

# New scholarship to help shape urban leaders

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Through a new scholarship, K-State is hoping to develop young leaders who will fix problems in urban communities.

These aspiring leaders and recipients of the Edgerley-Franklin Urban Leadership Scholarship are five freshmen.

They are Eli Anderson, freshman in pre-journalism and mass communications; Rymonda Davis, freshman in pre-journalism and mass communications; Matthew Ho, freshman in environmental design; Edmond Rivera, freshman in nutritional sciences; and Derrick Wiggins, freshman in open option.

Anita Cortez, administrative director of the Developing Scholars Program, an undergraduate program for underrepresented students, works closely with these new freshmen in hopes they will visibly affect urban communities.

"I think that it's imperative that we begin to look at what's lacking, what's not accessible in some communities, and instead of turning our gaze away, we better look right in the center of things and see how we can make a difference," Cortez said.

The families of Bernard Edgerley and Bernard Franklin, both with close K-State ties, have organized this scholarship.

According to a recent press release, Franklin was the first black student body president and was a 1976 graduate, and Edgerley was a 1978 graduate.

Both families wanted to address the issues of the urban community that have too long been

ignored, Cortez said.

"They have real interest in addressing the concerns of the urban environment," Cortez said.

The annual scholarship is renewable for \$3,000 a year, as long as students maintain a 3.0 grade point average. The winning students are also enrolled in a leadership class and are part of the Developing Scholars Program.

The students are matched with faculty research mentors and are currently forming ideas for their individual projects, which they will present in April. They are paid a stipend for their work.

Ho said he is honored to be a part of this program, which he thinks will help him throughout his time at K-State and beyond. He is interested in learning about architecture acoustics for his scholarship project.

"I know DSP will provide me with many opportunities, both as a student and an individual," Ho said. "The program will push me to strive to be the best that I am."

The students selected for the scholarship had all been involved in their own urban communities, working on various projects.

Davis, for example, logged more than 600 hours working for Breakthrough, a program devoted to closing the achievement gap in schools. Davis said she came to appreciate what she has through her work.

"Many of the students in the program came from low-income families and were beating all types of odds by even attempting to graduate from high school," Davis said.

Davis said she sees society's ability to change

through working with children.

"It is important that we not only address the fact that these children are the future of America, but we applaud them for waking up every day and trying to succeed," Davis said.

Davis will base her scholarship project on recovering history that could be lost. She will be interviewing older, black women in the Manhattan community as part of the project.

Though all the scholarship winners have a common interest in volunteer work, Cortez sees varying differences in all of their other interests.

"The first words that come to mind are 'amazing' and 'eclectic' - very broad in their interests and curious," Cortez said. "It's exciting to work with young students who have curiosity and really want to know more about the things that they're studying."

In time, Cortez hopes this scholarship will begin to have its effect on society.

"I think here in the beginning, we're really wanting to have an impact on Kansas urban centers, like Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita - but that's just the beginning," Cortez said. "We would like to see what we do here, then open avenues for improvement, ultimately nationwide."

Through a combination of emphasis on volunteer work and leadership, the program hopes to mold these students into the leaders that America needs.

"Just lecturing the people, urban America won't fix the problem," Wiggins said. "What they need is leadership examples, someone to follow."