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O'Melveny Awards Warren Christopher Scholarships to 15 Outstanding Los Angeles Students

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Fifteen Students Selected from 116 Area High Schools Will Receive \$20,000 in College Scholarships

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOS ANGELES—June 1, 2018—Fifteen outstanding Los Angeles Unified School District high school sophomores will receive \$20,000 in college scholarships at the annual Warren Christopher Scholarship Awards luncheon today at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

For a quarter-century, O'Melveny has been awarding Warren Christopher Scholarships to exceptional LAUSD sophomores who embody the spirit of the late O'Melveny Chairman and former US Secretary of State, a tireless champion of higher education opportunities for disadvantaged students. This year's Scholars were selected from among 116 nominees whose schools recognized their academic promise, record of community service, and financial need. Their inspiring stories of achievement in the face of adversity appear below.

The best measure of the success of the program to date is that all 200-plus Scholars in the program have graduated from high school, and well over 90% have gone on to graduate college and pursue rewarding careers. These statistics far outmatch local and national rates generally, and especially among the communities the program serves.

"We want to extend our warm congratulations to the 15 outstanding students who earned Warren Christopher Scholarship Awards this year,"

said O'Melveny Chair Brad Butwin. "It is a true honor to recognize these special individuals for their many accomplishments. We look forward to supporting them in the years to come as they pursue their goals and join our extended community of scholars past and present."

"Our Scholars are remarkable young people, with enormous talent and energy. Our hope—borne out by past successes—is that this scholarship will help remove some obstacles to their clearly deserved lifelong success," added Matt Kline, an O'Melveny partner who chairs the Warren Christopher Scholarship Committee. "This group has overcome a great deal, and we hope that this strong vote of confidence in their future, as well as the financial support and network of support services we provide the Scholars, will make a lasting impact."

The Warren Christopher Scholarship program, which represents O'Melveny's commitment to support promising high school students during their college careers, is managed by the Warren Christopher Scholarship Committee and the California Community Foundation in Los Angeles. Since its inception, the program has awarded \$6.2 million in college scholarships to more than 250 Los Angeles-area students.

Scholars must graduate from an LAUSD high school and attend college to claim their scholarship awards. While most other scholarship programs target students in their senior year of high school, the Warren Christopher Scholarship program is unique in recognizing rising academic stars in the 10th grade. The goal is to motivate the scholars to excel throughout high school and to attend and graduate from college. Each scholar receives \$5,000 a year during his or her four years in college to help cover tuition and other educational expenses.

Warren Christopher scholars have gone on to attend and graduate from some of the country's most prestigious universities, including Yale, MIT, Brown, Duke, Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, and almost all of the UC schools. Many scholars are now teachers, public servants, doctors, and lawyers.

For more information about the program, please visit:
<https://www.calfund.org/warren-christopher-scholarship-fund> or email christopherscholars@omm.com.

Below are profiles of the 2018 Warren Christopher Scholars:

Brianna Acosta

Girls Academic Leadership Academy

Brianna Acosta is an artist, capturing life in photographs and poetry because "she understands no moment is too small." Her long-time goal is not to be in the spotlight with her own art, but to help other artists as a business and marketing director. "Art has always been a safe space for me. I want to give artists access to the resources that make them successful so that I could help people in the same way music and books helped me." Brianna also has a detailed plan to help the homeless, starting

with serving meals and distributing hygiene supplies, and eventually being able to provide access to job training and housing opportunities. Despite spending two hours each way on a bus to and from school, Brianna maintains a 4.4 GPA, takes three AP classes, serves as editor-in-chief for her school's newspaper, and volunteers on the weekends at her local animal shelter. She also has played varsity volleyball, basketball, and softball.

Robin Ayala-Barrios

RFK - New Open World Academy

For a student who once created a periodic table of rap songs to help him remember all the elements, it may not be surprising that his teachers describe Robin Ayala-Barrios as innovative and creative, with a passion for learning and leading. Robin founded several clubs at school, and serves as the president of Interact Now, which is dedicated to making communities better by organizing service projects. In addition to maintaining straight As, Robin takes college courses in the afternoon, aiming to earn his associate's degree by the time he graduates high school. He credits the support of his family for helping him recover from setbacks and look for the best in others. "It would be difficult to miss Robin Ayala as he walks down the hallways, his smile is instantly recognizable, warm and welcoming," according to his science teacher.

Lindsay Butler

Lincoln High School & Lincoln Math & Science Magnet

Lindsay Butler is known for setting the bar high, and then pushing that bar just a little bit higher. "She is dissatisfied with a goal that fails to test her limits, continually pushing herself forward to learn as much as she can," her English teacher says. Lindsay plays sports year-round, participating in soccer, cross country, and track, as well as performing with the school's theater program and volunteering every Saturday at the California Science Center. Following her after-school commitments, she takes three trains and a bus to get home, often arriving after 10 p.m., and then starts her homework. Lindsay is a voracious reader, originally aiming to read 14 books before the end of this year, and then upping that goal to 20 when she finished the first 14 too quickly. "I will become a writer to help other people facing such challenges as poverty and domestic violence. I want them to believe in themselves and in their future and remind them they are not alone."

Skye Carbajal

San Pedro High School & Magnets

As one of her counselors described her, Skye Carbajal is a "confident advocate for what she is passionate about." This passion inspires both Skye's work in school, where she has maintained straight As, and her activities outside of the classroom. Whether taking full advantage of opportunities at Boys and Girls Club, taking violin lessons, or participating in the Leaders in Training program where she volunteers at an elementary

school, Skye continues to push herself by taking college courses at Harbor College, seeking out college application help from UC Berkeley, and applying to be a junior counselor at Tech Trek Science and Math Camp. She also wants to make sure that all her peers have the support they need to apply for and go to college, and volunteers to mentor other college-bound young women attending a program at San Diego State.

Andy Chen

Franklin High School & Magnet

Praised by his counselor for a maturity and wisdom beyond his years, Andy Chen learned a valuable lesson from his math teacher this year that changed his outlook on education. Always driven to make excellent grades in pursuit of his dream of becoming a mechanical engineer, Andy enrolled in AP Calculus and AP Physics as a sophomore, and initially struggled with the extremely challenging college-level courses. His teacher said to him, "It's not what grade you achieve, it's the knowledge you obtain," and Andy took that advice and applied it everywhere. Andy plays tennis and football, which he credits with teaching him the meaning of teamwork and brotherhood, and he earned Student Athlete of the Year for having the top grades on his football team. On the weekends, Andy studies Chinese, tutors younger students, and plays a mean piano.

Belinda Davenport

Cesar E. Chavez Learning Academy - Social Justice Humanitas Academy

Belinda "Efe" Davenport is the youngest of 10 children being raised by a single mom, who Efe calls the strongest woman she knows. As one of the only black families living in Idaho, Efe witnessed violence and racism, which fueled her desire to be a criminal defense lawyer so she can be a voice for the traumatized and help deliver justice to those who may not otherwise receive it. One of her school administrators called Efe a "true civil servant and a beacon of hope and strength." She often buys food to share with the homeless, wanting to pay back the kindness others have shown to her family. She says that kindness can be as small as smiling at a panhandler instead of pretending you don't see them. Her teachers and counselors praise her compassion and generosity, saying, "Efe is known for her gratitude, always taking advantage of the opportunities put in front of her, help received, or even just the fact she gets to go to school."

Rebecca Leon

Contreras - Los Angeles School of Global Studies

Rebecca Leon has courage in spades. Rebecca left her family in Mexico, on her own, to pursue a better chance for an education in Los Angeles. "Accomplishing good grades is a reward to me and my parents because it is proof that our sacrifices of living apart are being repaid." After surviving a bad car crash and multiple surgeries, Rebecca decided to study medicine and become a trauma surgeon, to help others in the same way doctors helped her. Despite starting at a new school this year, Rebecca has already joined the swim team and several community service organizations,

including Key Club; Peace over Violence, which is a forum to address issues affecting teens; and the Welcome Club, which offers support for immigrants. “Rebecca has shown herself to be not just an exceptional student but someone filled with kindness and empathy,” her teacher says.

Jocelyn Leyton

Vasquez University High School & Magnets

Jocelyn Leyton Vasquez is already an inspiration to everyone around her. She was chosen by Baby2Baby, a celebrity-supported organization that helps children in need, to help raise awareness for their great cause. “To say my meetings with Jocelyn changed my life is not an overstatement. Our work at Baby2Baby allows me to meet hundreds of kids every year, but there was always something different about her. Every person that I introduced her to was inspired and wowed,” the organization’s deputy director says. Jocelyn, who helps take care of her younger siblings, wants to major in psychology and work with children dealing with anxiety or depression. “I want to be a mental health therapist and talk to kids who feel unwanted. I want to make them feel like they do belong.”

Abigail Leyva

Bravo Medical Magnet

Abigail Leyva has very specific dreams. She plans to graduate from medical school, become a pediatric oncologist, and then use her skills to give back to underserved communities. And she’s already well on her way. Abbey participates on her Biology Olympiad team, which is the premier biology competition for high school students, and serves as the secretary for MESA (Math, Engineering and Science Advancements). After running on her crosscountry and track teams, Abbey volunteers at night at USC Keck Hospital— already honing her craft. She even tore through her school’s entire required reading list in one summer, listening to audible books while working. “Abbey is gifted, ambitious, selfless and well-rounded; her wisdom and empathy are well developed beyond her years,” her mentor says.

Jonathan Peña

Sylmar Biotech Health Academy

Jonathan Peña completely changed his life from a failing middle school student to a 4.0 high school student and wrestler, who is simultaneously taking five college courses. “I believe that giving up our goals because we have setbacks is like slashing our other three tires because one got a flat.” As a freshman, Jonathan worked at Mission College’s computer repair shop and taught himself how to build a computer out of spare parts from broken machines. He then used that computer to design a Homeless Management System for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to better track and serve Los Angeles’s homeless population. That program qualified Jonathan to compete in the California State Engineering Championships this year. In college and after, he wants to take his knowledge of computers one step further, and develop artificial intelligence in the hope of curing Alzheimer’s.

Urmi Queen

Fairfax High School & Magnet

Growing up in Bangladesh, Urmi Queen witnessed firsthand how limited access to medical facilities can cost people their lives. That experience forged her career path from a young age. Urmi wants to become a doctor and start a nonprofit to bring medical clinics to remote villages in Bangladesh. "I believe everyone deserves to have access to medical attention, indiscriminately, regardless of financial status or background." Urmi's compassion for others permeates her volunteer work, including as a member of Kiwin's, which is an international student-led organization that concentrates on community service, leadership, and character-building. She is also the president of the Planeteers ecology club, and participates in LAPD cadets, "which allowed me to learn how to protect the underserved from harm." Her counselor says Urmi "offers herself up on a daily basis to improving the world around her by her generous spirit of heart and sacrifice."

Joshua Reed

Middle College High School

"Every member of a community has something to offer and we should all make whatever contribution we can." Joshua Reed tutors younger students in his community at the library after school. One student named Chris made a particular impact on his life, as Joshua was able to help him bring a D in math up to an A. Joshua also serves as a mentor to his peers. His AP English teacher called him "a compassionate voice of reason" to his students.