



From the Office of the American Secretary

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, DC/November 23, 2019 – Elliot F. Gerson, American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, today announced the names of the 32 Americans chosen as Rhodes Scholars representing the United States.

Gerson described this year’s class: “This year’s American Rhodes Scholars—independently elected by 16 committees around the country meeting simultaneously—once again reflect the extraordinary diversity that characterizes and strengthens the United States. They will go to Oxford in September 2020 to study in fields broadly across the social, biological and physical sciences, and in the humanities. They are leaders already, and we expect their impact to expand exponentially over the course of their public-spirited careers.”

For the third consecutive year, the class overall is majority-minority and approximately half are first-generation Americans. One is the first transgender woman elected to a Rhodes Scholarship; two other Scholars-elect are non-binary.

Rhodes Scholarships provide all expenses for two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England and may allow funding in some instances for four years. Mr. Gerson called the Rhodes Scholarships, "the oldest and best-known award for international study, and arguably the most famous academic award available to American college graduates." They were created in 1902 by the Will of Cecil Rhodes, and are provided in partnership with the Second Century Founders, John McCall MacBain O.C. and The Atlantic Philanthropies, and many other generous benefactors. The first class of American Rhodes Scholars entered Oxford in 1904; those elected today will enter Oxford in October 2020.

Rhodes Scholars are chosen in a two-stage process. First, applicants must be endorsed by their college or university. This year more than 2,900 students began the application process; 963 were endorsed by 298 different colleges and universities. Committees of Selection in each of 16 U.S. districts then invite the strongest applicants to appear before them for interview.

This class includes the first Rhodes Scholar ever elected from the University of Connecticut. And there were finalists from 14 institutions that had never before had a Rhodes Scholar.

Applicants are chosen on the basis of the criteria set down in the Will of Cecil Rhodes. These criteria are first, academic excellence. This is a critical but only threshold condition. A Rhodes Scholar should also have great personal energy, ambition for impact, and an ability to work with others and to achieve one's goals. In addition, a Rhodes Scholar should be committed to make a strong difference for good in the world, be concerned for the welfare of others, and be conscious of inequities. Although the Trust strives for the most inclusive application pool

possible, considerations of balance or diversity are not however factors in selection. And finally Gerson said, “a Rhodes Scholar should show great promise of leadership. In short, we seek outstanding young people of intellect, character, leadership, and commitment to service.” Gerson said “these basic characteristics are directed at fulfilling Mr. Rhodes’s hopes that the Rhodes Scholars would make an important and positive contribution throughout the world. In Rhodes’s words, his Scholars should 'esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim.'”

Applicants in the United States may apply either through the state where they are legally resident or where they have attended college for at least two years. The district committees met separately, on Friday and Saturday, November 22 and 23, in cities across the country. Each district committee made a final selection of two Rhodes Scholars from the candidates of the state or states within the district. Two-hundred thirty-six applicants from 90 different colleges and universities reached the final stage of the competition, including 14 that had never before had a student win a Rhodes Scholarship. Of the 90 institutions whose students reached the finalist stage in 2019, 19 had not endorsed any applicants in 2018.

The 32 Rhodes Scholars chosen from the United States will join an international group of Scholars chosen from 23 other jurisdictions (more than 60 countries) around the world, and for the second year, two Scholars from any country in the world without its own Scholarship. In addition to the 32 Americans, Scholars are also selected from Australia, Bermuda, Canada, China, the nations of the Commonwealth Caribbean, East Africa, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Southern Africa (South Africa, plus Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and Eswatini), Syria/Jordan/Lebanon/Palestine, the United Arab Emirates, West Africa (including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, São Tomé

and Principe, and Togo), Zambia, and Zimbabwe. One hundred Rhodes Scholars will be selected worldwide this year, including several who have attended American colleges and universities but who are not U.S. citizens and who have applied through their home country.

With the elections announced today, 3,516 Americans have won Rhodes Scholarships, representing 324 colleges and universities. Since 1976, women have been eligible to apply and 588 American women have now won the coveted scholarship. Approximately 2,000 American Rhodes Scholars are living in all parts of the U.S. and abroad.

The value of the Rhodes Scholarship varies depending on the academic field and the degree (B.A., master's, doctoral) chosen. The Rhodes Trust pays all college and university fees, provides a stipend to cover necessary expenses while in residence in Oxford as well as during vacations, and transportation to and from England. The total value of the Scholarship averages approximately US\$70,000 per year, and up to as much as approximately US\$250,000 for Scholars who remain at Oxford for four years in certain departments.

The full list of the newly elected United States Rhodes Scholars, with the states from which they were chosen, their home towns, and their American colleges or universities, follows. Very brief profiles follow the list.

For further information, please contact:

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Beginning Sunday, November 24, Mr. Gerson may be reached for press inquiries or comments at amsec@rhodesscholar.org. Joyce Knight and Thom Yu of the American Secretary's Office will be able to provide details on how to reach Scholars-elect, and may be reached at joyceknight@rhodesscholar.org or thom@rhodesscholar.org. Beginning Monday, questions can be directed to Ms. Knight and Mr. Yu at the Rhodes Trust office in Vienna, Virginia at 703-821-5960.

PLEASE NOTE: Given the time challenge and complexity of 16 concurrent district selections across the United States, initial versions of the short bios and winners' list included with this press release may contain small errors, typographical and otherwise. Most are corrected within 24 hours, so always check www.rhodesscholar.org for the most up-to-date versions. In addition, you may find photos of the winners on the global Rhodes Trust website, www.rhodestrust.ox.ac.uk, where they will be uploaded as soon as practicable.