American Rhodes Scholars—Elect for 2016

(Subject to ratification by the Rhodes Trustees after acceptance by one of the colleges of Oxford University)

**District I**
GRACE E. HUCKINS  
Massachusetts—Harvard University  
GARRETT M. LAM  
Massachusetts—Harvard University

**District II**
RUSSELL C. BOGUE  
Connecticut—University of Virginia  
EVAN J. SOLTAS  
New Jersey—Princeton University

**District III**
NEIL M. ALACHA  
New York—Harvard University  
ANDREW N. KAPLAN  
New York—Brown University

**District IV**
JENNIFER C. HEBERT  
Pennsylvania—University of Pennsylvania  
RIVKA B. HYLAND  
Pennsylvania—Harvard University

**District V**
HANNAH G. SCHNEIDER  
Maryland/DC—Georgetown University  
ISAAC M. STANLEY-BECKER  
Maryland/DC—Yale University

**District VI**
MACHMUD A. MAKHMUDOV  
Georgia—Oberlin College  
LEAH S. MICHALOVE  
Georgia—Emory University

**District VII**
ZACHARY S. FINE  
Louisiana—New York University  
ERICKA M. WHEELER  
Mississippi—Millsaps College

**District VIII**
THOMAS M. CARROLL  
Texas—Rice University  
LAURA C. ROBERTS  
Texas—Duke University

**District IX**
JOHN C. RUCKELSHAUS IV  
Indiana—Duke University  
LOGAN C. JACKSON  
Kentucky—Northeastern University

**District X**
ILHAN A. DAHIR  
Ohio—Ohio State University  
ASHLEY E. ORR  
Ohio—Youngstown State University

**District XI**
SARAH B. KOVAN  
Michigan—Michigan State University  
COLIN T. HIGGINS  
Wisconsin—University of Wisconsin–Madison

**District XII**
JEFFREY DING  
Iowa—University of Iowa  
RICHARD J. LU  
Missouri—Princeton University

**District XIII**
EMILY M. MEDIATE  
Colorado—University of Notre Dame  
RACHEL E. MULLIN  
South Dakota—College of Saint Benedict

**District XIV**
JARED C. MILFRED  
Oregon—Yale University  
MAISON Y. JJ  
Washington—Yale University

**District XV**
MEGAN G. MUSILLI  
California (North)—United States Naval Academy  
KATHERINE K. CLIFTON  
Hawaii—Princeton University

**District XVI**
CAMERON M. PLATT  
California (South)—Princeton University  
HASSAAN SHAHAWY  
California (South)—Harvard University

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From the AARS President:

The Association of American Rhodes Scholars (AARS) is pleased to present this now-traditional newsletter introducing the newly elected Rhodes Scholars to their predecessors, to each other, to Oxford, and to well-wishers and educational institutions nationwide. It is indeed a joy to learn about these fine young people who will follow in our footsteps to Oxford next September.

In addition to introducing our 2015 Scholars, this newsletter reports on the 21st annual Sailing “Bon Voyage” Weekend, sponsored by the AARS for the class of 2015 Rhodes Scholars, which took place in Washington, DC, last September 24 to 27. This BVW allowed the new Rhodes Scholars an ample opportunity to become acquainted with each other before traveling to Oxford and dispersing among the colleges. By hearing from and talking with a wide variety of Scholars of all ages in the course of the Weekend, these young Scholars gained a new understanding of how Rhodes Scholars value academic scholarship, pursue public service, and participate in “the world’s fight.” The keynote speaker this year at dinner was Leana Wen (Missouri and Merton 2007), the Baltimore City Health Commissioner.

The AARS fosters intellectual and social fellowship among its members by facilitating events and reunions and through its publications and the website (www.americanrhodes.org). It continues to facilitate the annual transfer of substantial gifts to Oxford, its colleges, and related entities through the American Trust for Oxford University (over $33 million since 2008). Additionally, the AARS participates in the appointment of the annual Eastman Professor at Oxford and funds the Professor’s salary. The quarterly publication of The American Oxonian brings current information about Oxford, articles of interest to the Oxonian constituency, class letters, and the annual address list.

Both this publication and the Sailing Weekend described herein are sponsored by the Association of American Rhodes Scholars and are paid for by dues and generous annual contributions from its membership. While financially and organizationally distinct from the Office of the American Secretary to the Rhodes Trust, many AARS activities enjoy the cooperation of the American Secretary in service to the Scholarships. Commended to you is this newsletter’s report from the American Secretary, Elliot Gerson.

This is my final year of the traditional eight-year presidential term at the AARS. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve you and all the other extraordinary people who belong to this organization. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for continuing your vital support.

Steven A. Crown
(Washington and Queen’s ’80)
President
Neil M. Alacha

Harvard University: BA, Social Studies, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, International Relations

Preferred Contact Details
182 Beach 144th Street
Rockaway Park, NY 11694
347.446.7703
neil.alacha1@gmail.com

Current Address
182 Beach 144th Street
Rockaway Park, NY 11694

Career Aspirations
I would like to pursue a career in foreign policy and diplomacy, either on behalf of the US or an international organization.

Neil Alacha is a Brooklyn-bred 2016 graduate of Harvard College, where he concentrated in Social Studies, with a focus field of Human Rights in the Middle East. At Harvard, Neil was co-captain of Harvard’s national championship–winning mock trial team and co-president of Harvard Model Congress, the country’s largest American government simulation program for high school students. In addition, he served as a peer tutor and peer counselor, and worked as an undergraduate pedagogy fellow for Harvard’s Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. Off campus, he worked as a microdemocracy intern at the Right Question Institute, a Cambridge-based nonprofit working to build and teach the foundational democratic skills of asking questions and focusing on decisions. His academic interests lie in the theorization of international human rights law across different cultures, which he would like to put in practice through a career in foreign policy and diplomacy. At Oxford, he will work toward an MPhil in International Relations, after which he will return to the US to pursue his JD at the Yale Law School.
Russell C. Bogue

Connecticut

University of Virginia: BA, Government and Foreign Affairs with a minor in Economics, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Politics (Political Theory), at Balliol College

Preferred Contact Details
70 Pepperbush Lane
Guilford, CT 06437
203.687.7219
rcbogue@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
I hope to pursue a career at the intersection of government and academia. In particular, I’d like to teach law with the eventual goal of moving into public service.

Russell Bogue’s interest in politics led him to found *Seriatim*, the University of Virginia’s first journal devoted to American politics and political theory. In the realm of political theory, he has investigated a meta-constitutional framework for governing Taiwan and China, and he has received funding to conduct political survey research in Taipei, Taiwan. He also assists a professor in the research and revision of a major work on economics and public policy. Inducted as a junior to Phi Beta Kappa, he is a Truman Scholar, a Jefferson Scholar, and a US Presidential Scholar. He also served on the UVA Honor Committee and as opinion editor of the *Cavalier Daily*. Russell has conducted service work in Haiti and plays on the university’s squash team.
District VIII

Thomas Carroll
Texas

Rice University: BS, Biochemistry and Cell Biology, and BA, Classical Studies, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: DPhil, Clinical Medicine, at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details
5722 S. Mesquite Grove Way
Chandler, AZ 85249
440.897.7727
tcarr1224@gmail.com

Current Address
5722 S. Mesquite Grove Way
Chandler, AZ 85249

Career Aspirations
To make a contribution toward curing cancer as a researcher

Tom Carroll, formerly of Westlake, Ohio, and currently living in Chandler, Arizona, is a senior at Rice University. In the classics, Tom’s work includes research into the Indo-European roots of the mythological figure Prometheus and a senior thesis studying the motifs associated with flood myths and the functions these narratives serve in the world’s mythological canons. In his medical research at the National Cancer Institute, MD Anderson Cancer Center, and the Cleveland Clinic, Tom seeks to combine tools from different disciplines, especially from cancer biology and immunology, to solve complex challenges in the field of cancer research. He has also performed research into the bioethical issues associated with the progression of genomic technology. At Rice, Tom is the president of his residential college, and the president and cofounder of Rice’s Classics Club. When not in the classroom, he is an avid sports fan, captaining his college’s soccer team.
Katherine K. Clifton

Hawaii

Princeton University: BA, English/Theater, 2015
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, and MSt, World Literature in English, at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details
2475 Makiki Heights Drive
Honolulu, HI 96822
808 352 6943
kclifton10@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
As yet unknown

Born and raised in Honolulu, Katherine Clifton graduated from Princeton University in 2015. In college, she served in student government, directed and performed with the Princeton Shakespeare Company, and tutored inmates at New Jersey correctional facilities. Before college, she spent a gap year in Serbia teaching English to Romani students. Last fall, she returned to Belgrade through Princeton’s Dale Fellowship to create a verbatim theater piece exploring the longstanding ethnic tensions between the Roma and the Serbs. Because her return coincided with the refugee crisis, she got heavily involved in refugee response throughout Serbia.
Ilhan Dahir

Ohio State University: BA, Political Science, 2015
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, and MSc, Global Governance and Diplomacy, at St. Anthony’s College

Preferred Contact Details
614.989.3509

Career Aspirations
After completing two master’s degrees at Oxford I plan to attend law school and begin a career as a human rights attorney.

Ilhan Dahir graduated from Ohio State University in May 2015 with a degree in English and Political Science. She is now on a Fulbright Fellowship teaching English in Turkey. Her senior thesis was on the role of western foreign fighters in ISIL and their threat to global peace. The US Department of Homeland Security sent her to represent the US in Brussels for an international discussion on countering violent extremism. The daughter of Somali immigrants who fled that country’s civil war, she has been very active in interfaith efforts in Ohio and throughout the world.
Jeffrey Ding

University of Iowa: BS, Political Science; BA, Chinese; BBA, Economics: 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, International Relations, at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details
2611 Walden Road
Iowa City, IA 52246
319.331.0155
jding99@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
I would like to work in the international treaty and institutional design space, focusing on US-China relations. One place that I am interested in is the Department of State’s Office of the Legal Adviser.

Born in Shanghai and raised in Iowa City, Jeffrey Ding will graduate Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Iowa with majors in political science, economics, and Chinese. A Truman Scholar and a Udall Scholar, Jeffrey is invested in building a more sustainable US-China relationship. He has established an International Student Advisory Board, created a Green Initiatives Fund, and advocated for a mandate for citywide apartment recycling as vice president of the University of Iowa student government. Fascinated by the growing influence of interest groups—such as nongovernmental organizations and state-owned enterprises—in China’s environmental governance and foreign policy, he has conducted research in Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Peking University in Beijing. Dedicated to mobilizing political consciousness among Asian Americans, he distributes a bi-weekly newsletter on Chinese-American issues and leads voter registration campaigns targeted toward the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Jeffrey has interned for the Hong Kong Legislative Council, the Department of State’s East Asia Pacific Bureau, and the US Embassy in Dakar, Senegal, through the US Foreign Service Internship Program.
Zachary S. Fine

New York University: BA, Concentration in Art History and Philosophy, 2015

Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Criminology of Criminal Justice, and MSt, History of Art and Visual Culture, at Christ Church

Preferred Contact Details
357 Walnut
New Orleans, LA 70118
504.621.7792
zfine92@gmail.com

Current Address
12 Boulevard de Port Royale
Bâtiment B, 5ème étage
Paris, France 75005

Career Aspirations
Professor and writer

Zachary Fine, New Orleans, graduated summa cum laude from New York University in 2015. He is particularly interested in the history of the use of photography by law enforcement and in the judicial process. Zachary has been a contributor to magazines and newspapers including Harper’s, the New York Times, the Financial Times, the New Republic, and Boston Review. Zachary has also developed a museum education program, now being implemented in collections in five states, that aims to share academic art historical methods with a broader audience.
Jennifer C. Hebert  
Pennsylvania  

University of Pennsylvania: BA, Biological Basis of Behavior, 2016  
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Psychiatry  

Preferred Contact Details  
103 Lloyd Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218  

Career Aspirations  
Neuroscience research, possibly in academia or industry  

Jenna Hebert, Pittsburgh, a varsity oarswoman and a member of the US National Rowing Team, competed in the Under-23 World Rowing Championships in Linz, Austria. She is also an adaptive rowing instructor, assisting and instructing physically and cognitively disabled rowers. A member of Phi Beta Kappa and a 2016 Penn Dean’s Scholar, she has published in *Frontiers in Neuroscience* and has presented at the Society for Neuroscience conference. She is currently conducting research for her senior honors thesis on the effects of stress on susceptibility to drug addiction, but is broadly interested in the neuroscience of psychiatric disorders. At Oxford, Jennifer plans to pursue her research in neuropsychiatry. She also hopes to compete with the Oxford University Women’s Boat Club.
Colin T. Higgins


Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Geography and the Environment

Preferred Contact Details
7309 Ashwabay Lane
Madison, WI 53709
608.852.3971
colin.higgins93@gmail.com

Current Address
225 E. Lakelawn Place
Madison, WI 53703

Career Aspirations
Academic geographer or environmental policy adviser

Colin Higgins is currently completing a Master of Public Affairs in Policy Analysis at UW–Madison. While an undergraduate, Colin founded and chaired the student government’s sustainability committee, helped initiate the university’s $50,000 green fund, and served as the student director at the UW’s Office of Sustainability, where he spearheaded numerous campus-wide engagement initiatives. He has also served on the board of directors for the student farm and helped lead a local food justice nonprofit. A 2014 Udall Scholar, Colin’s passions are animated by a concern for finding philosophical and practical solutions to pressing problems of environmental and economic governance, particularly those surrounding land use. He has written extensively on environmental politics and policy in Wisconsin and in the UK. He is currently working on a publication from his award-winning senior thesis on the development and implementation of market-based conservation in the UK.
Grace Huckins

**Harvard University**: BA, Neurobiology and Physics, 2016

**Proposed Oxford Course**: MSc and DPhil, Neuroscience, at Merton College

**Preferred Contact Details**
115 Country Drive
Weston, MA 02493
339.222.6895
grace.huckins@gmail.com

**Current Address**
115 Country Drive
Weston, MA 02493

**Career Aspirations**
I hope to conduct computational neuroscience research and work in academia.

At Oxford, Grace Huckins will be completing the Wellcome Trust Doctoral Programme in Neuroscience. She is passionate about computational neuroscience and plans to continue to pursue research in the field after earning her PhD. In the past, she has done research in neuroscience at Harvard and at the Riken Brain Science Institute in Japan, and she has done genetics and immunology research at the Institut Pasteur in France. Along with neuroscience, Grace is interested in social justice and in literature and writing. At Harvard, she was the arts chair of the *Harvard Crimson* and the president of the Radcliffe Union of Students. She recently completed the Boston Marathon, her first marathon, and hopes to run the London Marathon while at Oxford.
Rivka B. Hyland

Harvard University: AB, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Theology, at University College

Career Aspirations

Academia

Rivka B. Hyland, Philadelphia, is a Harvard College senior who majors in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (Islamic Studies). Her primary academic interest is the common intellectual heritage of medieval Islamic and Christian theologians. She is especially interested in how medieval philosophy, with roots in ancient Greece, can offer insights into modern attitudes towards international and intercultural understanding. She has staffed the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center’s hotline, and codirects Harvard’s Eating Concerns Hotline and Outreach. Rivka was also captain of her intramural rowing team.
Logan C. Jackson
Kentucky

Northeastern University: BS, Civil Engineering, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Nature, Society, and Environmental Governance

Preferred Contact Details
lcjackson93@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
My career goal is to become a key player in the United States in the field of education reform. This role could range from a researcher in the field to an adviser to policymakers to a direct role in public service.

Raised in Lexington, Kentucky, Logan Jackson studied Civil Engineering at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. She maintained an unblemished academic record while devoting two years to testing a system for detecting progressive structural collapse of reinforced concrete structures. Through Northeastern’s cooperative education program, Logan accepted positions of progressively greater responsibility at some of our nation’s and the world’s leading construction firms while also earning a prestigious internship to work at Intel Corporation. Logan has also devoted time and energy to Northeastern’s chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers, serving first as chair of the Pre-College Initiative, then as vice president and finally as president. Logan is Northeastern’s first Rhodes Scholar. She plans to further her studies in education and social policy and work to redress educational inequity in the United States.
Mason Y. Ji
Washington

Yale University: BA, Global Affairs, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Global Governance and Diplomacy, and Master of Public Policy at St. Antony’s College

Preferred Contact Details
20117 15th Avenue NW
Shoreline, WA 98177
206.335.4085
masonji12@gmail.com

Current Address
20117 15th Avenue NW
Shoreline, WA 98177

Career Aspirations
Diplomacy and policymaking

Mason Ji was the first Yale student to directly enroll in study abroad at Peking University, where he took all his international relations classes in Chinese with native students at the university’s School of International Studies. Mason was also, at age 18, the youngest delegate to the United Nations as the adviser to the Mission of the Republic of the Seychelles. In his four years working at the UN, he has negotiated nuclear disarmament, climate change, and human rights treaties at the UN for Seychelles. A Udall Scholar, he coauthored a document through the UN that influenced the 2014 US-China joint statement on climate change, and worked in negotiations toward the Paris Climate Change treaty in 2015. He has interned at the White House and for one of China’s largest law firms, is a competitive table tennis player in the US and China, and is principal oboe for the Yale Concert Band. He serves as an Educate, Engage, and Empower Ambassador for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders for nationwide community engagement, and recently appeared as a guest artist with the Yale Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.
Andrew N. Kaplan  

Brown University: BA, Political Theory, 2015  
Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Comparative Social Policy  

Career Aspirations  
I aspire to a career in public service in order to advance the guarantee of basic needs and substantive equality of opportunity for all in New York City and beyond.

Andrew Kaplan, New York City, graduated from Brown University in 2015 with highest honors. His senior thesis examined rising homelessness and inequality in New York City. Since graduating, he has been an Urban Fellow in the New York Mayor’s Office of Operations, where he focuses on efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness, particularly veteran homelessness, and improve current shelter conditions and capacity. While at Brown, Andrew cofounded Common Sense Action, the first national bipartisan grassroots advocacy organization of millennials, which he grew to more than 40 university chapters in 20 states, and which has since merged with Run for America. He was also a member of the four-time collegiate national champion Brown tae kwon do team.
Sarah B. Kovan

Michigan State University: BA, Comparative Cultures and Politics, and BS, Human Biology; 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Medical Anthropology, at Linacre College

Preferred Contact Details
sbkovan@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
International medicine

Sarah Kovan, Okemos, Michigan, has a passion for not only understanding issues in global health, but also acting on them. During her time at MSU, Sarah has participated in two international experiences in Israel and Spain, serving in Israel’s national ambulance corps and studying intensive Spanish. She also earned a James Madison College fellowship to perform independent research exploring the need and sustainability for providing interest-free loans to poor women in Sri Lanka, and she worked as a research assistant under Professor Andrea Freidus, conducting an ethnographic study on the consequences of undergraduate medical volunteerism. While pursuing service at home and abroad and engaged in two rigorous academic majors, she has also been the starting midfielder for Michigan State’s varsity soccer team.
Garrett Lam

Massachusetts

Harvard University: AB, Neurobiology and Philosophy, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: BPhil, Philosophy, at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details
4 Bellevue Road
Wellesley, MA 02481
781.254.6141
garrett.m.lam@gmail.com

Current Address
4 Bellevue Road
Wellesley, MA 02481

Career Aspirations
Do as much good as I can

Garrett M. Lam was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a junior and holds a perfect academic record. He is interested in the philosophical problems of free will, moral responsibility, and punishment. For his senior thesis, Garrett conducted the neuroscientific experiments purported to disprove free will and discovered novel neural correlates to human decisions while simultaneously evaluating their philosophical relevance. Believing that many empirical insights from neuroscience and conceptual insights from philosophy go unappreciated in criminal law, he has career interests in criminal justice reform. Garrett is an active advocate of the effective altruism movement, and is also editor in chief of the Harvard Review of Philosophy, the only professional journal of philosophy in the world run by undergraduates. He is one of five undergraduates on Harvard’s General Education Committee, and was the opinion editorial executive on the Crimson. Garrett enjoys playing both tennis and real tennis, and holds the Guinness world record for the longest time standing on a Swiss Ball.
Richard J. Lu

Princeton University: BA, Chemistry with a minor in Global Health and Health Policy, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Global Health Sciences, at Trinity College

Preferred Contact Details
271 Strecker Farms Court
Ballwin, MO 63011
636.675.5517
richarlduj@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
Physician working in clinical medicine and public health

Richard Lu, Ballwin, plans to become a physician and has strong interest in global health policy. He is collaborating with the Mayo Clinic to complete his senior thesis in Chemistry on nerve regeneration potential, and he is writing a second independent thesis on the barriers to efficient vaccine production and distribution in Africa. Richard conducted research on vaccine technology transfer at the Biovac Institute in Cape Town, South Africa, and helped provide health care access to rural populations at Tropical Clinics in Kakamega, Kenya, by creating an electronic medical record for a clinic. He won the Global Health Scholars Fellowship at Princeton, where he also serves in student government and as a residential college adviser for incoming students. He also led a civic engagement trip with his peers to explore the effects of the Affordable Care Act on health access in urban New Jersey.
Machmud A. Makhmudov  

Oberlin College: BA, Politics, 2016  
Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Politics (Political Theory), at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details  
4767 Cedar Wood Drive  
Lilburn, GA 30047  
404.374.2061  
machmudmakhmudov@gmail.com

Current Address  
4767 Cedar Wood Drive  
Lilburn, GA 30047

Career Aspirations  
Public service; environmentally sustainable economic development

Machmud Makhmudov, Lilburn, is a senior major in politics at Oberlin College. His senior thesis focuses on the influence of the Supreme Court on climate change opinion. He immigrated to Atlanta from Uzbekistan 20 years ago. A Truman Scholar, he has served as an intern for the White House Domestic Policy Council, the City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability, the Environment Defense Fund, and the office of Congressman John Lewis. He is vice president of his class and served as head of and liaison to the Oberlin College Student Senate for two years. Machmud was a pitcher on the Oberlin varsity baseball team for three years. He anticipates a career in public service that focuses on sustainability, economic development, and national security issues.
Emily Mediate

University of Notre Dame: BA, Africana Studies/Pre-Medicine with a minor in International Development Studies, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Global Governance and Diplomacy, at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details
3645 Falco Court
Colorado Springs, CO 80920
719.229.7111
emEDIATE@alUMNI.nd.edu

Current Address
Plot 1119, Ggaba Road
PO Box 6785
Kampala
Uganda

Career Aspirations
Eventually work as Assistant Secretary in the Africa Bureau of the US State Department

Following graduation from the University of Notre Dame, Emmie Mediate worked as a junior desk officer for Ethiopia at the US State Department. She is now in Kampala, where she evaluates a USAID project for vulnerable households in Uganda. Emmie also built a library and entrepreneurship center for Ugandan students and worked in Ugandan clinics and communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Emmie has received many prizes and grants for her academic work in East Africa.
Leah S. Michalove

Georgia

Emory University: BA, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies with a minor in Anthropology, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Social Anthropology, and MSc, Refugee and Forced Migration Studies

Preferred Contact Details
220 River Springs Drive
Atlanta, GA 30328
404.790.1562
leahmichalove@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
I aspire to a career in Mideast policy reform and humanitarian aid, and am interested in work combining academia, public scholarship, and political advocacy.

Leah Michalove has studied and conducted fieldwork in Morocco, and her research concentrates on Moroccan fashion as it reflects and influences identity politics, nationalism, and conceptions of modernity in the Maghreb. She is a passionate thespian and has served as both artistic director and production manager for Emory’s student theater troupe. Leah acts as a campus organizer for Emory J Street U and represents Emory regionally and nationally at conferences addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She speaks five languages and tutors both Arabic and Hebrew. Leah has spent her summers advocating for progressive causes—including working for a Senate campaign and a Peruvian NGO supporting early childhood education and nutrition programming—and will spend this summer at the Center for the Study of Law and Religion.
Jared C. Milfred

Yale University: BA, Ethics, Politics, and Economics, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Politics (Political Theory)

Preferred Contact Details
1130 SE 73rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97215
503.901.4859
jared.milfred@gmail.com

Current Address
206 Elm St. #205611
New Haven, CT 06520

Career Aspirations
Government, social justice advocacy, and academic research

Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Jared Milfred has combined research in political theory and political science with a passion for social justice advocacy and campaign finance reform. He founded the nonpartisan student advocacy organization Democracy United and was appointed by New Haven mayor Toni Harp to serve on the city’s Campaign Finance Board, where he was elected chair by his colleagues. In this capacity, he directs one of the nation’s only city-level public campaign financing programs and has championed similar good-governance initiatives in cities around the country. Jared worked as a speechwriter for US Attorney General Loretta Lynch and served as editor in chief of Yale’s Journal of Political Thought, as well as ethics editor of the Yale Philosophy Review. He trained as an EMT with Yale Emergency Medical Services and volunteers as a reader for blind students at Yale’s Office on Disabilities. He also competes in slalom and giant slalom for the Yale Alpine Ski Team. At age 17, Jared became the youngest licensed nuclear reactor operator in the United States, and he has published research and organized a national conference on nuclear energy policy. He looks forward to a career spanning public service, social justice advocacy, and academic research.
District XIII

Rachel E. Mullin
South Dakota

College of Saint Benedict: BA, Political Science and History, 2014
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, at Green Templeton College

Preferred Contact Details
45754 266th Street
Humboldt, SD 57035
605.759.4845
rachelemullin@gmail.com

Current Address
45754 266th Street
Humboldt, SD 57035

Career Aspirations
Following my time at Oxford I hope to spend time working in a direct service capacity in refugee camps. Eventually, I plan to seek a more refugee policy-oriented position within either the UNHCR or the US State Department.

Rachel Mullin, a native of Humboldt, South Dakota, earned her BA in Political Science and History from the College of Saint Benedict in 2014. She has focused on understanding and combating the causes of genocide and forced migration around the globe. She spent a summer in Bosnia-Herzegovina interviewing Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats to support two undergraduate theses on the 1990s genocide in Bosnia. A passionate believer in the power of narratives and images, Rachel codirected a documentary and led a film crew through Thailand to understand the refugee experience of the Karen minority. She also traveled to India to create a documentary exploring the social stigmas surrounding mental health in India and on US college campuses. As a Truman Scholar, she spent the summer following graduation working with the DC-based nonprofit Teaching for Change, advocating greater emphasis on social justice in education. She recently returned from a Fulbright grant to Malaysia, where she worked as an English teacher and focused on using sports to tackle traditional gender norms. She is currently serving as an English and citizenship teacher for refugees in her home state.
Megan G. Musilli

United States Naval Academy: BS, Mathematics, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Medical Anthropology

Preferred Contact Details
506 Lakeridge Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

Career Aspirations
Military surgeon. I owe 20 years of service to the military, and am looking forward to serving in various levels of leadership.

Megan Musilli, El Dorado Hills, will enter the Navy Medical Corps. Her research spans the study of traumatic brain injury and CT scanning techniques, satellite tracking (at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory), and the concept of genetic algorithms and state machines in data compression. Megan has served as squad leader, platoon commander, regimental commander, and brigade operations officer at the Naval Academy. She earned a scholarship to study abroad at Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey, and served in medical and surgical clinics on the US Navy hospital ship Comfort in a 2015 humanitarian deployment to Panama and El Salvador. Megan’s varsity women’s crew won the 2013 Division I Patriot League Championships and participated in the 2013 NCAA Women’s National Rowing Championships. Megan will attend the University of California–San Diego School of Medicine after Oxford to begin her career as a Navy physician.
Ashley E. Orr

Youngstown State University: BS, Mathematics, and BA, Economics, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Economics

Preferred Contact Details
43497 Columbiana Waterford Road
Columbiana, OH 44408
330.509.1351
ashleyorr.usxx@gmail.com

Current Address
43497 Columbiana Waterford Road
Columbiana, OH 44408

Career Aspirations
I would like to pursue a career as a research economist. I am passionate about poverty reduction and human capital development, both in the US and abroad, and hope to work to impact policy through academic research.

Ashley Orr, Columbiana, is a first-generation college graduate of Youngstown State University, where she was a member of the University Scholars Program in the Honors College. Completing degrees in Mathematics and Economics, she has studied at the London School of Economics, has worked at the Federal Reserve Bank in Cleveland, and has done research projects focused on public housing, crime, and poverty generally. During her senior year, Ashley served as president of the YSU Student Government Association and worked with her peers to develop a food pantry for YSU Students. She is cofounder of YSU’s Poverty Awareness program in the city of Youngstown and is extremely active in a wide range of volunteer service in her community. Ashley is the first Rhodes Scholar to be elected from Youngstown State University.
Cameron M. Platt

Princeton University: AB, English, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MSt, English (1550–1700), and MSt, English (1900–present), at New College

Preferred Contact Details
cameron.m.platt@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
In some combination, I hope to work in academia, journalism, and/or the arts!

Cameron Platt, Santa Barbara, is concentrating in English and pursuing a certificate in Theater. She recently completed her senior thesis in English, which sets the possibilities for female motion against the pressures of familial succession in Shakespeare, Austen, and Woolf. Named the valedictorian of her Princeton class, Cameron has previously been elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Society and awarded many honors for her work in English, including the Class of 1870 Old English Prize for exceptional achievement in the fields of Old English, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies. As an actor, a director, and in other production roles, Cameron has worked on over 20 theater productions at Princeton. She also served as the president of the Princeton University Players, Princeton’s only entirely student-run musical theater company. Off campus, Cameron has worked in administrative and educational roles at Prospect Theater Company, an Off-Broadway musical theater company, and at the McCarter Theatre, a regional performing arts center in Princeton.
Laura C. Roberts

Duke University: BA, History with minors in Religion and Political Science, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MSt, Medieval History, at Magdalen College

Preferred Contact Details
6226 Mimosa Lane
Dallas, TX 75230
972.922.3536
13lauracatherine@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
Human rights attorney

Laura Roberts has a passion to apply her knowledge of history to promote women’s rights through advocacy and international law. Her historical work is focused on questions of gender and religion in the late medieval and early modern period, and her research has been published by the Cornell Historical Society. Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Laura is also a member of the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society and is the recipient of the Ole R. Holsti award for excellence in Political Science research. Laura has worked with the Rwanda Girls Initiative and Freedom House, and to support the Women’s Institute for Secondary Education and Research in Kenya. She is an active volunteer with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and works with refugees arriving in the Durham area.
John C. Ruckelshaus IV

Duke University: AB in Political Science with minors in Philosophy, History, and English, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil in Political Theory

Preferred Contact Details
8080 Hollybrook Court
Indianapolis, IN 46250
317.509.4660
jay.ruckelshaus@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
Public service at the intersection of academia and policy

Jay Ruckelshaus is a senior at Duke University, where he is an Angier B. Duke Scholar. He has focused his studies largely in political theory, and he is passionate about exploring the role of ideas in democratic governance from a broad theoretical perspective. This academic work has resulted in several publications and earned him Duke’s Faculty Scholars Award and election to Phi Beta Kappa. At Duke Jay serves on the board of trustees, in Duke student government, and as coeditor in chief of the Eruditio and the Duke Political Science Standard academic journals. Jay is also a highly engaged advocate for individuals with disabilities. He founded Ramp Less Traveled, a nonprofit that assists those with spinal injuries in the pursuit of higher education, and organized the first national conference on higher education and disability to include both students and administrators. He’s been invited to present and write on disability issues at conferences across the country. Jay enjoys poetry, exploring botanical gardens, and trying new beers—hobbies he’s excited to continue to cultivate at Oxford.
Hannah G. Schneider

Georgetown University: BA, Russian, 2015
Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Music (Musicology)

District V
Maryland/DC

Preferred Contact Details
209 Carmalt Road
Hamden, CT 06517
8.981.747.1335 (Russia)
h.gabrielle.schneider@gmail.com

Career Aspirations
Conducting and composition, broadening engagement with and access to classical music

An accomplished violinist and aspiring conductor who has performed around the world, Hannah Schneider deferred her admission to Georgetown to study at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. She is fluent in Russian with advanced proficiency in Chinese and Hebrew. During her junior year at Georgetown, she took a leave of absence to develop a project focused on promoting underserved musicians in the violent North Caucasus region of Russia, where she was based for six months. After funding the project through crowdsourcing and awards, she secured a collaboration with Carnegie Hall’s Musical Exchange initiative. During college, Hannah participated in extreme sporting events such as “GoRuck” and was active in InterVarsity, leading service projects as well as discussion groups through the Gospel of John. She currently works for Maestro Valery Gergiev at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, where she is also chief developer of the First International Mariinsky Far East Festival in Vladivostok. She plans to pursue an MPhil in Music at Oxford, specializing in musicology while pursuing conducting.
Hassaan Shahawy

California (South)

Harvard University: BA, double major in History and in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: BA, Philosophy, Politics, Economics

Career Aspirations
Legal academia, public interest law, public service

Hassaan Shahawy has devoted himself to working with marginalized communities to correct social injustices and improve access to opportunity, while also studying Islamic jurisprudence and global health. He worked with Los Angeles County inmates with the American Civil Liberties Union, as an intern in rural health clinics in Kenya with Vecna Technologies, and as an analyst with small-business lender Liwwa Inc. in Amman, Jordan. He has also conducted research on transplant surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital and on the causes of Saudi Arabia’s private sector labor shortage at the Harvard Center for International Development. Hassaan served as the vice president of the Harvard Islamic Society and as an executive committee member of the Harvard International Review, Harvard’s leading publication on international affairs. He has volunteered at the Children’s Cancer Hospital in Cairo, Egypt, and mentors prison inmates in Norfolk, Massachusetts.
Evan J. Soltas

Princeton University: AB, Economics, 2016
Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Economics

Preferred Contact Details
95 Ridge Road
Rumson, NJ 07760
732.865.4570
esoltas@gmail.com

Current Address
95 Ridge Road
Rumson, NJ 07760

Career Aspirations
Economist involved in public policy

Evan Soltas, Rumson, is earning an AB in Economics with a Certificate in Statistics and Machine Learning. He is a regular contributor to the Washington Post, Bloomberg, and the New York Times and has written a blog on economic policy since 2012. His research also explores the interaction of government and the economy, including an in-depth study of the impact of food stamp benefits in reducing hunger in impoverished households. At Princeton, he was president of Fed Challenge, where he led his team to a second-place finish nationally in a presentation to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors; and the financial vice president of the Princeton Debate Panel.
Isaac Stanley-Becker

Yale University: BA, History, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MPhil, Economic and Social History

Preferred Contact Details
5011 46th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016
773.480.2423
isaacstanleybecker@gmail.com

Current Address
5011 46th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016

Career Aspirations
Journalism, with a focus on politics and legal affairs

Isaac Stanley-Becker has found himself inching eastward throughout his life—born in Los Angeles before relocating to Chicago, and then to DC, before attending Yale. He will now cross the pond to study transnational urban history. At Yale, Isaac majored in history, focusing on urban and legal issues. He wrote his senior thesis about Catholic pacifism and international law as twin justifications for civil resistance to nuclear weapons in the 1980s. Isaac is an award-winning journalist and aspires to a career in news reporting, with possible beats including politics and legal affairs. He served as editor in chief of the Yale Daily News, where he directed prize-winning coverage of the university’s procedures for trying claims of sexual assault and collaborated with student journalists in Singapore to explore Yale’s footprint as a global university. Isaac interned at the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. He also founded the Hillhouse High Journalism Project to teach journalism to New Haven public high school students. Outside of the classroom, he enjoys biking, sailing, and metal welding.
Ericka M. Wheeler

Mississippi

Millsaps College: BS, History, and BA, Literature in English, 2016

Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Criminology and Criminal Justice, at New College

Preferred Contact Details
560 CR 130
Carrollton, MS 38917
662.299.6303

Current Address
560 CR 130
Carrollton, MS 38917

Career Aspirations
I plan to become a doctor/professor and target health and educational disparity in Mississippi.

Ericka M. Wheeler, from Carrollton and Greenwood, Mississippi, is a senior at Millsaps College, where she is a pre-med student who will be receiving dual degrees in History and Literature in English. Her honors thesis, “Aircraft Boneyard: A Historical, Creative Reflection on Structural Racism and the African American Community,” navigates complicated historical and autobiographical issues in the form of a historical fiction novella. Ericka is president of both the Millsaps College Intercultural Student Organization and Major Harmony, an a cappella ensemble. She has also reached out to several underfunded schools in Mississippi as a tutor and mentor, and was a “Lives in Transition” intern in Greenwood, where she helped to design programs for mentoring and training in coping skills and for better integrating behaviorally challenged youth. She is an Alzheimer’s disease social activist who has sought to assist Alzheimer’s patients in capturing their memories in short-story booklets. Raised in the heart of the rural Mississippi Delta, Ericka has a passion for social justice, borne in a desire to return from her studies to pursue issues of race, education, and health in Mississippi. She has been accepted to and will attend Mayo Medical School upon her return.
The Bon Voyage Weekend is the signature event organized by the American Association of Rhodes Scholars: three and a half days of learning, discussion, and conviviality for the newest Scholars—including meeting and mingling with alumni Scholars—just before their departure for Oxford.

This year, BVW hosted 30 US Scholars and one Scholar each from Bermuda, Jamaica, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates. The weekend began late Thursday afternoon with a welcome and orientation in the Dupont Circle Hotel in Washington, DC. Then the Scholars started the first half of a two-part seminar, Instincts to Lead and the Art of Learning. This first session, designed to help the Scholars ground themselves and steer their course going forward, centered on the themes of “happiness and purpose.” The seminar leaders were Todd Breyfogle (Colorado and Corpus Christi ’88) and George Keys (Maryland/DC and Balliol ’70). Dinner that evening was generously provided by American Secretary Elliot Gerson (Connecticut and Magdalen ’74) and Jessica Herzstein at their home.

Friday was a day of sessions with alumni Scholars in DC. Retired Senator Richard Lugar (Indiana and Pembroke ’54) hosted a Capitol Hill brunch, and a discussion featured Congressmen Jim Cooper (Tennessee and Oriel ’75) and Jim Himes (New Jersey and St. Edmund Hall ’88). A visit to the World Bank Group followed. The BVW Committee, responding to a request from Rhodes House, had included more international alumni Scholars in the BVW programming, and the World Bank discussions...
featured several. John Roome (South African College and Lady Margaret Hall ’83), the bank’s senior director for climate change, was host, and speakers included Scholars from Zambia and Quebec. That evening, the new Scholars dined in small groups at the houses of 15 different local alumni.

Saturday began with a panel discussion on “fighting the world’s fight,” with Randal Pinkett (New Jersey and Keble ’94), CEO of consulting firm BCT Partners, and Martina Vandenbeng (California and St. Antony’s ’90), president of the Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center. After lunch, the new Scholars saw the play Destiny of Desire at Arena Stage and then joined in a conversation about theater and society with the playwright.

At the Bon Voyage Reception and Dinner that night in the Sulgrave Club, the new Scholars mingled with 113 alumni Scholars and their guests. They were welcomed by the president of AARS, Steve Crown (Washington and Queen’s ’80). American Secretary Gerson introduced each of the new Scholars, and also—reflecting on the Rhodes Must Fall campaigns in South Africa and Oxford—delivered brief remarks on the life of Cecil Rhodes. He noted that, “for all his faults—and there were many, greed, misogyny, and racism high among them,” Rhodes “was a giant who . . . left legacies both good and ill; ephemeral and permanent; in business and in politics; and well beyond the two continents of Europe and Africa.”

The keynote speaker, Leana Wen (Missouri and Merton 2007), was introduced by Megan Steven Wheeler (New Hampshire and Magdalen 2002), who had been a member of Wen’s selection committee. Wen spoke on the vagaries of her job as health
commissioner for Baltimore, the pernicious effects of economic inequality on health, and the best ways to use the Rhodes Scholarship. “Nobody signs up for a scholarship based on fighting the world’s fight because we want the easy things,” she said. “Use the credibility and connections the Rhodes offers to do what you really want to do.” (Wen’s and Gerson’s remarks are in print and online in the Fall 2015 issue of *The American Oxonian*.)

The final day began with the traditional Women’s Breakfast, followed by a discussion of the changing Supreme Court by University of Virginia law professor A. E. Dick Howard (Virginia and Christ Church ’58) and lunch with the AARS board. After a meeting with Gerson, the new Scholars participated in the second session of Breyfogle and Keys’s seminar, this one centered on “leadership and power.” At 6:00 p.m., the Class of 2015 boarded the buses that would take them to Dulles Airport.

The force behind BVW’s success was its trio of co-chairs: Neil Brown (Iowa and Merton 2002), Emmy Probasco (Maryland/DC and Wolfson 2002), and Noorain Khan (Michigan and St. Antony’s 2006). They were backed by some two dozen other volunteers, notably the BVW Committee members and the Scholar alumni who hosted and participated in events and small-group dinners. Thanks too to all the Rhodes alumni and guests who attended the reception and dinner—joining in welcoming the new class of Scholars.

This year’s Bon Voyage Weekend is scheduled for September 22–25, 2016, again in Washington, DC. The Bon Voyage Reception and Dinner are open to all Rhodes Scholars as opportunities to reconnect. BVW is sponsored by the AARS and supported entirely by the contributions of its members.
From the American Secretary

PLEASE MEET the United States Rhodes Scholar Class of 2016. As always, they combine the academic excellence necessary for admission to Oxford with ambition, passion, energy, leadership, and a set of values directed to the public interest.

This year we elected an equal number of women and men, four African Americans, several Muslim Americans, at least seven first-generation Americans or immigrants, from a wide range of academic fields, and from a wide range of institutional types and selectivities. We also elected Rhodes Scholars from two institutions that had never had one before, Northeastern University and Youngstown State University. (In the last 20 years, we have elected Rhodes Scholars from 231 institutions.) These elections however were made by 16 district committees meeting independently and simultaneously, each committee choosing the two candidates a majority of its members, after conscientious and open deliberation, thought best to meet our demanding criteria. So we cannot expect such results every year. But we can be confident that over time, if not in every year in every respect, our selections should nationally—and will in fact—reflect to a remarkable degree the diversity of excellence across America’s colleges and universities.

Publications like this obviously focus on the Scholarship winners, and we often discuss the extraordinary challenges of selecting them at our district interviews. But it is also important to understand how challenging it is to shortlist from about 50–70 endorsed applicants in each district to the number to be interviewed. Our selectors, all volunteers who devote many hours to their task, take very seriously their obligation to shortlist as carefully and conscientiously as possible. But we also look for and enforce best practices as we continuously explore possible improvements in our application requirements and our selection methods. For example, we conducted trials in two districts in the last two years with technologies that allowed us to “interview” applicants before shortlist decisions were made. We studied those experiences closely and found that to the degree either pilot program benefited or affected the actual shortlists, those same benefits could be realized without adding risks of forms of unconscious bias (visual, verbal . . .) simply by expanding our finalist pools to a minimum of fourteen in all districts. Most committees until now have interviewed a dozen candidates, some as few as nine or ten, and several consistently as many as sixteen. This change will allow us to interview nationally perhaps 15 to 20 percent more finalists. We are very pleased about this, knowing how difficult it can be for institutions to send stellar applicants year after
year only rarely to see them reach the finals stage, let alone win a Rhodes Scholarship. But it is also our hope that, for the large majority who do not win, the application process will itself have been extremely valuable, with horizons opened and greater self-awareness achieved—and in many cases other prizes, awards, and opportunities realized that otherwise might not have been.

As part of the application process, we have for the last few years required a special attestation from all applicants that their required personal statement or essay was not edited by anyone, nor reviewed by anyone with suggestions to improve it. Two years of experience suggest that compliance with this rule has been successful and that candidates are spending more time thinking about what Oxford programs best fit with their long-term career goals and why they are qualified to pursue those programs, and less time as if we were awarding a literary prize for the genre of application essay. But we have also found that there remained some ambiguity about the degree of help advisers may still provide regarding personal statements. Accordingly, we are clarifying our rules so that there is no input on the personal statement, even pre-drafting. We have worried too that some outstanding students might be discouraged from applying due to the mistaken belief that our application—particularly the personal statement, over which too much mythology has developed—requires extremely extensive counsel.

The Rhodes Scholarships continue to expand not just globally (e.g., as reported in this letter last year, to the UAE and to China, and more countries to follow), but geographically in our own jurisdiction. For the first time, all US citizens (and certain legal permanent residents) who attend universities within the US Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands) will become eligible. Previously, the United States Rhodes Scholarships were only available to students who either resided in or attended university in one of the fifty states or the District of Columbia, meaning that a Puerto Rican, for example, despite her US citizenship, could apply for a Rhodes Scholarship only if she attended a university on the mainland. Starting in 2016, all students and institutions within US states and territories will be able to observe the same rules and guidelines in place for US applicants.

Join me in wishing the American class of 2016 great happiness and success in Oxford.

Elliot F. Gerson
(Connecticut and Magdalen ’74)
American Secretary to the Rhodes Trust
About the Rhodes Scholarships

The Rhodes Scholarships were established in 1902 by the Will of Cecil Rhodes, the British philanthropist and colonial pioneer. Rhodes hoped that the Scholarships might improve “the lot of humankind through the diffusion of leaders motivated to serve their contemporaries, trained in the contemplative life of the mind, and broadened by their acquaintance with one another and by their exposure to cultures different from their own.” Rhodes intended that his plan of bringing able students from throughout the English-speaking world and beyond to study at Oxford University would “aid in the promotion of international understanding and peace.” (See further Oxford and The Rhodes Scholarships.) Each year, 32 Americans are among approximately 80 Rhodes Scholars selected world-wide to take up degree courses at Oxford.

Cecil Rhodes wrote that Rhodes Scholars should “esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim” and outlined four criteria of selection: 1) literary and scholastic attainments; 2) fondness for and success in sports; 3) truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindliness, unselfishness, and fellowship; and 4) moral force of character and instincts to lead, and to take an interest in one’s fellow beings.

Interested applicants are encouraged to consult the fellowship office of their own college or university, or the American Secretary of the Rhodes Scholarship Trust: Elliot F. Gerson, 8229 Boone Blvd., Suite 240, Vienna, VA 22182. Phone: (703) 821-5960. Fax: (703) 821-2770. E-mail: amsec@rhodesscholar.org. Or visit the web site at: www.rhodesscholar.org.

About the Association of American Rhodes Scholars

The mission of the AARS is to bring Rhodes Scholars in the U.S. together in support of the Rhodes Scholarship and Oxford University through events, publications, networks, and the web. We provide the social, intellectual and professional outreach to reflect on our shared experiences and extend our current opportunities. We promote exchange and goodwill among the peoples of the diverse countries from which Rhodes Scholars and other Oxonians are drawn.

AARS plans and supports several activities including national and class reunions, regional events, and the Bon Voyage Weekend/Orientation for new Scholars. The Association publishes an annual newsletter, The American Rhodes Scholar, as well as the quarterly journal, The American Oxonian, which includes articles, book reviews, class letters and the annual Address and Occupations List of American Rhodes Scholars and other Oxonians. It also hosts the website www.americanrhodes.org. It administers the Eastman Professorship Trust and the American Trust for Oxford (ATFO). AARS members pay modest dues annually; many members also make generous additional donations. AARS does not receive funding from the Rhodes Trust nor does it have responsibility for the Rhodes Scholar selection process in the U.S.

For membership and further information, contact Nicholas W. Allard, AARS Secretary, c/o AARS, 8229 Boone Blvd., Suite 240, Vienna, VA 22182. Or visit the AARS link on the internet from: www.rhodesscholar.org or directly at: www.americanrhodes.org.