

MNLGA 2018 Scholarship Recipients

In keeping with its mission to promote and provide for the future success of Maryland's ornamental horticulture industry, the Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association shall sponsor academic scholarships to students pursuing an education in the field of landscape/ornamental horticulture. The 2018 applicant pool all shared their passion for horticulture; either in design/architecture, plant science, or greenhouse specialization, and their excitement to enter a career in the horticulture industry was abundantly expressed in their applications. We congratulate our 2018 scholarship recipients: Rachel Levitt, Michael Pullano, and Marquis Barnes. We would also like to congratulate 2018 Link Shanks award winner Audra Bissett.

Rachel Levitt

Rachel is currently a senior in the Landscape Architecture program at Penn State University. She is completing her final year in the program. Her passion for the environment and her field of study is carrying her through her final year with flying colors. Through her studies and extracurricular activities Rachel's love of landscape architecture has continued to grow.

She has taken a broad range of classes that included interactive design studio, introduction to soils, world landforms and plant biology as well as ecology and GIS. Rachel had the opportunity this past year to take part in the University's Landscape Architecture Semester abroad in Bonn, Germany. She was able to study a multitude of unique designs and was able to see the many opportunities that the field of landscape architecture has to offer.

Growing up in the Chesapeake Bay area has made her appreciate the unique eco-system and is more aware of the challenges that the watershed faces. It is her hope that her education will be used to focus on environmental work in Maryland.

Rachel's future plans are to return to Maryland to work, upon graduation. Her family resides in Columbia.

Michael Pullano

Michael is currently a senior at the University of Maryland College Park pursuing a degree in Landscape Architecture. Michael is currently serving as the President of the UMD's Student ASLA. His affinity for the outdoors and desire to explore all that nature has to offer helped him to choose this unique career path in horticulture.

In addition to his studies, he worked as a team to create a productive living wall within the student union at UMD. He not only is dedicated to his major course of study, but Michael is also a sustainability minor and worked with his peers to gain the funding for the living wall.

Michael has a bright future ahead and plans to stay heavily involved with the ASLA after graduation to support current and aspiring professionals. His main goals in the future are to promote sustainability, landscape architecture and environmental stewardship.

Marquis Barnes

Marquis is currently a junior at the University of Maryland College park pursuing a degree in Landscape Architecture. His main goal in the pursuit of his degree is to “make the environment we depend on so much more livable and ecologically sustainable.” Marquis has always looked at the world from a design perspective and his rich love of nature and the environment have encouraged his studies.

Marquis will be taking a broad range of classes including Principles of Site Engineering, Site Planning and Design Studio, An Urban and Community Design Seminar and many more. Marquis has always been very driven working towards his Associate’s degree while still in high school, and that drive has carried through into his college career.

Marquis plans to utilize his skills and knowledge from his college courses to pursue a career with a firm that is focused on sustainability and integrating greenspace into urban design. His main hope is that he can be apart of the next generation to become an impactful person of future change.

Link Shanks Scholarship Award Winner – Audra Bissett

Audra Bissett is currently a senior at the University of Maryland. Audra started out at the University of Maryland as a Letters and Science major taking classes in geometric art, graphic design and psychology, but then took a few years off as she didn’t feel this was the direction she wanted to go.

When she came back several years later, she found a specialization that really intrigued her – Horticulture and Crop Production in the Plant Science Department. This is where she could learn about form, function and application to plant growth and development. She met a peer mentor in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and started taking a variety of plant science classes (Introduction to Horticulture, Greenhouse Crop Production and Nursery Management).

Audra was recognized for her outstanding work in her horticulture classes and was invited to be a part of a lab on campus. Since then she has exceled in the lab and has been given a number of horticulture projects. Her professors and colleagues have described her as a smart, reliable, hard-working, and detail-oriented student. Audra plans to graduate in the Spring of 2019 and continue her work with a career in the horticulture industry.

The MNLGA is pleased to endorse our 2018 scholarship recipients’ goals and we applaud them for their hard work and dedication. We extend our best wishes to Rachel and Stephen on their future academic and career success.

You may find more information on the Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association Ornamental Horticulture Scholarship, as well as additional horticulture education scholarships at:

<http://www.mnlga.org>.