



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ron Brown Scholar Program Names 2021 Scholarship Recipients

Forty-Five of nearly 4,000 Applicants Join Ranks of Prestigious African-American Scholar Program

Charlottesville, VA (April 26, 2021) – The Ron Brown Scholar Program – the nation’s leading scholarship program for African-American youth announced its 2021 class of Scholars. The winners, selected from amongst nearly 4,000 applicants, will receive mentoring, career counseling and \$40,000 toward their college expenses. This year’s class of scholars numbers 45, up from 20-25 in previous years. This dramatic increase was made possible by the visionary generosity of The Norman R. and Ruth Rales Foundation. Their game-changing \$5M donation, 100% of which is earmarked for scholarships, will effectively double the number of Ron Brown Scholars for each of the next five years. The effects of this historic grant will be felt for many years to come: Ron Brown Scholars become innovators in fields as diverse as the arts, science, and public service, and twice as many Scholars will mean twice as many transformative leaders.

Founded in 1996 and named in memory of the first African-American Secretary of Commerce, the Ron Brown Scholar Program provides financially challenged students with the resources and mentoring to thrive at the finest colleges and universities in the country. The Program also promotes outstanding service opportunities for the next generation of promising African-American leaders. Each of the 45 new Scholars and an additional 250 semifinalists, will join the Ron Brown – Ruth and Norman Rales Leaders Network, an initiative which focuses on career development, provides mentoring and matches talent with opportunity.

“I am continually impressed by the thousands of students who apply to become Ron Brown Scholars,” said Michael Mallory, President & CEO of the Ron Brown Scholar Program. “This year’s group of Scholars is perhaps the strongest class ever in terms of activism, with more than half scheduled to graduate in the top one or two percent of their class. These hard-working young people all bring unique backgrounds and personal experiences to the Program, but all share extraordinary achievements in academics and a profound commitment to using their education to benefit their communities and society as a whole.”

Ron Brown Scholars are selected on the basis of demonstrated academic excellence, leadership potential, social commitment and financial need. Some key highlights of the Program include:

- To date, 534 Ron Brown Scholars named
- More than 135,000 applications since 1997
- More than 50% of Ron Brown Scholars attend Ivy League universities
- 99% graduation rate
- More than 50% complete graduate degrees
- 100% involved in extensive community service projects
- 82% of Ron Brown Scholars have donated financially back to the Program, totaling nearly \$800,000

The 2021 Ron Brown Scholars are:

- Serkute B. Abebe, Holly Springs, NC
- Yasmeeen A. Adeleke, Waldorf, MD
- Sade A. Adeniran, San Diego, CA

- Chidimma J. Adinna, Ontario, CA
- Jerron-Michael D. Arline, Beaumont, TX
- Devonte D. Billings, Sunrise, FL
- Nicole A. Campbell, Milton, GA
- Jaylen N. Cocklin, Columbia, SC
- Jean V. Colas, Immokalee, FL
- Fatimah M. Coppin, Fresh Meadows, NY
- Bank E. Daniel, Independence, MO
- Amalia G. Desir, Masapequa, NY
- Mohamed Z. Elhassan, Laurel, MD
- Elishevlyne H. Eliason, Aurora, CO
- Peirce B. Ellis, Broomall, PA
- Dinan H. Elsyad, Lorton, VA
- Abel Geleta, Arlington, VA
- Rediet K. Ghebrehiwet, Silver Spring, MD
- Marlon B. Griggs, Jacksonville, FL
- Makayla C. Harris, Ann Arbor, MI
- Mia L. Hurts, Houston, TX
- Robert C. Igbokwe, Chicago, IL
- Kadija A. Ismail, Springfield, VA
- Shaltiy-El B. Jackson, Houston, TX
- Eric J. Jones, Saint Rose, LA
- Nicholas S. Joyner, Jacksonville, FL
- Katherine L. Keaton, Cary, NC
- Faith A. Kumi, Marietta, GA
- Moses T. Matanda, Plano, TX
- Mikayla S. Merin, Philadelphia, PA
- Ahmed A. Muhammad, Oakland, CA
- Kennedy S. Odiboh, Stone Mountain, GA
- Emmanuel A. Okyere, Columbus, OH
- Norah R. Ostin, Pittsburgh, PA
- Bryant E. Perkins, Ocean Springs, MS
- Ja'Karri S. Pierre, Boston, MA
- Maximillion A. Shearod, Houston, TX
- Lydia Shimelis Belay, Aurora, CO
- Kynneddy S. Smith, Shaker Heights, OH
- Da'vion V. Tatum, Houston, TX
- Sebastian A. Ward, New Haven, CT
- Madison R. Webb, Fairburn, GA
- Kyle J. Willard, Homewood, IL
- Malaya D. Williams, Lakeland, FL
- Jamaal N. Willis, Apple Valley, CA

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About the Ron Brown Scholar Program

The Ron Brown Scholar Fund is a 501(c)3 public charity. Named for the late Secretary of Commerce and inspired by his dedication to public service, the Ron Brown Scholar Program was established in 1996 to advance the collective impact of extraordinary service-minded leaders. The value of the scholarship is far more than the \$40,000.00 awarded for college; in addition to these funds, each Scholar has the opportunity to participate in leadership development activities, regional meetings and conferences, and receives mentoring. Since the Program was founded in 1996, more than \$25 million has been raised to support 534 students who have received generous scholarships to America's finest colleges and universities. All Ron Brown Scholars are involved in community service.

About The Norman R. & Ruth Rales Foundation

The Norman R. and Ruth Rales Foundation is dedicated to supporting children and families facing hardship by creating opportunities for them to realize their life's potential. The Foundation strives to advance the legacy of Norman and Ruth Rales, two individuals from modest means who built an extraordinary life together based upon the values of integrity, compassion, hard work and giving back to others. Norman Rales, raised in the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in Harlem during the Great Depression, where he learned lessons about the value of community, striving, and resiliency, was honored as the 2010 recipient of the Ron Brown Scholar Program American Journey Award.

For more information please visit: www.ronbrown.org