The Ron Brown Scholar Program has entered its 21st year—a milestone that has us celebrating where we are, evaluating how far we have come, and looking to the future to determine how we can achieve the most good for the greatest number of deserving young leaders.

Growing this Ron Brown family over the years has been a very rewarding team effort. Many of our earliest champions are still volunteering: Charlene Sedgwick, Phyliss Leffler, Steve Rubin, Kenly Webster, Robert Binswanger, Tracey Brown—thank you for your steadfastness and invaluable advice through the years. So many good and accomplished people have worked hard, volunteered, donated, spread the word, mentored the Scholars, and advised the staff. Heartwarming acts of kindness and generosity underlie all that we have accomplished. Also, profoundly moving examples of strong, determined young people overcoming adversity and achieving breathtaking successes in every field of endeavor while remaining committed to helping others keep us optimistic about what the future holds. Thank you Ron Brown Scholars—for all that you are and all the good things you are accomplishing and sharing with others.

Of course, we would not be where we are without the Pilaro Family. Thanks Tony, Linda, Andrew. We miss you, Chris.

This 2017 summer newsletter focuses on the wide-ranging and impactful ways our Scholars are giving back—to the Program, to local communities throughout America, and to communities across the globe. I am proud to note that a recent and highly successful Scholar fundraising campaign in support of the RBSP netted over $100,000. We knew from the outset that generosity was a key element in the makeup of these young leaders, but this level of commitment to the Program and its ideals was something we could only dream about.

This newsletter also highlights our most recent American Journey Awards celebration. Over 500 friends attended the March 24, 2017, event in Washington, DC, where we honored Robert F. Smith—Founder and Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners and Founding Director and President of Fund II Foundation—for his leadership in technology investing and philanthropy. Smith inspired the Scholars and friends in attendance to give back to their communities and pledged his own commitments of time, mentorship and financial support, including an electrifying $1 million matching gift challenge to the Scholars and a $100,000 match of current Scholar gifts.

We were proud to honor Terence Carter (RBS 1997) with this year’s American Journey Award for Emerging Leadership. Terence is Executive Vice President, Drama Development, Programming and Event Series for Fox Broadcasting Company, and the force behind the wildly successful Fox series Empire.

Please enjoy this summer update. It is with the support of friends like you that we are able to discover, nurture, mentor and encourage this very special group of America’s future leaders. I hope you will consider extending your generosity again. We appreciate every vote of confidence, no matter the size. A gift envelope has been enclosed should you wish to make a donation, or you can donate online at www.ronbrown.org. As always, I welcome your suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Mallory
President and CEO
Message from Our Founder

I believe that most young people want to and will give freely of their time, abilities, and talents with the proper support and opportunity. In accord with this simple concept and in concert with my family and the CAP Charitable Foundation, I sought to create a program where bright, motivated young African Americans could come together and help each other succeed, not just through their college years, but for a lifetime. The program would support their academic journey through a $40,000 scholarship and a network of dedicated staff and mentors to guide them along the way. What has resulted from this initial undertaking has far surpassed my greatest hopes and expectations. The prudence of enlisting fellow University of Virginia alumnus Michael Mallory to spearhead and develop the Ron Brown Scholar Program has been self-evident. The creativity and dedication of so many people committed to positive social impact has improved hundreds of lives and has created a solid institution for the cultivation of hundreds if not thousands of America’s future leaders. We can only begin to imagine what current Scholars and those yet to be named will accomplish over the next 20 years.

I want to thank all of you who have taken part in the success of this program, but in particular the Scholars themselves. Lastly, I want to recognize the 20 years given to the Program by my late son Chris, who embraced this effort at full force, with love and commitment.

Anthony M. Pilaro
Founder
Chairman, CAP Charitable Foundation, CAP Advisers Limited of Dublin

2017 Summer Events

Summer is a time of networking and connecting for Scholars, Captains, Leaders Network Partners, and staff. Our annual Leaders Summit, above, was hosted by Goldman Sachs in New York on June 30 and July 1. For the fifth year, Deloitte hosted our August conference in Washington, DC. Look for full coverage of both these events in the Fall 2017 newsletter.
Remembering Chris Pilaro
(1972 – 2017)

A treasured friend, Christopher Pilaro passed away on February 16, 2017. If a man’s character and value is judged by his humility, passion, and kindness towards others, it is obvious to all who knew Chris Pilaro that he was an extraordinary man.

Our thoughts and prayers go to his mother, Linda Pilaro, father, Anthony Pilaro, brother, Andrew Pilaro, and sons Zeppelin and Logan.

Chris was surrounded by his loving family and felt at peace with dying after fighting such a long battle with cancer. Chris will be missed by all who respected his love of life, free spirit and interest in helping others.

Chris fought valiantly and suffered silently, all the while continuing his good work in support of the Ron Brown Scholar Program and its Scholars. He was a cornerstone of the Ron Brown Scholar Program and was instrumental in the development and realization of the Ron Brown Scholar Program book, *I Have Risen: Essays by Ron Brown Scholars*. This book stands as the defining affirmation of what this Program is all about.

Chris was one of those unusual people who had the rare talent of making everyone he met feel special. He served on the RBS Selection committee for 20 years and was involved in every aspect related to the success of the Program.

John Burt  
Co-Founder, MBA JumpStart Advisory Group

Kevin J. Carrington  
Vice President, The Segal Company

Matthew D. Catts  
Partner, Squire Patton Boggs, LLP

Lauri Fitz-Pegado  
Partner, Livingston Group, LLC

Guy E. Flynn  
Partner, DLA Piper, LLP (US)

Nupur Parekh Flynn  
Managing Director/Co-Director of Marketing, Brown Capital Management

James Hackney  
Director, Tanstarr Corporation

Judith Harrison  
Senior Vice President, Staffing and Diversity & Inclusion, Weber Shandwick

Ritza Y. Hendricks  
Managing Partner, R.Y.Ink! LLC

Ellie Hylton  
Client Solutions Executive, Nielsen

Michelle C. Hill  
Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Verizon Operations, IT & CAO

Tracey Brown James  
Managing Partner, The Cochran Firm

Calvin C. LaRoche  
Co-Founder, DC Ventures and Associates

Sharon Brickhouse Martin  
Founder and President, Brickhouse Martin Healthcare Engineering

Ginger McKnight-Chavers  
Attorney

Lesia Bates Moss  
Vice President, Business Development, Marsh & McLennan Companies

Cynthia R. Murray  
President, Cynthia Murray Enterprises, LLC

Kaya Orkand  
Manager, Orion Technology Solutions

Danielle L. Purfey  
National Director Events & Meetings Strategy, KPMG

Joshua B. Rales  
Founder & Managing Partner, RFI Associates

Eileen Cassidy Rivera  
Vice President of Marketing, CIOX Health

M. Michelle Robinson, RBS 1997  
Associate Professor of American Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

V. Davis Smith  
Principal, Organizational Development and Executive Coach, Caste Energy LLC

Gib Staunton  
Principal, Staunton Career Advisors

Elsie Wilson Thompson  
Attorney

Maria Tildon  
Senior VP, Public Policy & Community Affairs, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

Jonice Gray Tucker  
Partner, BuckleySandler LLP

R. Kendy Webster  
Attorney at Law

Michael Williams  
Chief Medical Information Officer, University of Virginia Health System

Bethany Dickerson Wynder  
Director of Outplacement and Community Outreach, Beauvoir, the National Cathedral Elementary School
The 2017 American Journey Awards
Celebrating 20 Years of the Ron Brown Scholar Program

“Don’t download, upload.
Form meaningful bonds in your community and use that power.”
—ROBERT F. SMITH 2017 Honoree

The 2017 American Journey Awards gala held on March 24 celebrated the increasing depth and diversification of Ron Brown Scholar achievements. The evening’s presentations highlighted the endeavors and successes of several of the growing number of young leaders who comprise the Ron Brown Scholar family as the Program celebrated reaching the 20-year milestone. Friends and partners enjoyed the opportunity to witness and marvel at an incredible return on a two-decade investment in terms of personal attainments and Scholar-initiated, thriving public service start-ups across the globe.

For the first time, instead of seeking outside talent to emcee the evening’s festivities, we called upon a member of the Scholar family, Jessica Larche Washington (RBS 2003). Washington is an Emmy-winning morning anchor and reporter for WTKR-TV in Hampton Roads, Virginia. She has also earned several William Randolph Hearst Awards and recognition by the Mississippi Associated Press for her reporting. “Whenever I think of Mike Mallory, I think of good news because he told me—all those years ago—that my dreams were valid and that college tuition would not be a hindrance to my success,” Jessica reflected.

Dr. Carmelle Norice-Tra (RBS 1997) introduced a film commemorating the dedication of Chris Pilaro—the son of Program founder Tony Pilaro and a 20 year champion of Ron Brown Scholars—who passed away in February 2017. Carmelle recalled how Chris cared so deeply about the Scholars and in return was loved and respected by every Scholar who had the good fortune to know him. His clear judgment steered the quality of the Program’s landmark book, I Have Risen: Essays by Ron Brown Scholars. Chris was always overwhelmingly generous with his financial support and with his time. He will be deeply missed.

The evening honored Robert F. Smith, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners and Founding Director and President of Fund II Foundation, for his business achievements and global philanthropic works. Inspired by the Scholar stories he read in I Have Risen, Smith returned early from a trip overseas to meet Ron Brown Scholars and accept the award in person.

Smith inspired those in attendance with his generosity—he announced a gift of $100,000 to match alumni giving and pledged an additional $1 million to match alumni gifts over the next five years—and with his words, “My challenge to you young people is this. Equip your mind to be the greatest scientists and engineers and technologists and storytellers. Use social media. Use the platforms of distributions of content. Don’t download, upload. Form meaningful bonds in your community and use that power. Some of you will be engineers. Some of you will be writers. Make sure that you work together to ensure that our community moves forward and advances.”

“You’re is a give back culture,” he observed of the Program, and announced the million dollar pledge to a rousing ovation.

This year’s American Journey Award for Emerging Leadership recipient was Terence Carter (RBS 1997), Executive Vice President Drama and Development, Programming and Event Series for Fox Broadcasting Company. While at Fox, Terence has been responsible for developing and overseeing Empire—the number one broadcast network drama—as well as many other acclaimed shows, including Lethal Weapon, Gotham, Lucifer, 24: Legacy, and Star.

At left: Paul Adams II (RBS 2016), Cheryl Calhoun, and RBSP Board of Trustees member Terri Dean. Center: Mike Mallory, RBSP Emeritus Board of Trustees member Thad MacFarlane, and Anthony Rucker (RBS 2017). At left: Charlotte Kea and Linda Wilson, Executive Director of Fund II Foundation.
Terence was introduced in person by fellow 1997 Scholar Travis Gayles, MD, and also via video by Lee Daniels, acclaimed film and television director and producer who has worked with Terence on *Empire.*

“Throughout the development of *Empire,* I found I could always go to Terence as my advocate, as a friend. The bottom line is that Terence has always embraced my insanity. He supports my vision. I am so pleased to introduce my friend and rising star... I know that in his position in the entertainment industry will empower and inspire other talented young African American men and women in this audience tonight.”

Accepting the award, Terence reflected on his career path in entertainment and how his observations of a lack of diversity inspired him to make a difference. “As I touched these various segments of the industry, I noticed one constant. A conspicuous dearth of black faces and voices, both in front of and behind the camera. So I took it upon myself to do something about it. I pushed myself to become one of the very few African Americans in a buyers seat, so I could hopefully effect change in a broken system... I’ve tried to lead in my career, not by standing on the highest platform, or sitting in the tallest chair... I’ve tried to lead by announcing to everybody else out there, hey, I’m here in this very fortunate position to help you achieve your greatest dreams, and to live up to your greatest potential... to me, that’s what a leader should be... that’s what the Ron Brown Scholar Program says to black youth.”

The night’s theme of Scholars’ commitment to giving back was further exemplified when Scholars Ty Moore (RBS 2002), Brandon Nicholson (RBS 2001), and Jason Young (RBS 2000) took the stage to discuss Hidden Genius, their start-up that is working to build a bridge between young black men and technology. Their endeavor and its growing success provided everyone with real-life examples of impact and reinforced the Program motto *The Value of One; the Power of All.*

Several Scholars, including Sam Alemayehu (RBS 2004), the first and only RBS alum thus far to fully endow a scholarship, spoke about the RBS family, and thanked sponsors, friends and RBS alumni for their donations and fundraising efforts.

A celebration of the Program’s 20-year milestone wouldn’t have been complete without recognizing President and CEO Mike Mallory for his commitment to the Program and to each and every Ron Brown Scholar. In a surprise presentation, Vice President Vanessa Evans-Grevious presented a collection of video tributes from Scholars. “Tonight we look back on 20 years of steady growth for the Program,” she reflected, “and that is due in great part to your vision and dedication.”

Joshua Rales, Advisory Board member and long-time friend to both Mike and the Program, also paid tribute. “What makes Mike such a great leader is that he sets goals, follows through, and knows how to bring people along with him... Mike inspires loyalty.” Rales pledged $100,000 in matching dollars to create the Mike Mallory Pay it Forward Fund, to be used at Mike’s discretion.

The introduction of the 2017 Finalists at the close of the evening was a reminder that the story of Scholar grit and resilience—of their ability to overcome adversity and remain optimistic and committed to positive change—is still being written and expands every year. We hope you will continue the journey with us.

### Dates to remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>AUGUST 1, 2017</td>
<td>Application opens for scholarship competition</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 19, 2017</td>
<td>Cultivation event, New York</td>
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<td>NOVEMBER 1, 2017</td>
<td>Early application deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 2017</td>
<td>Cultivation event, Washington, DC</td>
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<td>JANUARY 9, 2018</td>
<td>Final application deadline</td>
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<td>MARCH 23 – 25, 2018</td>
<td><strong>Selection Weekend</strong></td>
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<td>JUNE 2018</td>
<td>Friday, March 23: American Journey Awards</td>
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<td>AUGUST 1 – 5, 2018</td>
<td>Saturday, March 24: RBS Alumni Association Meeting</td>
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<td>Ron Brown Leaders Network Leaders Summit</td>
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<td>RBSP Triennial Conference</td>
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Congratulations to the 2017 Ron Brown Scholars

Chidinma P. Agbo
Norwalk, CA
Stanford University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Mechanical Engineering

Sterling F. Alic
Miami, FL
Stanford University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Computer Science

Isis P. Anderson
New Haven, CT
Stanford University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Sociology

Delali H. Azamati
Gaithersburg, MD
Stanford University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Biomedical Engineering

Jeyla M. Brown
Upper Marlboro, MD
University of Maryland
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Mathematics

Carroll “Rusty” Fields II
Brooklyn, NY
Johns Hopkins University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Neurobiology/Biological Sciences

Kiara M. Gilbert
Charlotte, NC
Princeton University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Philosophy/African American Studies

Sara Hailu
Charlotte, NC
Princeton University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Molecular Biology

Keylonnie L. Miller
Seffner, FL
University of Michigan
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Computer Science

John O. Okhiulu
Dallas, TX
Stanford University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Computer Science

Jerry W. Registre
Stony Point, NY
Harvard College
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Human Development and Regenerative Biology

Anthony J. Rucker
Chicago Ridge, IL
DePaul University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Economics and Mathematical Sciences

Rebecca M. Schmitt
Atlanta, GA
Duke University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Chemical Engineering

Saaya A. Sugiyama-Spearman
Philadelphia, PA
Yale University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Music

Alexander Tekle
Plano, TX
University of Texas, Austin
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Electrical Engineering or Computer Science

Frelicia N. Tucker
Aiken, SC
Rice University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Chemical Engineering

Quan T. Usher
Decatur, GA
University of Michigan
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Astronautical Engineering

Miriam I. Wahid
Salisbury, NC
MIT
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Environmental Engineering

Jadal N. Williams
Ann Arbor, MI
Stanford University
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Engineering

Tierra F. Wilson
Maple Valley, WA
University of Southern California
ACADEMIC INTEREST:
Business or Political Science
The Ron Brown Leaders Network marks its seventh year in 2017. With the admission of 20 new Scholars and 332 Captains this spring, our Leaders Network now tops 2000 students and alumni! As our numbers grow and our reputation expands, Captains and Scholars are not only taking advantage of the services, but also taking initiative to engage meaningfully with the Network and support one another. Ron Brown Captains and Scholars stepped up in big ways this year to give back to the Program by leading training workshops, organizing campus events and providing college application advice to the high schoolers in our Guided Pathway Support Program (GPS).

Ron Brown Captain Kristen Shipley, a junior Public Relations student at North Carolina A&T State University led “LinkedIn 101: A Student’s Guide” to over 30 of her fellow Captains and Scholars via a webinar this year. Kristen serves as a LinkedIn Campus Editor, helping students improve their LinkedIn profiles.

Ron Brown Scholar and Boston Chapter Delegate, Leah Yared (RBS 2015), organized a dinner in Cambridge, MA for a dozen Scholars and Captains to meet with Harvard Kennedy Fellow and New York State Assemblyman, Michael Blake.

Over 200 Scholars and Captains volunteer in our GPS program providing encouragement and guidance to high school students in the college application process. Read more about GPS on page 10.

Margaret Ivey: Scholar on Stage

Margaret Ivey (RBS 2007) played the title role in a modern stage adaptation of Jane Eyre at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Milwaukee Repertory Theater this spring. “Ivey represents the ever individualistic and unconventional Jane Eyre with a transformation from young girl to mature women with palpable sincerity and warmth,” noted Peggy Sue Dunigan in a review in Broadway World Milwaukee. David Lyman of the Cincinnati Enquirer described Margaret’s performance as “wonderfully earnest and consistent.”

This summer, Ivey performed in the world premier of The Niceties at the Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Peter Marks of the Washington Post raved about both the play and Ivey’s performance in a July 11 review: “Ivey is flat-out marvelous as Zoe. She synthesizes the character’s contradictions with stunning clarity: the elegant mind and the blind rage; the courage and the self-destructiveness.”

Learn more about Margaret’s career on her website: www.margaretivey.com

Margaret Ivey (RBS 2007) in the title role of a contemporary stage adaptation of Jane Eyre.

Scholars in Academics

We’ve received news of a few academic promotions and placements; our Fall 2017 newsletter will feature all of the Ron Brown Scholars who are giving back as teachers and mentors with careers in academics.

Yolanda Covington-Ward, PhD (RBS 1997) was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in the Department of Africana Studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

William Tarpeh (RBS 2008) will begin a tenure-track professor position in Chemical engineering at his alma mater Stanford in Fall of 2019.

Yolanda Covington-Ward (RBS 1997) and William Tarpeh (RBS 2008)
Global Scholar Impact

Ku McMahan’s Program Recognized by Fast Company

“Yours is a give back culture,” recognized Honoree Robert F. Smith at the 2017 American Journey Awards, acknowledging the impact that Scholars have had on the Program, their communities and the world. The Scholar whose impact might have the farthest geographical reach is Dr. Ku McMahan (RBS 1999), whose Securing Water for Food: A Grand Challenge for Development funds innovations that produce more food with less water in more than 40 countries.

Securing Water for Food’s Technical Assistance Facility was recognized earlier this year by Fast Company as a World-Changing Idea Award finalist. Ku serves as Team Lead for Securing Water for Food (SWFF) in the US Global Development Lab at USAID. SWFF is a $35 million partnership between USAID, South Africa, Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the Foreign Ministry of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Technical Assistance Facility provides funding and support to innovations like Reel Gardening, a South-Africa based social enterprise founded by Claire Reid that has developed a Garden in a Box: strips pre-loaded with seeds at the proper depth and spacing and the fertilizer they need to grow. The system uses 80 percent less water than conventional gardening and the company is working on a buy one/donate one sales model.

Another African enterprise receiving SWFF support is Aybar Engineering in Ethiopia. Aybar produces a Broad Bed and Furrow Maker (BBM) that allows Ethiopian farmers to make the clay-rich soils of the region (vertisols) more suitable for cultivation by draining away excessive moisture.

In the Himalayan Mountains of Nepal, small farmers are challenged to keep their crops irrigated with methods that are smaller in scale and more sustainable than the diesel and solar-powered pumps used for larger farming operations. As a solution, the SWFF-funded aQysta has developed the water-powered, low-maintenance Barsha pump.

Thirty-seven additional projects have received SWFF support, and to date 650,000 tons of food have been produced with innovations supported by the Technical Assistance Facility. The program has helped 1.2 million farmers and their families.

Ku recognizes the ways the Ron Brown Scholar Program inspired and facilitated his current work, “Through mentorship and funding from the Ron Brown Scholar Program, I was able to see that the world is facing big challenges, and that innovation is crucial to help us solve those challenges. Had the Program not funded my tropical ecology course during my summer abroad or part of my grad school costs for my water degree, I would have never invented a water quality test nor gotten involved in international development.”

In 2018, Securing Water for Food will celebrate its five-year anniversary at Stockholm World Water Week, with all current and former projects sharing five years of lessons learned. By 2020, more than three million farmers will have been helped by the programs innovations, with more than six billion liters of water saved and more than two million tons of food produced.

Three innovations funded by Dr. Ku McMahan’s (RBS 1999) Securing Water for Food Technical Assistance Facility are, from left, the Barsha pump in Nepal, Aybar Engineering’s Broad Bed and Furrow Maker in Ethiopia, and the South Africa-based Reel Gardening.

Sheila Adams Honored

Sheila Adams (RBS 2001) was honored with a Champion of Justice Award at the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project’s Annual Gala on May 11, 2017. The Volunteer Lawyers Project provides legal services to residents of Brooklyn living at 200 percent or below the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Adams is a litigation associate at Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP. Her pro bono work includes representing veterans seeking disability claims.

Victoria Akah (RBS 2012) was published in the Spring 2016 issue of the Penn Undergraduate Law Journal. Her paper, A Dream Deferred, explores the Court’s treatment of affirmative action policies post Brown v Board of Education.
Even downtown shelter is better than sleeping in a car, and I know

By closing the downtown shelter and opening four smaller shelters, our City’s plan will eliminate 500 beds. I want to share what the loss of those beds could mean to people battling homelessness. Before my family called the downtown shelter home, my sister and I slept in the backseat of a rusting, white hatchback. Up front, my parents would crank the car on to use its heater and crank it off to save gas. We would park at neighborhood parks. Some nights a beam of light would pierce through the car’s fogging windows. As my father rolled down his window, a police officer would see us, lower his flashlight, and apologetically tell us that the park closed at sundown. On those unwelcomed nights, my father would turn over the engine, and we would journey to a spot along the Jordan River where police patrolled less frequently. Although my mother had told my sister and me that the park closed at sundown, we were just happy to sleep in a warm bed. The shelter’s out-of-the-way location, across the street from a muddy Ute cab dispatch lot and its nearness to an active train yard did not bother me: if anything, the metallic chatter of train wheels rolling over cold tracks lulled me to sleep. The dull and dampened sounds from down the street told me that we were indoors, safe.

When my family moved into the downtown shelter, we were just happy to sleep in a warm bed. The shelter’s out-of-the-way location, across the street from a muddy Ute cab dispatch lot and its nearness to an active train yard did not bother me: if anything, the metallic chatter of train wheels rolling over cold tracks lulled me to sleep. The dull and dampened sounds from down the street told me that we were indoors, safe.

We eventually moved out of the downtown shelter. But, unable to pay rent, we found ourselves back at its front desk. This time, however, there were no beds; the downtown shelter was full. We tried an overflow shelter and found four cots in a room shared with several other families. In the tight space, there was no hiding from an older boy, Robert, who viciously bullied me; it was there that I learned to throw a punch. I still remember my sister crying as my mother chopped off her long hair after finding that it had become infested with lice, a consequence of living in cramped conditions.

I know from firsthand experience that the downtown shelter, even with all of its blemishes, is far better than improvised overflow shelters. It is certainly better than sleeping in a car. Our City needs an insurance policy to guard against inadequate shelter space, and if we keep it available, the downtown shelter could be that insurance policy.

No matter what happens to the downtown shelter, I know that showing compassion for people battling homelessness will be important. My sister and I were adopted after my mother unexpectedly passed away during my sophomore year at West High. Uplifted by my adopted parents’ compassion, I not only graduated from West High but also attended and graduated from West Point. We must all show compassion by welcoming shelter residents into our schools, workplaces, and communities. We can only dream of what they may someday accomplish.

But compassion cannot be an excuse for the City to turn a blind eye to the very real problems of illegal drug use and distribution around homeless shelters. I know firsthand how important it is to address these issues. It was at the downtown shelter that my father first burnt the bottom of a spoon, converting powder cocaine into crack.

His addiction endures. Returning from a combat deployment to Afghanistan, I drove 652 miles to formally introduce my wife to my father. But when my father opened the door, he did not recognize me. Though we had spent the first sixteen years of my life together, his continued drug use had twisted his mind so severely that he mistook me for a door-to-door salesman. With great difficulty, I explained that I was his son. I pleaded with him to sober up, so we could spend the next day together—I had so much to share. The next morning, he was in worse condition: his Louisianan accent, 1960s slang, and warm words reduced to unintelligible mumbles. I want to believe that one of them was “sorry.”

My father’s struggle is the human cost of our City’s continuing failure to eradicate illegal drugs near the downtown shelter. Who knows where he would be if Evaun, a fellow shelter resident, had not offered him a “cure” for his injured back. As our City pursues its plan, it must commit to eradicating illegal drugs near both the new and old shelters, and it must reassess its decision to close the downtown shelter. This is the only way to truly show compassion for our neighbors.

Bryant Watson graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 2010. A former captain and infantry officer, Bryant served five years in the U.S. Army, including a combat tour along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. He currently attends Yale Law School.

SCHOLAR VOICES | BRYANT WATSON, RBS 2006

This op-ed by Bryant Watson (RBS 2006) was first published in The Salt Lake Tribune on January 14, 2017

Kiya Jones (RBS 1999), John Ohkulu (RBS 2017), and Vernon Johnson (RBS 2016) connected at Selection Weekend 2017 over their shared experiences growing up in Dallas’ Oak Cliff neighborhood.

Mike Mekonnen (RBS 2009), at right, describes his chance meeting with Sam Alemayehu (RBS 2004), at left, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: “I met Sam (for the first time!) at a restaurant in Addis by accident. Later on, Sam was kind enough to give me a tour of the waste to energy facility that he is building.”

SCHOLAR CONNECTIONS
Last year, the Ron Brown Scholar Program launched the Guided Pathway Support Program (GPS), a free college access program that offers high-tech and high-touch mentorship to African American students throughout their college application journeys. GPS leverages the experiences of Ron Brown Scholars and Captains to help talented juniors and seniors navigate a path to top colleges.

For its first cohort, GPS selected 500 students—who named themselves the GPS Navigators—from 2,000 applicants. GPS has blossomed into a virtual college admissions leadership community. Students use GPS to share strategic college application information, find scholarships, get information on college prep programs, trumpet their academic successes and to vent in moments of academic distress.

This year, to build on the momentum of this college access movement, GPS aspires to name 1,000 talented African American high school juniors and seniors as Navigators. For the second cohort, GPS will provide more dynamic content, more direct interactions with college admissions professionals, more college prep webinars and information about even more scholarship opportunities.

Our biggest goal for GPS, however, is to bring the GPS Navigators together with Ron Brown Scholars and Captains. GPS aspires to host leadership conferences in which Ron Brown Scholars and Captains host in-person college prep workshops for GPS Navigators at high schools across the country.

Over 90 percent of GPS student respondents noted that they did or would recommend GPS to a college-bound friend, based on the preliminary results of the 2017 GPS Student Evaluation Survey. Almost half of GPS Navigators reported that they applied for at least one scholarship that they found on GPS about which they would not have known otherwise. Over 90 percent of GPS graduating seniors have committed to volunteer as mentors for the next cohort of GPS Navigators.

Colleges and universities across the country are joining the GPS cause. The following colleges have enrolled as Educational Partners expanding the services that GPS offers students: Amherst College, Cornell University, Carleton College, the College of William & Mary, Northwestern University, University of Virginia Jefferson Scholars Program, Wake Forest University, Wellesley College, and Wesleyan University.

For more information about GPS, please visit www.rbsgps.com. If you know of any extraordinary African American high school students who will be juniors or seniors this fall, encourage them to apply for the next GPS class at www.rbsgps.com.

**A Call for Volunteers**

The GPS Program has refreshed its mentorship approach. Scholars, Captains and friends of the Program now have more options to volunteer for GPS based on their available times and talents. We also need volunteers to help with other tasks, such as posting college admissions content, research and even grant-writing. To volunteer for GPS or to extend the opportunity to become an Educational Partner at your college or university please email Kiya Jones at kjones@ronbrown.org.

## 2016 FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

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<tr>
<th>2016 DONATIONS + ENDOWMENT GIFTS</th>
<th>2016 DONATIONS</th>
<th>500+ DONORS IN 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,436,578</td>
<td>$1,196,578</td>
<td>137 NEW DONORS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 ENDOWMENT VALUE</th>
<th>2016 DONATIONS FROM SCHOLARS</th>
<th>2016 SCHOLAR GIFTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$14.75M</td>
<td>$56,292</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **FROM UNDERGRADS**: 8%
- **FROM ALUMNI**: 92%

As of June 30, 2017, the endowment value was $15.84M
There is one trait that the entire Ron Brown Scholar community shares—a belief in serving their community and in paying it forward.

In 2016, the RBSAA launched a fundraising campaign with the goal of commemorating the Program’s 20th anniversary by collectively sponsoring a $40,000 scholarship to fund a Scholar in the class of 2017. With the support of a Scholar-led Campaign Leadership Committee, by February 2017, they successfully raised enough funds to secure two scholarships.

During the recent American Journey Awards in March 2017, honoree Robert F. Smith and Advisory Board member Joshua Rales, both inspired by the alumni collectively making an impact on the lives of new Ron Brown Scholars, generously offered to match alumni donations up to $100,000 each. Smith also extended his offer with a second proposal to match Scholar donations up to $1 million over a five year period, with Smith’s funds going to the endowment campaign.

We extend a special thanks to both Smith and Rales for their generosity, encouragement and motivation to the Scholars who instantly embarked on developing strategies for meeting these new goals. We thank each of the 416 Ron Brown Scholars, who with their desire to effect positive change provide testament to the principle ‘The Value of One, The Power of All.”

**Ways to Support the Ron Brown Scholar Program**

Each year, there are thousands of hopeful African American high school students, many of whom come from challenging backgrounds, who want to attend college. With your support, Ron Brown Scholars become leaders, creators and transformers in their chosen careers and professions, who remain dedicated to impacting the lives of others.

Below are some ways that you can support the Ron Brown Scholar Program.

**Endowed Scholarships**
$40,000 / $10,000 annually funds the cost of one full four-year scholarship to support a Ron Brown Scholar to be paid over four years.

**Annual Ronald H. Brown American Journey Awards**
A special event celebrating Ronald H. Brown’s legacy of service and dedication to providing opportunities for others. Outstanding individuals are presented with the annual Ronald H. Brown American Journey Award. Sponsorship opportunities are available at levels ranging from $5,000 to $50,000.

**RBSP Community Service Foundation**
$500 to $5,000 funds Scholar-designed and implemented service projects in local communities and around the world.

**Matching Gifts**
Does your company match gifts? You can double or triple your gift if you or your spouse work for a matching gift company.

**Bequests**
A bequest provides the opportunity for individuals to designate a specific sum or percentage of their estate to The Ron Brown Scholar Fund in your will.

**Retirement Plans**
Donating a portion of your retirement plan provides the opportunity for individuals to designate the Ron Brown Scholar Fund as the beneficiary of the remainder of their retirement account upon their death. This may lessen estate taxes.

**Securities**
An alternative to cash is a gift of appreciated securities which can offer income tax benefits, as well as savings on capital gains.

**Planned Gift**
Contact us about including the Program in your estate plan or to find out about other creative planned giving options.

Please contact Anita Karadia at akaradia@ronbrown.org for more information about giving opportunities.
Kalonji Nzinga (RBS 2002) was named a 2017 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellow by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. The Newcombe Fellowship is the nation’s largest and most prestigious award for PhD candidates in the humanities and social sciences addressing questions of ethics and religious values. Kalonji, who graduated from Stanford in 2006 and is completing his doctoral studies at Northwestern, describes his work: “My dissertation research project is a psychoanalysis of young people that are heavy listeners of rap music—sometimes called hip-hop heads—and how their perspectives on morality and ethics are influenced by their engagement with hip-hop culture.”

Nicholas Smith (RBS 2005) was awarded a $40,000 research grant by the American Urological Association for a project aimed at improving bladder cancer care for veterans at the VA Hospital in West Los Angeles. In sharing the news, Nick wrote, “That specific number reminded me of the RBSP, which decided 12 years ago to be the first to invest $40,000 in the 18-year-old me… I still feel grateful for the ongoing impact that the RBSP has had in my life.”

Dora Duru (RBS 2008) received The Leopold Schepp Foundation Scholarship for her studies at Vanderbuilt Law this fall. The Leopold Schepp Foundation awards educational scholarships to full time undergraduate and graduate students who demonstrate a combination of fine character, academic excellence, financial need, compassion, a commitment to volunteerism and whose goal will benefit mankind.

Hassan Hassen (RBS 2014) was one of only ten undergraduates named Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellows. Pickering Fellowships are funded by the U.S. State Department and provide undergraduate and graduate students from diverse backgrounds with financial support, mentoring and professional development to prepare them for careers in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service. Hassan, who will graduate from Dartmouth in 2018, is preparing for a career as an economic officer.