PAST AMERICAN SPIRIT MEDALLION RECIPIENTS

2021
Captain Daniel K. Fordice III, USA (Ret.)
Katherine Johnson, Posthumously (1918–2020)
Anne Levy
Major General Angela Salinas, USMC (Ret.)

2019
The Honorable Everett Alvarez Jr.
Gayle Benson
Peggy Noonan
Gerhard L. Weinberg, PhD

2018
Susan Hess
Archie Manning
Adair Margo

2017
James L. Barksdale
Captain James A. Lovell
Phyllis M. Taylor

2016
Norman C. Francis, JD
Governor William Winter

2015
Tom Brokaw
Tom Hanks

2012
Gary Sinise

2010
Senator Howard H. Baker Jr.

2008
Vernon Baker
Van T. Barfoot
John Finn
Arthur J. Jackson
Charles P. Murray Jr.

2007
President George H.W. Bush
Maurice R. “Hank” Greenberg
Peter Kalikow
Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger
John Whitehead

2006
Vice Admiral Thad W. Allen
Rear Admiral Robert F. Duncan
Colonel Terry Ebbert
Lieutenant General Russel L. Honoré
Bonnie McElveen-Hunter
General Colin L. Powell
Secretary of State George Shultz

2005
Senator Robert “Bob” Dole

2004
WWII Veterans Serving in Congress
Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) (Army)
Representative Cass Ballenger (R-NC) (Navy)
Representative John D. Dingell (D-MI) (Army)
Representative Ralph M. Hall (D-TX) (Navy)
Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC) (Army)
Representative Amory F. Houghton (R-NY) (Marines)
Representative Henry J. Hyde (R-IL) (Navy)
Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) (Army)
Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) (Holocaust Survivor)
Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) (Army)
Representative Ralph Regula (R-OH) (Navy)
Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) (Air Force)
Senator John Warner (R-VA) (Navy, Marines)

BILLY MICHAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Billy Michal Student Leadership Award is given annually to one student from each state and the District of Columbia who demonstrates the American spirit in his or her community.

The values of leadership, teamwork, tolerance, creativity, and perseverance can and should be learned and lived by all Americans regardless of age. When six-year-old Billy Michal from Zimmerman, Louisiana, helped his one-room school win a statewide scrap metal collection contest during World War II, he understood that every citizen—no matter how small—could contribute to our victory in the war. His example, and the actions of millions of other students on the Home Front, reminds us that service to country and community helps create active, engaged citizens. Through this award, The National WWII Museum promotes these values to students nationwide and honors those who exemplify them.
Benjamin Arr
Madison, Alabama | Bob Jones High School, Grade 11
Benjamin is a student athlete in his junior year at Bob Jones High School in Madison, Alabama. He is a member of the National Honor Society, National Society of High School Scholars, Student Government Association, and Future Business Leaders of America; a church youth leader, and a varsity baseball player. He has volunteered locally, nationally, and internationally for various mission projects serving elderly, underprivileged youth, and impoverished communities. He is a leader in school, church, community, and athletic activities. He desires to continue his family’s long legacy of military service through attendance at the United States Military or Naval Academies.

Jaenon Amaker
Eagle River, Alaska | Eagle River High School, Grade 11
Although new to Alaska, Jaenon is an active participant in a range of activities at his high school, including Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, Drill, Color Guard, National Honor Society, JROTC Leadership & Academic Bowl, Kitty Hawk Air Society, and soccer. He also volunteers within his community and has collected donations for the Fisher House, donated to the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) of Alaska’s Food Pantry, served dinner to military families at the United Service Organizations, and assisted with visitor services on behalf of Club Beyond and ASYMCA at Alaska’s Annual Salute to the Military. Jaenon is currently working on instituting a military peer-to-peer club at his school, which will benefit transitioning military peers.

Ashley Nevison
Scottsdale, Arizona | Arizona State University Prep Digital, Grade 9
Ashley founded Sargento’s Army, her S.O.F.T.E.A.M. in 2018 when her cat Sargento died of cancer. What started as an organization sewing cat toys now provides hope, dignity, and kindness in multiple ways: 1) cat and dog toys to animal rescues, 2) Hope Bags filled with hygiene items, and 3) her reading with purpose program. Ashley has donated more than 22,000 Hope Bags across Arizona and three other states and has raised over $50,000 through fundraising, grants, and book sales of her own children’s books that she writes, illustrates, and publishes. She also highlights changemakers in the community on her podcast, One World, One Future.

Trinity Foster
Crossett, Arkansas | Crossett High School, Grade 11
Trinity Foster is a nationally ranked public speaker and an ambitious and determined student at Crossett High School. As the Arkansas state president of Future Business Leaders of America – Phi Beta Lambda and a participant in various service organizations, Trinity strives to utilize her unique perspective to improve the lives of others. Trinity is a section leader of the CHS band and serves as a member of the CHS Eaglettes, Student Council, and Student Ambassadors. She is co-captain of the CHS Quiz Bowl, as well as a member of the universal dance class. Arkansas 4-H, Senator John Boozman’s Congressional Cabinet, and the local All-American Future Business Leaders of America National Beta Club.

Alina Susu
Sacramento, California | Natoma Preparatory High School, Grade 12
Shortly after the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, Alina decided she wanted to make a change in her community by creating Refugees in Crisis, a club dedicated to aiding refugees and warmly welcoming them to Sacramento. Through Refugees in Crisis, Alina has collected hundreds of donations and helped multiple Afghan families resettle in Sacramento. Beyond Refugees in Crisis, Alina leads her school’s Key Club, is the MVP of her Mock Trial team, and is an active member of the National Honor Society, Animal and Environmental Club, and the Black Student Union. She plans to attend college this fall.

Mihika Joshi
South Windsor, Connecticut | Timothy Edwards Middle School, Grade 8
Mihika is an 8th-grade student who strongly believes in being the change that you want to see in the world. Mihika founded the Home of the Brave program, honoring more than 50 veterans and documenting their stories to inspire younger generations. During the pandemic, Mihika raised funds and volunteered for 200 hours distributing food and PPE kits in several vulnerable communities. She is committed to numerous causes, including the environment, the fight against hunger, and supporting veterans. She has been recognized with the President’s Volunteer Service Gold Award, Connecticut Student Writers Contest Gold Award, and the Girl Scout Silver Award.

Brett Cressman
Newark, Delaware | Christiana High School, Grade 10
Brett Cressman is a 10th-grade student from Newark, Delaware. He is active in many programs both inside and outside of school, including soccer, track and field, Boy Scouts of America, Delaware Football Club, and the NJROTC program. In his troop, he has held many leadership positions and has participated in numerous service projects. As a cadet in the NJROTC program this year, Brett served as the supply officer and was active on the drill team. Brett also spends his summers working at Rodneys Scout Reservation on the Chesapeake Bay as a lifeguard teaching swimming, lifesaving, and snorkeling.

Alexis Buggam
Margate, Florida | Atlantic Technical High School, Grade 11
Alexis is a junior in the nursing program at Atlantic Technical High School. She is an advocate for mental wellness in her community. During the pandemic, she organized a body positivity webinar for her school despite the challenges of remote learning. This year, she and her team won the FTX hackathon for coming up with Eudai, a mental wellness app that connects youth with mentors and other youth. Through her work with Bridge2Life, Alexis has promoted events aimed at informing students of higher education and career opportunities.

Bryn Audrey Hammock
Buford, Georgia | Mill Creek High School, Grade 12
Bryn Hammock, a senior at Mill Creek High School in Hoschton, is a student athletic trainer for football, a club soccer player, and a swimmer. She is active in community service and was one of 42 metro Atlanta students chosen for the prestigious IDEALS Leadership School. Byrn received the Girl Scouts’ Gold Award, earned by fewer than 6 percent of Scouts nationally. Her project was creating bead-filled gloves, “Tiny Hugs,” to nurture NICU babies across Georgia, earning the Gold Award Council Young Women of Distinction Award. Three of Bryn’s great grandfathers served the United States in World War II.
Hannah Little  Meridian, Idaho | Renaissance High School, Grade 12

Hannah Little is a rising senior and an aspiring educator. Her love of history and learning has led her to leadership roles in her community and school, such as National History Day, Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council, and Academic Decathlon. She has enjoyed working with peers and younger students through different clubs and schools to mentor and share the things she has learned. Inspired by her own mentors and teachers, Hannah hopes to teach history to high school students. She hopes to share her love of history and inspire the next generation to not only learn and grow, but improve themselves as well as their communities.

Ariella Poi  Glen Ellyn, Illinois | Glen Crest Middle School, Grade 8

Ariella has a passion to help and care for animals. She has collected donations for the humane society and raised awareness for safe pet travel as part of her Lego Robotics team by creating a prototype of a pet plane. With her Girl Scout troop, Ariella collected thousands of plastic bottle caps to create a bench, which was donated to her school and recognized by state representative Terra Costa Howard. Setting up a beach cleaning station is another project underway to keep trash out of waterways since it can harm wildlife and interfere with people’s enjoyment of nature.

Isaac Rentschler  Columbia City, Indiana | Columbia City High School, Grade 11

At the age of seven, Isaac was diagnosed with an aggressive soft tissue cancer in his left eye socket that he spent the next year fighting with chemotherapy and proton radiation. He was able to beat his cancer and all the odds stacked against him. Isaac has a passion for giving back to the community that gave so generously to him and for helping other families deal with the struggles of a pediatric cancer diagnosis. He recently finished a fundraiser program for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, raising over $30,000 for research and family support.

Wren Menke  Algona, Iowa | Algona High School, Grade 12

Wren Menke is a senior at Algona High School. She is involved in numerous activities such as band, theater, and academic decathlon. Among all these activities, she prioritizes a healthy interest in history. Between restoring local museum exhibits to cataloging WWII veteran interviews, Wren can often be found in the library or her history teacher’s classroom. She has handled the organization, cataloging, and digitizing of local history in a preservation effort that will benefit generations to come. She has also secured multiple grants to help her museum.

William Hare  Mulvane, Kansas | Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School, Grade 12

William is a 12th-grade student at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School in Wichita, Kansas. He is an active volunteer at The Lord’s Diner, where he prepares and serves dinner for those in need. He volunteered to work the traveling Vietnam War Wall Memorial. William also participated in History Day for three years. All of his topics were centered around World War II. His third year, he earned first place in his district and third place in the state competition. He participates in service projects with his youth group at St. Mary Catholic Church in Derby, Kansas.

Lavery Malena Hughes  Glasgow, Kentucky | Barren County High School, Grade 12

Malena knew there was a need in rural Kentucky to research the impact of equine parasite resistance to dewormers, so she obtained a sponsorship from a veterinary medicine supplier of dewormer for horse owners and rescues, and she determined through her research that resistance had not yet developed. Malena plans to specialize in veterinary pathology and aspire to continue serving through this career. Malena conducts service projects through Beta Club, of which she is president, including volunteering with the local animal shelter and veterinary clinic. She also is captain of the academic team, Broadcasting Club President, and a member of mock trial team and mock government.

Autumn Herring  Holden, Louisiana | Walker High School, Grade 11

As a national top five leader of Beta, the Service Chairwoman of Louisiana 4-H Citizenship Board, and a junior docent of LSU Rural Life Museum, Autumn works tirelessly on a variety of projects. Autumn has worked as a tour guide and a junior artisan of beeswax candle-making, blacksmithing, and hearth-fire cooking at an 1800s museum; sewed masks for healthcare workers during the pandemic; helped plan and implement a statewide adolescent mental health youth retreat and art contest; and advocated for mandatory mental health classes in high schools. Autumn is dedicated to both bettering the future and preserving the past.

Grace Davie  Sanford, Maine | Sanford High School, Grade 12

While volunteering with and serving as an advisory board member for the Sanford Backpack Program, which provides food weekly to students experiencing food insecurity, Grace was tasked with the challenge of creating a holiday initiative in 2020. Grace founded the Box of Joy campaign, which is a box of pantry staples and favorite holiday items. To date, 325 boxes have been donated and placed with students. It is important to Grace that this meaningful work continue, and she has passed the responsibility of this initiative to her brother. She will attend Brigham Young University in the fall.

Zoe Tobery  Frederick, Maryland | Walker High School, Grade 12

Zoe graduated from Walker High School in Frederick, Maryland. Her History Day project earned her second place in the performance category at the state competition. Zoe served as a Student Service Learning aide for a WWII history class and volunteered as an intern for the World War II American Experience Museum. Zoe was an active member of Student Government Association, National Honor Society, English Honor Society, and Creative Writing Club. Zoe was selected to represent her peers as a member of the Senior Executive Board and Student Voices Program, as an emcee for the annual FCPS Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, and as a graduation speaker.

Monnavi Un  Lowell, Massachusetts | Lowell Catholic High School, Grade 12

Monnavi has always been committed to leading through example, often striving to better the lives of those around her—whether through small actions or bigger ones, such as spearheading a Pan-Mass Challenge bracelet fundraiser for a local cancer patient as a member of the National Honor Society. Due to Monnavi’s contagious optimism and work ethic, she was chosen to be trained as a mentor to eventually lead civility retreats for local 7th and 8th graders. Monnavi has also been an active volunteer, completing over 165 hours throughout her high school years at elementary schools and annually at the Baystate Marathon.
cold caps (a device that prevents hair loss for chemotherapy patients) free of charge to women to make hair loss optional for women battling cancer. He founded his nonprofit that provides four years after Stanley’s mother was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2014, he decided he wanted.

Samantha Doepker
Washington, Missouri | Washington High School, Grade 12

Samantha is a senior at Washington High School. She holds leadership positions in her school’s Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Dare 2 Be Real, and Student Superintendent Advisory Council. She has worked as an intern for local LGBTQIA+ advocacy organizations, Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, and mutual aid for the Minneapolis community after the murder of George Floyd. Kregness has spent the past three years developing a series of professional development trainings for the staff of her high school to build equitable practices. This year, she worked with fellow students to establish a student office of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to increase student voice of marginalized communities in school leadership through an Equity Development Center.

Elaine Reed
Columbia Falls, Montana | Columbia Falls High School, Grade 11

Elaine is an active member of Boy Scouts of America (BSA)—holding the rank of Eagle Scout—and of National Honor Society. At the beginning of the pandemic during the mask shortage, Elaine sewed fabric masks for the Montana Veteran’s Home and local assisted living homes. She received the BSA Medal of Merit. Living next to her great-grandfather, a WWII veteran, Elaine learned to cheerfully serve her community. In high school, she has worked on service projects in Glacier National Park, restored flowerbeds at her church, helps her local Lions Club, and is restoring woodland areas on Melita Island in Flathead Lake. She will lead Montana’s BSA National Youth Leadership Training course in June.

Joslyn Stamp
Plattsburgh, Nebraska | Brownell-Talbot School, Grade 8

Joslyn’s volunteerism started in the 4th grade when she brought marker recycling to her elementary school. In total, she has collected more than 12,000 markers, dry erase markers, and highlighters for recycling through Crayola ColorCycle. As a Buddy Bison Ambassador for the National Park Trust, she promotes and protects parks and historical landmarks through volunteer work, social media, blogging, workshops, and public speaking. To help kids cope with stress, Joslyn offers free mindfulness workshops. Her project is called Clearer Thinking Through Mindfulness, and it is offered through the Nebraska 4-H Gives Back program.

Abigail Panariso
Las Vegas, Nevada | Las Vegas Academy of the Arts, Grade 10

Abigail is a Gold Award Girl Scout and a volunteer with Honor Flight Southern Nevada (HFSN). Abigail founded the Abigail C.A.R.E.S. for Veterans Program, which honors veterans by organizing events, purchasing wheelchair for HFSN, and making sure every veteran at the VA Home gets the gifts they wanted for Christmas. During the pandemic, Abigail saw how elderly veterans in nursing facilities were feeling forgotten. She organized caravan parades in Las Vegas and the surrounding cities, and organized pizza, craft, and holiday parties at the VA Home in Boulder City to make sure the veterans felt honored, respected, and appreciated every day.

Olivia Rose DeAngelis
Concord, New Hampshire | Concord High School, Grade 11

Olivia is always looking for ways to be involved and give back. During the summer months, Olivia volunteered much of her time maintaining several of the flowerbeds throughout the NH State Veterans Cemetery. The time spent caring for the gardens was not only appreciated by families who visited but also recognized by an officer of the NH National Guard. Additionally, Olivia partnered with the Green Beret Foundation to help raise money for Special Forces soldiers and their families. Olivia raised over $500, exceeding her original goal. The foundation later recognized her as the youngest person to do so.

Milton James “Jamie” Deity III
Williamstown, New Jersey | Williamstown High School, Grade 12

Jamie is a charismatic, assiduous student who is well respected by his community for his ambition, drive, and passion for education, especially history. He exemplifies leadership in class with thought-provoking ideas to help others learn. He has chosen extra history electives to further his knowledge. Jamie is a devout JROTC Air Force member and has held leadership positions throughout his four years. Jamie played soccer all four years and volunteers with lake preservation and veteran services. He looks forward to becoming a history professor to share his passion with others.

Elliott Saiontz
Chappaqua, New York | Horace Greeley High School, Grade 10

After participating in the HBO documentary The Number on Great Grandpa’s Arm with his great-grandfather, an Auschwitz Survivor, Elliott has dedicated his time over the past four years to educating on the dangers of hate by conducting question-and-answer sessions with high-12 students and college students as well as in churches, libraries, museums, and teacher training seminars. He teaches about the importance of standing up to hate, taking action when you witness bullying or an injustice, and being kind to everyone. Elliott’s ongoing educational efforts are helping to create a more inclusive generation of individuals.
James Michael Williamson  Vaz, North Carolina | Sandhills Classical Christian School, Grade 8
James is a devoted patriot and volunteer. For his Eagle Scout project, James created a monument dedicated to our nation’s female veterans. Through a podcast and informational board at the monument, he highlights a different female veteran each week. James has adopted a local cemetery to sponsor for Wreaths Across America. He has constructed and maintains two flag retirement boxes at the Fayetteville VA Healthcare Center and a local barber shop. As the Senior Patrol Leader of his BSA Troop and Den Chief to the pack, he organizes multiple activities and fundraisers. He also volunteers with his school’s mission trip team.

Elizabeth Cantrell  Wagoner, Oklahoma | Wagoner High School, Grade 12
Elizabeth is a graduating senior from Wagoner High School in Wagoner, Oklahoma. She participated in several clubs and organizations, such as varsity cross country, varsity track, Student Council, Leadership, National Honor Society, and others. One annual leadership project that she has held close to her heart has been creating mental health initiatives. Through her work with these projects, Elizabeth became more aware of the troubles faced by teens in her community. She saw a need for and helped create safe spaces within the school for students to go if they needed to refocus or recharge themselves.

Emily Truitt  New Bethlehem, Pennsylvania | Redbank Valley Junior/Senior High School, Grade 10
Growing up with a mother who struggles with PTSD wasn’t easy for Emily. When she was 12, Emily approached her parents with an idea. She wanted to create a veterans memorial garden—a place where people could go to sit, relax, and enjoy a beautiful view. Through the support of her family and her community, Emily developed a plan to build a Victory Garden, where veterans and other community members could gather when life gets too overwhelming. Her Victory Garden has a focus of tranquility and peace and consists of different memorials, flags, a waterfall view, and lots of flowers. Aside from her work with Victory Garden, Emily is a member of the Redbank Valley Marching Band and Concert Band. She is also a member of Modern Muscat Masters and her school’s track and field team. She previously won the American Legion Auxiliary Essay contest and lettered in her school’s marching band for playing both flute and piccolo.

Katherine Sweeney  Warwick, Rhode Island | Toll Gate High School, Grade 11
Katherine is a junior at Toll Gate High School in Warwick, Rhode Island. Katherine has always had a passion for history and learning. She was awarded the RI Secretary of State’s Civic Leadership award. She is a member of the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society, and she is a varsity tennis athlete. She is a type 1 diabetic and involved with the Camp Surefire Foundation as a Junior Counselor. She was a Girl Scout for 10 years and earned her Silver Award. She has contributed to her community by volunteering at the library’s reading program and engaging in service projects through her church.

Parker Bradford  Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina | Palmetto Christian Academy, Grade 11
Parker is very passionate about the outdoors, wildlife preservation, and aquatic environments. In 2018 he was asked by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Division of Marine Fisheries to participate in their fish tagging program, and he works with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to use empty oyster shells to restore reefs. Parker was awarded his Eagle Scout in February 2022 and works hard to support veterans through the Honor Flight Program, the Boy Scouts of America, and Memorial Day flag placement for veteran graves. Parker continues to dedicate his energy to our country.

Cole Carnes  Grants Pass, Oregon | Grants Pass High School, Grade 10
Cole was born in Grants Pass, Oregon, where he is currently a sophomore at Grants Pass High School. He has been elected into student government while taking advanced courses and tutoring peers. He is also a three-sport varsity athlete in football, wrestling, and baseball. He volunteers as a youth wrestling coach, a baseball umpire and football referee, a reading buddy at the elementary schools, and cleans out horse stalls at the Moomaw Ranch. He loves everything World War II! Being Oregon’s Billy Michal Leadership Award winner and visiting The National WWII Museum is a dream come true for Cole.
Sydney Adreon  | Vergennes, Vermont | Rice Memorial High School, Grade 11

When COVID-19 struck, Sydney felt isolated while noticing that others around her were struggling with similar feelings. In response, Sydney and two friends started #VTWeGotThis through social media to stay connected. For Sydney, this campaign was the start of her fight to raise awareness about mental health among her peers. This past year, she started a chapter of Hope Happens Here with similar feelings. In response, Sydney and two friends started #VTWeGotThis through social media to stay connected. For Sydney, this campaign was the start of her fight to raise awareness about mental health among her peers.

Kate-Yeonjae Jeong  | Houston, Texas | Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Grade 10

Kate is a sophomore attending Kinder HSPVA with a concentration in creative writing. She serves as the Editor-in-Chief of her school newspaper and Underclassmen Liaison of Student Council. Kate is interested in integrating her artistic background with public health and ethics, and is a longtime volunteer at the county hospital and advocate for patient safety through Patient Safety Movement Foundation. A keen communicator and driven community changer, Kate founded Light Up Network, an organization that fosters intergenerational connections and prevents elderly isolation through art performances. In partnership with nursing homes, VA hospitals, and nonprofits nationwide, Light Up Network celebrates the joy art brings.

Anika Rao  | Salt Lake City, Utah | West High School, Grade 11

Anika is a junior at West High School. She is passionate about creating an inclusive community that values diversity and equity, and has focused her service on achieving this goal through her role as the Editor-in-Chief of her high school's newspaper and volunteering with the Mundi Project, Salt Lake City PeerCourts, Salt Lake City Public Library, and National Honor Society and Key Club at her school. She is a four-time recipient of the Utah Lieutenant Governor’s Service Award, and was awarded the University of Utah’s Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Leadership Award and Youthline Utah Young Humanitarian Award. She is also a two-time national qualifier for the National History Day contest.

Jean Lin  | Camas, Washington | Union High School, Grade 11

Jean is a junior at Union High School in Camas, Washington. She is actively involved in organizations such as the Future Business Leaders of America, where she serves as a four-time State Officer and Executive Director of Public Policy on the National Presidents Council. Outside of business, Jean is active in the community and founded the 501%(c)(3) nonprofit organization Leaders Across the World (LATW) to connect youth worldwide to discuss and act on critical global issues. LATW has reached thousands of students and has had more than 450 individuals from more than 45 countries participate in its six-week virtual exchange programs.

Ruby Homer-Wambeam  | Laramie, Wyoming | Home School, Grade 12

Ruby applies her love of cooking to raise funds for social causes like homelessness, reproductive health, and Ukrainian refugees. She volunteers in the high school special education classroom, belongs to the Best Buddies club, and is Treasurer for the Multicultural Club. She has won multiple Wyoming History Day awards and passed a bill to limit the cost of insulin at the Wyoming American Legion Girls State. Ruby traveled to Washington, D.C., as the Wyoming representative for the National Pro-Start Culinary Competition. In the fall, Ruby will attend the University of Wyoming, majoring in special education and dance as a student in the Honors College.

Percell Jackson  | Richmond, Virginia | Glen Allen High School, Grade 12

Percell enjoys aviation, taekwondo, Boy Scouts of America (BSA), traveling, chess, and coding. Percell has been involved with BSA for 12 years and holds the rank of Eagle Scout. For his Eagle Scout community service project, he planned, designed, and created a 9/11 memorial honoring first responders for Henrico County Division of Fire. The memorial incorporates a piece of steel from the World Trade Center. Percell has studied taekwondo for the past eight years and is a second degree black belt. A member of the Latin Honor Society and Jack and Jill of America, Percell plans to major in flight education and become a commercial pilot. He currently holds his student pilot’s license.
EDUCATION AT THE MUSEUM

The National WWII Museum is a dynamic educational resource, serving the needs of teachers and students from grade school through the postgraduate level. Through exhibitions, on-site programs, distance learning, and online resources, teachers and students from all backgrounds can explore the values and beliefs—the universal concepts—that Americans and their Allies embraced during World War II. Proceeds from the American Spirit Awards will support educational programming at the Museum—including the ongoing development of classroom materials and professional-development opportunities for teachers in schools across the country, as well as online experiences that bring the Museum and its resources to students around the world.

The National WWII Museum extends its gratitude to the 2022 Four Star Normandy Academy and Three Star Student Leadership Academy Sponsors—whose contributions have made it possible to provide all-expenses-paid scholarships for selected students to participate in the Normandy Academy, which takes students from our New Orleans campus to the beaches of France—or Student Leadership Academy, which offers hands-on, behind-the-scenes learning at America's National WWII Museum. Each program includes the option to earn college credit while exploring leadership and decision-making during World War II.

About the Museum

Initially opened in 2000 as The National D-Day Museum, The National WWII Museum now goes far beyond that crucial landing on June 6, 1944, to tell the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

Covering everything from industrial efforts on the Home Front to the combat experience of the American servicemember abroad, the Museum offers an impactful blend of sweeping narrative and poignant personal detail, featuring immersive exhibits, state-of-the-art multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories to take visitors inside the story of the war. Beyond the campus experience, the Museum’s extensive online digital collections and distance-learning opportunities promote WWII education at all levels while offering patrons of all ages new ways to connect to history and honor the generation that sacrificed so much to secure our freedom.

Designated by Congress in 2004 as America’s National WWII Museum, the Museum is located in the Warehouse District of New Orleans, the manufacturing home of the famed Higgins landing crafts that delivered American soldiers to their D-Day landings. Across a six-acre campus, six soaring pavilions house historical exhibits, retail outlets, restaurants, a performance theater modeled on entertainment venues for WWII servicemen, the 4D experience Beyond All Boundaries (narrated by Tom Hanks), the interactive Final Mission: USS Tang Submarine Experience, and—soon—the first-of-its-kind nighttime sound and light experience Expressions of America. The on-site Higgins Hotel and Conference Center opened in 2019, and a capital expansion program funding the current construction of the Museum’s capstone pavilion—Liberation Pavilion—will cement the institution as a state-of-the-art educational facility and a premier destination for travelers from around the world when complete in the coming years.