside of school.”

**William Tarpeh, PhD (RBS 2008)**
*BS Chemical Engineering, Stanford University*
*BA African Studies, Stanford University*
*PhD Environmental Engineering, University of California, Berkeley*

William is currently doing a postdoc in the University of Michigan’s Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. He assesses the risks of pharmaceuticals in fertilizers derived from urine and the treatment processes used to convert urine into fertilizer. He has committed to a tenure-track assistant professorship position in chemical engineering at Stanford University, where he’ll begin in the fall of 2019.

Working with your Professors

Advice for Undergrads

From Maria Velazquez:

"There are two kinds of mentors—one that works with you, coaches you. And one that talks about you behind your back, telling others about the good work you’re doing. Seek out both kinds."

From Kristian Henderson:

"Do not complain about your grades. Professors hate this. But we love students who care about learning, who work hard, and actually seemed invested in the material. Connect with your professor outside of class, talk about your interests, and again, grow your network."

From Traci Burch:

"Advice for Undergrads: Working with Your Professors*"
Leaders Summit 2017


In late June, the students and alumni who participate in our Ron Brown Leaders Network came together with corporate partners for two days of networking and professional development at the Ron Brown Leaders Network Summit.

The Summit was generously hosted by Goldman Sachs at their global headquarters in Lower Manhattan. Participants were welcomed to the Summit by Goldman Risk Analyst and 2013 Ron Brown Scholar Njeri Grevious. In a post-Summit survey, many attendees listed the keynotes from Lacy Blalock, Senior Manager at Deloitte Consulting; Florian Koenigsberger, a Product Marketing Manager for Google; and Woody Woodyard, VP of Communications for the Sikorsky Aircraft Division, Lockheed Martin as highlights of the event.

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Breakout sessions included a lively simulation competition led by Capital One and a powerhouse panel on job searching moderated by Weber Shandwick, with representatives from Deloitte, Goldman Sachs, Google, Lockheed Martin and Otis. Alumni participated in two roundtable dialogues: the first, “Preparing for Leadership and Leading from Where You Are,” was led by Accenture and RTI. Wake Forest University School of Business led a roundtable titled “Navigating Early Career Changes.”

Throughout the two-day program, Leaders Network partners shared valuable insight and career advice with our young leaders while introducing them to professional opportunities in college and beyond. “My favorite part of the Summit was talking to people who are successful at what they do and realizing that these highly successful people want nothing more than to help me be successful,” said Grace Kyallo, Ron Brown Captain and Yale class of 2021.

Representatives from Deloitte, Google, Lockheed Martin, Goldman Sachs and Otis on a job searching advice panel led by Weber Shandwick.

Amy Vargas-Tonsi (left) and Dr. Stephanie Hawkins (right) of RTI with Scholar Jaquesta Adams (RBS 2016).

Welcome New Partner
Otis Joins the Ron Brown Leaders Network

T his summer Ron Brown welcomed Otis, a United Technologies company, into partnership with our Leaders Network. Otis is the world leader in technologically advanced elevators, escalators and people-moving systems. Otis’s legacy of innovation is a great fit for the ambitious Ron Brown students and alumni who will receive career opportunities with the company through this partnership.

Ron Brown Captain Ejiri Ojinni from the University of Pennsylvania said of her Otis summer internship, “During my time at Otis, I can confidently say that I refined my analytical, interpersonal, and presentation skills as well as gained insight to the work environment of project managers. Otis is an amazing company that cares about developing their interns’ potential along with their overall career development.”

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Kili Gilmore talks with a student at the Leaders Summit about opportunities at Otis.

Amy Vargas-Tonsi (left) and Dr. Stephanie Hawkins (right) of RTI with Scholar Jaquesta Adams (RBS 2016).
Taking a stand
From car firebombings to rooftop standoffs, Steve Rubin has never backed down from civil rights battles

This article about Ron Brown Scholar Program volunteer Steve Rubin’s participation in the Civil Rights Movement first appeared in Charlottesville’s C-VILLE Weekly on February 15, 2017. It was written by C-VILLE Weekly editor Jessica Luck and is reprinted with permission.

The first thing Steve Rubin heard was not the wailing sirens of a fire truck, but the shouts of his house guest, actor Bob Costley, alerting Rubin his car was on fire. Rubin had expected this—he routinely checked underneath his car for a bomb before going to his teaching job at Louisiana State University New Orleans, but he admits he “didn’t even know what a bomb would look like.” And he had moved his son, Joshua, out of the second floor apartment’s front bedroom so that Joshua and his sister, Jennifer, shared the middle bedroom, away from the screened-in porch. Rubin, then president of the New Orleans chapter of the ACLU, had been receiving harassing phone calls at home from people he presumed were Ku Klux Klan members.

It was March 1965, when Rubin stepped out of his house at about 1am to see his 1961 off-white Rambler Classic engulfed in flames. The next morning, a friend of Rubin’s, Ed Holander with the Congress of Racial Equality, who never went anywhere without his camera, snapped a photo of Rubin staring through the hollowed out car, now just a torched metal frame with tattered insides. Eventually three men—all members of the KKK—were arrested for setting fire to a church in town that same night, about 20 minutes before Rubin’s car was set ablaze. Rubin says he knows they were the same men who firebombed his car.

In typical Rubin fashion, he laughs a little at the memory, saying he was glad to get rid of that car, which “couldn’t outrun a Volkswagen.” He didn’t miss it, but finding an insurance company that would cover someone who was now the target of car torchings was another story. When Rubin visited nearby towns on ACLU business, he had to borrow a friend’s black Thunderbird so he was sure he could outdrive the KKK members who pursued him to the town’s borders.

Even with multiple threats and nonstop harassment—he entered his locked office at LSU on three occasions to find a business card from the Klan letting him know it had been there—Rubin never wavered in his dedication to civil rights and helping those in need. It was something that was unavoidable to him; something he had to do.

“I certainly wasn’t important to the civil rights movement though it was, and it changed my life forever,” he says.

Civil matters
Steve Rubin, 83, grew up on Long Island, New York, in a white middle-class liberal household. His father, Max J. Rubin, served as president of the New York City Board of Education, and was an early outspoken critic of funding public education through real estate taxes, because it meant the suburban schools would be well off, and inner city schools would be poor. There’s a photo of Max Rubin and Bobby Kennedy together on the wall downstairs in Rubin’s study in his Charlottesville home, where other black-and-white images from the era, including the photos of Rubin’s burned car and one of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. hang. As Rubin takes the King photo off the wall to see if a date is written on the back, he points out a poignant Do Not Enter sign, just visible in the background. These photos and other pieces of memorabilia, a cover of Jet magazine with one of Rubin’s mentors, civil rights activist Mary Hamilton, on the front, to buttons from groups such as Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Congress of Racial Equality and the NAACP, are all the remnants he has from his time with the ACLU during the Civil Rights Movement.

Rubin’s foray into civil rights began almost immediately upon his move to New Orleans in 1960 with his wife, Gail, who was pregnant at the time with their daughter, Jenny, and their young son, Joshua. Rubin had been working as a professor in Delaware for two years—his first job after graduating from Carleton College and NYU—when one of his Carleton professors suggested he study at Tulane University. Rubin received a scholarship to Tulane and

Rubin’s father, Max J. Rubin, right, served as president of the New York City Board of Education, and Bobby Kennedy used him as a resource on public education, especially regarding funding.

Rubin’s friend, George Thomas, who taught photography at MIT, took this photo of Dr. Martin Luther King in Boston. The photo has never been officially published, and Rubin has a couple of prints.

8 THE JOURNEY | The Newsletter of the Ron Brown Scholar Program
Finding a Family

When you enter Mike Mallory’s office, one of the first things you notice is the “Steve Rubin wall” in the back right corner. As an homage to the longtime Ron Brown Scholar Program volunteer, Mallory, president and CEO of the nonprofit, has put up not just framed photographs of Rubin, including him with his torch car and an article written about the incident, but also photos of Rubin’s family—one of his father, Max, with his arm around Bobby Kennedy—the same one in Rubin’s study—and a photo of Rubin’s daughter, who was killed in 1984 in Togo, Africa, while on a Peace Corps assignment.

The wall looks more like something you’d find in someone’s living room, which is fitting—Rubin, who began volunteering with the program in 1998, a year after it was established, is like family. Mallory says he and Rubin connected instantly when they were introduced by a mutual friend who told Mallory, “You just have to meet this guy.” Rubin opened up about what happened to his daughter, and that he had videotapes of the CBS special the network ran after her death, and Mallory said he would have them made into DVDs to preserve them.

“We just felt connected—it can’t be really explained,” Mallory says. “He’s a kind fellow and he would do anything for anybody, but I needed a lot [at that time].”

Again, Rubin jumped right in. Alongside a staff of just three at the time, Rubin volunteered as much as he could—up to 30 hours a week—serving as a reader of scholarship applications. Each year, approximately 25 African-American students across the country are awarded a $40,000 college scholarship through the Ron Brown Scholarship Program. Out of a field of 5,000 to 7,000 applications, Rubin and his team of readers would whittle the candidates down to the top 200. The 175 students who don’t receive scholarships are called Ron Brown Captains, and remain in touch with program graduates and mentors about opportunities for furthering their careers. Mallory, who has saved his calendars since 1987, can recall every Ron Brown Scholar Program recipient, and knows where they are now and what they’ve accomplished; continuing mentorship is a cornerstone of the program, as the scholars go through college and start careers/internships.

Rubin’s last official program title was “editor”—no correspondence was released without him having read it first. His most recent project began two years ago, when he laid the foundation for a book tracing the organization’s 20-year history, which will be released in April (a retired UVA professor who accompanied Rubin to the ceremonies). As for Rubin himself, “He would give you the shirt off his back.”

The thing that always struck me about that is they’re the kindest, happiest, most positive and uplifting people I have ever met,” Fariello says about Rubin and his wife, who accompanies him to the ceremonies. As for Rubin himself, “He gave the student his own shoes to wear.

These people in this program, they transform the lives of these young boys and girls in a way unlike any other scholarship program; it’s not only money, but giving them mentorship, family and structure,” Fariello says. “The program is Steve getting to save a life all over again.”

Fariello is referring to the tragic death of Rubin’s daughter, Jennifer. Jennifer had been on a Peace Corps assignment in the village of Defale, in the West African country of Togo, for a year when she was murdered by a villager she had befriended. The woman, Giselle, had stolen some items from Jennifer, and instead of going to the police, Jennifer told the girl’s father, who was also her landlord. Giselle and two other men were charged with Jennifer’s murder—at the time the ninth killing of a Peace Corps volunteer in the program’s 23-year history. Rubin said in an article in the New York Times that despite feeling lonely, his daughter wrote to her parents that she knew she was exactly where she needed to be, helping women build more efficient stoves out of local materials, such as mud. The Rubins received many letters that the Peace Corps forwarded—and they answered every single one.

One day the Peace Corps called and said they had Togo on the other line. Two of Jennifer’s killers had been caught (the third fled to Ghana), and the court wanted to know if the Rubins wanted them executed—it would happen immediately. Rubin looked across the room at his wife, and said into the phone, “Tell the court we do not request they be executed.”

“It saved our lives,” Rubin said. “That was a stroke of good fortune to be given the option and not to have sought vengeance. We had subsequently thought we might not ever have been normal again had that not happened.”

He talked about how he had done all this civil rights work in Mississippi and Louisiana, and then I later moved to Mississippi and got to travel a lot in Louisiana and I just don’t see how he could have done that,” she says. “Just incredible stories, not just how he survived there back then—it’s hard enough to survive in those places today—but why he chose to be there and do that work for so long. And, he has good taste in barbecue.”

Jen Fariello has been the Ron Brown Scholar Program’s official photographer since it started. She sees Rubin every year at the annual awards ceremony, and says she loves how he has become a mentor to all the incoming scholars and program participants—they know they have someone in their corner.

“He’s one of my favorite people!” exclaims Kiya Jones, a 1999 graduate of Baton Rouge called Plaquemine, and he pursued his Ph.D. in English (though he never finished it) while teaching at LSU’s New Orleans campus.

He remembers well the moment his life changed forever. He had been invited to a meeting of the Congress of Racial Equality and says the evening “stunned” him. One of the young women in attendance asked Ronnie Moore, a civil rights activist who was not more than 18 at the time, if he would march with them the next Saturday. Moore, without hesitation, said he would be marching on Monday in a little town south of Baton Rouge called Plaquemine, and he knew was he going to be beaten there and he would have to go to the hospital. But he said if he was out of the hospital on Friday, he would march with them the next day.

“What struck me was that nobody thought this was a remarkable answer, but I thought it was a remarkable answer,” Rubin says. “The very ordinariness of this anticipated experience…I went home and said, ‘Gail, I’ve got to do something’.”

That something began with Rubin working with the NAACP, for which he led a crusade to get the publisher of the morning and evening newspapers to stop identifying the race of black men who had committed crimes while not identifying white perpetrators. Rubin argued you wouldn’t identify someone as Catholic, so why include their race? The answer he received was that they were doing girls of New Orleans a favor by printing addresses and races of those accused of crimes because “a lot of them didn’t know where their friends lived.” Rubin fired a note back saying the response was “pure vaudeville.” And though he respected the work of the NAACP, which mainly focused on desegregation in schools,

Continued on Page 10
Rubin wanted to join an organization involved more directly on the front lines—he never could shake the image of a battered Moore marching. In the fall of 1963, Rubin joined the board of the New Orleans ACLU chapter, “a tiny group” then, became its president in 1965 and served as a national ACLU board member from 1965-68.

**Justice for all**

One of Rubin's most vivid memories from his time as ACLU president was of a march from Franklinton, Louisiana, to Bogalusa, a town 19 miles away. He can't recall the date of the March or how many people were involved, but what he does remember is the black woman who walked in front of him, with ankles so swollen he knew each step was excruciating.

“I could see that every step had to be painful for her, she was ahead of me, and she did those 19 miles,” he says. “I would get so moved by that.”

She was his reason to keep going—on that day and many others.

He participated in several marches and protests over the years, and learned the words to many spirituals that served as a mantra during the demonstrations. After moving to Charlottesville in 1993, Rubin got to see Odetta perform at the Gravity Lounge off the Downtown Mall—the last time he had heard her sing was at a CORE/ACLU event off the Downtown Mall—the last time he had heard her sing was at a CORE/ACLU event in New Orleans. He keeps a recording of Odetta singing one of the many hymns that became the soundtrack to the Civil Rights Movement on his desktop computer, and says “he has to hear it every so often.”

Years ago, three white farmers from upstate Louisiana visited Rubin's tiny ACLU office in New Orleans, which was certainly not a normal sight. He said when they looked at each other he could see it in their faces: He was the enemy. The men told him they wanted their children to go to school but their children didn't have birth certificates; in those days birth certificates were required to attend school because race was listed on them. They were afraid someone might say their children weren't white, and thus they would not be able to attend all-white schools. Rubin called his friend Lolis Elie, a partner in the firm of Moore marching. In the fall of 1963, Rubin joined the board of the New Orleans ACLU chapter, “a tiny group” then, became its president in 1965 and served as a national ACLU board member from 1965-68.

Rubin remained friends with Elie's family throughout his life. Elie's wife, Geraldine, and daughter, Migel, have visited the Rubins at their summer home in Nova Scotia—where Migel ate crabs for the first time. And among the hundred or so photos on the Rubins' refrigerator is one from a visit from Elie's son, Lolis Eric Elie, who attended graduate school at UVA. Lolis Eric is wearing a white apron while stirring a big pot of his family's signature gumbo that takes nine hours to make.

In the '60s, part of Rubin's job was to visit potential plaintiffs at their home on the ACLU's behalf. During one visit to Bogalusa, he planned to speak with a family about desegregating the local hospitals—at that time black citizens had to drive to New Orleans, 75 miles away.

He pulled up to the house only to find all the neighbors camped out on their roofs holding rifles. Someone handed him a .22, and he thought, “What the hell am I doing on the roof with a loaded rifle? I'm not going to pull the trigger.” The night before, someone had shot into the house, and the neighbors were ready to retaliate. Thankfully, Rubin says he was never put to the test.

Rubin wrote multiple letters to Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights John Doar, about numerous incidents that had occurred in Bogalusa (Rubin says it was common knowledge half of the local police force were Klansmen). In one letter, Doar responded that his office had brought a suit prohibiting discrimination at six restaurants in Bogalusa. While true, it wasn't enough for Rubin, and he persisted in his correspondence. Years later a suit was brought against the Bogalusa Police Department—a victory.

Twice Rubin was chased from Bogalusa by KKK members after being there on ACLU business. They pursued him all the way to the causeway leading to New Orleans. The whole time he was driving he hoped he didn't get a flat tire; or if he was in Elie's car he anticipated how the car would swerve to the left if he hit the brakes.

The effects of Rubin's involvement trickled down to his family. When his daughter called out “Good morning!” to a certain neighbor, he kept walking without acknowledging the little girl. That broke Rubin's heart. And it got to the point where he couldn't let his children answer the home phone, because the person on the other end would tell them, “I killed your daddy today,” or they would detail the route the children took to school. But both Rubin and his wife were steadfast in their part in the Civil Rights Movement and refused to stop being involved, despite threats. Their phone was tapped, too, they knew. On one occasion, Rubin received a call to be at a certain street at 3pm for a demonstration. When he got there, police cars had already surrounded the area.

“Yes, I worried about Gail and the kids but I think I did the right thing,” Rubin says. “I'm very grateful that I was there, no matter how minor a role or participant. I would have hated to be a spectator, because it was, after all, one of the major events in our lifetime in America. I was always grateful I wasn't in Ohio, where I might have joined organizations but it was pretty white bread.”

In 1968, a lawyer who also served on the national board of directors for the ACLU flew to New Orleans from New York City to try to convince Rubin to become head of the national ACLU, which Rubin calls a “shocking” invitation. The man who accepted the position, Aryeh Neier, was “the right guy for the job,” Rubin says.

“When I left the movement I didn’t even want to read about it—I couldn’t,” he says. “I went 10 to 15 years without reading a word, unless somebody sent me a clipping. Now I’m greatly happy to have done it.”

Rubin went on to chair the English department at the State University of New York at Oneonta, the city where he and his family lived for 15 years. He and Gail moved to Charlottesville after many visits to see their best friends from their civil rights days in New Orleans.

“I was the winner here,” Rubin says. “I came away from the movement not having contributed a great deal, but it contributed a great deal to me. And I knew it when we left New Orleans.”
**Ron Brown Scholar Program**

The Ron Brown Scholar Program wishes to thank all of the foundations, organizations and friends who have supported our mission.

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Michael Billings (RBS 1997) and Sara Hailu (RBS 2017)
Scholar Awarded Echoing Green Fellowship
Funds to Support Amanda Alexander’s (RBS 2000) Detroit Justice Center

Like the Scholars profiled on pages four to six, Amanda Alexander (RBS 2000) has taken her education to the highest levels. She has a BA in Government from Harvard College, earned her JD from Yale Law School, and completed her PhD in History at Columbia University. Amanda is a racial justice lawyer and the founder of the Detroit Justice Center (DJC), which promotes inclusive economic development and effects change in the criminal justice system through community lawyering.

This year, Amanda was named an Echoing Green Black Male Achievement Fellow. Echoing Green is a global nonprofit that awards millions in social entrepreneurship funding each year through fellowships and other leadership programs. Echoing Green Fellows are named annually, and past Echoing Green leaders have launched Teach For America, City Year and the One Acre Fund.

The DJC’s approach to creating change is threefold: a Legal Services Practice will remove legal barriers such as warrants, criminal records, and fines that prevent criminal justice-involved individuals from participating in Detroit’s economy, and deliver targeted support to community-based organizations. DJC’s Economic Equity Practice will provide legal support for land trusts, housing co-ops, and enterprises led by returning citizens. DJC’s Just City Innovation Lab will introduce and normalize alternatives to punitive justice through pilot programs, strategic partnerships and communications.

The DJC is fundraising and recruiting staff, and will begin serving clients in spring of next year.

Amanda sees a direct connection between her passion for service and the culture of the Ron Brown Scholar Program. “The Program has always emphasized service and the power of collective impact, and that’s helped reinforce my commitment to social justice. I’m continually inspired by this community. Not only are RBS making their mark in various fields—arts and culture, scientific research, public health, and more—but they’re using their talents and energy to improve people’s lives and change unfair systems.”

She encourages other Scholars to consider applying for Echoing Green fellowships, and offers this advice on cultivating an idea: “If you’re frustrated by some problem in your community, or you find yourself wishing there were an organization that did X, then trust that instinct. You probably have the seeds of a solution! We need more people—especially people with direct experiences of the systems they want to change—to have courage and pursue bold ideas. If you have an idea, start by researching the field, see if there are already organizations doing similar work, and run it by trusted mentors and friends. You might consider piloting a version of the idea so that you can learn and hone your model. It’s a lot of legwork, but it will all make for a strong application and organization.”

Learn more about Amanda, the DJC and Echoing Green at www.echoinggreen.org/fellows/amaanda-alexander.

Triennial Conference Returns to Charlottesville
Scholars and their Families to Reunite August 1 – 5, 2018

Nearly ten years ago, Charlottesville was the site of the Program’s Fourth Triennial Conference. In 2018, Scholars from our 21 classes and their families will be invited to return to the site of the headquarters of the Program to reconnect.

As the home of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville is known for its vibrant arts scene, fine dining, lively urban spaces and scenic outdoor settings. These spaces will provide the backdrop to the Triennial Conference activities, which will include family-friendly gatherings, prominent speakers, and opportunities to impact the community.

Lodging for a range of budgets will be available, and we will have child care available for those who need it. Scholars interested in serving on the planning committee for the 2018 Triennial Conference should email Vanessa Evans-Grevious at vevans@ronbrown.org.

PHOTO CREDITS | Fritz Blakey: p. 15; Jen Fariello: cover, pp. 3 (GPS and Danielle Lewis), 9, 11 – 13; Marcia Molnar: p. 14 (Pippin Hill Vineyard), courtesy Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitors Bureau; Kimberly Mufferi: p. 7; Stephen Salpukas: p. 3 (Randy Tripp, Jr.); Roy Van Doom: p. 14 (Downtown Mall), courtesy Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitors Bureau
When Ron Brown Scholars get together, it is often in service to others, and this year’s annual August conference was no exception. The gathering kicked off with a service project, where Scholars recorded video advice for high schoolers in our new Guided Pathway Support (GPS) college access program. Participants shared candid, invaluable thoughts on the college application process based on their personal experiences, and their advice will be shared with hundreds of African American juniors and seniors on the GPS Workplace by Facebook platform.

For the second year, Leaders Network partner Deloitte hosted the conference, and Deloitte Principal Brian Siegel welcomed Scholars, partners, and Program friends to an opening reception Friday evening.

On Saturday, after an update from staff on Program initiatives, Donielle Buie (RBS 2000) introduced an initiative currently in the planning stages, the Ron Brown Scholars Speakers Bureau (read more about the Speakers Bureau below). Scholars then spent the afternoon networking in small career interest groups and brainstorming location and activity ideas for the Program’s Triennial Conference.

At the Big Ideas for Big Impact Dinner Saturday, Jeff Nelson (RBS 2006) opened the evening with advice from his experiences as Co-Founder of Blavity and Founder of CHINCHAPI. Young Scholars demonstrated their willingness to take risks as Rusty Fields II (RBS 2017), Taylor Howell (RBS 2015), and Jerry Registre (RBS 2017) each shared an innovative idea. Marjada Tucker (RBS 2014) announced the publication of a book on surviving the first year of college to which she contributed called *Grown and Gone*.

The weekend wrapped up with fellowship over brunch in Georgetown, with plans to reunite next year in Charlottesville for the 2018 Triennial, which will be held August 1 – 5.

### Ron Brown Scholars Speakers Bureau

Donielle Buie (RBS 2000) is taking the lead in developing the Ron Brown Scholars Speakers Bureau, an initiative that will connect Scholar experts to speaking opportunities, ultimately benefiting both Scholars and the Program. At the August conference, Donielle led small groups of Scholars in discussions around the following questions:

- What topics/messages should Scholars be speaking about/sharing?
- Where should Scholars be speaking?
- What support should the Speakers Bureau provide?

Scholars are interested in speaking within their professions (the arts, science, entrepreneurship/business, medicine, etc.), on social justice issues like education/college access and financial literacy, and about their personal journeys (including mental health, overcoming adversity, and building community). And, in true RBS fashion, they would like RBS to speak in their local communities, at their college institutions AND globally via TED Conferences, South by Southwest and other large-scale events. Our next steps will be creating speaker profiles for interested scholars (email doniellebuie@gmail.com if you’re interested) and connecting speakers with opportunities (like the expansion of GPS!).
Save the Date

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Ronald H. Brown
American Journey Awards

March 23, 2018 • 6:30 – 9:30pm • JW Marriott, Washington, DC

For additional information and tickets, visit www.ronbrown.org