



From the Office of the American Secretary

Elliot F. Gerson
American Secretary
The Rhodes Trust
8229 Boone Boulevard, Suite 240
Vienna, VA 22182-2623

November 23, 2019

703 821 5960
Fax 703 821 2770
amsec@rhodesscholar.org
www.rhodesscholar.org

American Rhodes Scholars-elect for 2020

(Subject to ratification by the Rhodes Trustees after acceptance by one of the colleges of Oxford University)

DISTRICT 1

Massachusetts

Kristine E. Guillaume, Forest Hills, New York, is a senior at Harvard, where she is majoring in History and Literature, and in African and African American Studies. Kristine is the first black woman President of the *Harvard Crimson*, the independent daily, student-run newspaper. A recipient of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, Kristine's undergraduate honors thesis examines memoir and autobiography in the era of mass incarceration. The daughter of immigrants, Kristine's goals lie in her passion for "helping the underserved, educating young minds, and digging deeper into injustices often ignored in the public sphere." At Oxford, Kristine will pursue an M.St. in English and American Studies, and an M.St. in U.S. History.

Massachusetts

Lillian (Lily) Moore-Eissenberg, Harvard, is a senior at Yale University where she is completing double majors in English and Philosophy. Lily is an accomplished writer-philosopher whose work centers on analyzing the exploitation of marginalized groups, including issues of gender, migration, and family. An award-winning journalist, she served as editor-in-chief of Yale's political magazine, where she founded the university's only outlet for public philosophy. As an editorial intern at the *Texas Monthly*, Lily covered this summer's mass shooting in El Paso, Texas. Lily plans a career as a philosophy professor and staff writer at a long-form magazine. At Oxford, Lily will do the B.Phil. in Philosophy.

DISTRICT 2

Connecticut

Wanjiku (Wawa) N. Gatheru, Pomfret, is a senior at the University of Connecticut. Her major is in Environmental Studies, and she has minors in Global Studies and in Urban and Community Studies, all with a perfect academic record. Wawa is a Truman Scholar, a Udall Scholar, a UN-USA Foundation Global Health Fellow, and a Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange Scholar. She has founded and led programs on food insecurity and sustainability, and is the vice president of the student government. She is a first generation American of Kenyan descent and the first Rhodes Scholar ever elected from UConn. At Oxford, she plans to do a master's degree in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance, and a master's degree in Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation.

Connecticut

Laura Plata, Palatine, Illinois, graduated from Yale in May with a major in Ethics, Politics, and Economics. Her academic studies, including research as a Mellon Mays undergraduate fellow, engage the link between the criminalization of Central American asylum seekers and a global trend toward closed borders. After hearing relatives in El Salvador describe how worsening gang violence and political instability threatened their daily safety, Laura devoted her time as an undergraduate to defending migrants' rights, including founding the only campus organization dedicated to providing legal assistance to asylum seekers and

undocumented immigrants. Laura currently works in Mexico City, tracking migrant kidnappings and conducting independent research on the challenges faced by deported Mexican families. At Oxford, Laura will pursue the M.Sc. in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies and the M.Sc. in Comparative Social Policy.

DISTRICT 3

New York - South

Serena Alagappan, Manhattan, is a senior at Princeton majoring in Comparative Literature. Serena's writing and research explores the ways in which identity and modes of expression shape art. Serena is the president of the Princeton University American Sign Language Club and the Editor-in-Chief at the *Nassau Weekly*. A published author of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, Serena has also interned at *O, The Oprah Magazine*, and the Religion and Resettlement Project where she interviewed and preserved stories of Holocaust survivors. At Oxford, Serena will pursue an M.Sc. in Social Anthropology and an M.St. in World Literatures in English.

New York - South

Luke G. Melas-Kyriazi, Manhattan, is a Harvard senior pursuing a B.A. in Mathematics and a M.S. in Computer Science. Luke's research agenda on machine learning has included work analyzing demographic diversity and blood laboratory data in order to improve clinical decision-making. As treasurer of the Harvard Student Agencies, the largest student-run company in the world, Luke manages a \$1.2 million reserve fund to support educational and business opportunities for students. He also organizes hackathons for computer science undergraduates across the U.S. and Canada. At Oxford, Luke will do the D.Phil. in Computer Science.

DISTRICT 4

Pennsylvania

Stephen G. Damianos, North Hampton, New Hampshire, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in May. A political science major, he maintained a perfect grade point average and received the University's James Howard Weiss Memorial Award for distinguished

academic achievement and significant leadership. Stephen's academic research and volunteer work focuses on refugee mobility and survival sex work among refugees. He founded multiple refugee-focused initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania, including a successful effort to establish new employment pipelines for refugees at the university. A Truman Scholar, Stephen is now completing an M.Phil. in Development Studies at Cambridge and will pursue the D.Phil. in Migration Studies at Oxford.

Pennsylvania

Olivia J. McGinnis, Phoenixville, is a senior at Harvard University where she is pursuing an A.B. in Neuroscience. Olivia's undergraduate thesis analyzes zebrafish escape response to gain insight into their internal models of their environment and how such models might be biologically instantiated to bias escapes. Olivia's research complements her studies in understanding how the human brain works as a complex set of circuits to achieve behavior. Olivia is the Editor-in-Chief and Head of Design of *Ecdysis*, a student-run journal dedicated to building bridges between the sciences and the humanities. She is also a committed volunteer at Alzheimer's Buddies, which supports individuals grappling with advanced Alzheimer's disease. At Oxford, Olivia will pursue an M.Sc. in Experimental Psychology and an M.Sc. in Psychiatry.

DISTRICT 5

Maryland/DC

Daine A. Van de Wall, Ellicott City, is a senior at the United States Military Academy, majoring in Systems and Decision Sciences. Daine is the Brigade Commander, the highest-ranking cadet position at West Point. In this capacity, Daine is responsible for the military, physical, and character development of 4,452 cadets. Daine studies decision making in complex environments, particularly in the context of foreign policy. He is certified in *Lean Six Sigma* and throughout his time at West Point, has received numerous awards for excellence across academics, athletics, and leadership. At Oxford, Daine will pursue an M.Phil. in International Relations.

Maryland/DC

Eileen Z. Ying, Clarksville, is a senior at the University of Virginia where she has maintained a perfect grade point average while completing double majors in Politics and English Modern Literature and Culture. Her academic research examines Asian diasporic speculative fiction and its intersections with queerness and biopolitics. Eileen is an accomplished student leader who chairs an umbrella organization facilitating collaborations among low-income, non-white, and queer groups on campus. She also founded and serves as editor-in-chief of the Virginia Review of Politics. This spring, Eileen designed and taught one of the nation's only undergraduate courses on Asian American activism. At Oxford, Eileen will do a M.St. in World Literatures in English and a M.St. in Women's Studies.

DISTRICT 6

Georgia

Gabriella M. Deich, Savannah, is a senior at Duke University majoring in Biological and Artificial Intelligence. Gabriella designed her major to interrogate threats to biosecurity, leveraging computational biology, machine learning, and policy studies to research the nature of infections and their potential impact on public health. Gabriella's early and personal encounter with loss and grief motivated her to pursue a career in biosecurity to save lives by preventing epidemic outbreaks and improving disease detection. Prior to college, Gabriella pursued self-directed learning before securing a full merit scholarship to Duke. At Oxford, Gabriella will pursue an M.Sc. in Global Governance and Diplomacy and an M.Sc. in Computer Science.

Georgia

Ananya A. Malhotra, Atlanta, is a senior at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. Her research examines transnational legacies of intergenerational trauma typically excluded from nuclear history, and her senior thesis uses oral histories to examine the consequences of nuclear weapons testing in the American southwest. While interning at United Nations Women, Ananya created a program for youth gender equality activists. Ananya plans a career as a human rights lawyer and an academic. At Oxford, Ananya will do the M.Phil. in International Relations.

DISTRICT 7

Alabama

Sarena Martinez, Birmingham, graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2016 summa cum laude in Psychology, after receiving an A.A. degree from Bard College at Simon's Rock. She is now Assistant to the Director of Innovation and Economic Opportunity for the City of Birmingham. She was previously a Venture for America Fellow for two years, focused on promoting entrepreneurship for economic opportunity. While at Vanderbilt, she launched a chapter of Active Minds, a student-driven, national mental health organization. Serena plans to do the M.Sc. in Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation at Oxford.

Mississippi

Arielle C.T. Hudson, Dundee, is a senior at the University of Mississippi majoring in English. Arielle desires to create sustainable and equitable policies in Mississippi through a career in policy and civil rights. Arielle is the president of the Black Student Union, and as a senator in the Associated Student Body Government, co-authored a resolution to remove a Confederate statute from campus. Through the Marks Education Project, Arielle tutors students across the Mississippi Delta. In 2019, Arielle was crowned USA National Miss Hospitality. At Oxford, Arielle will pursue an M.Sc. in Education and an M.Sc. in Comparative Social Policy.

DISTRICT 8

Texas

Lauren D. Spohn, College Station, is a senior at Harvard where she concentrates in English, with a deep interest in intellectual history. Home-schooled in an Air Force family, she has a perfect academic record across literature, history, philosophy, government, languages, and economics. Lauren founded a mentorship program for freshman in the humanities, is editor-in-chief of the *Student Journal of Christian Thought and Expression*, has won many top prizes in English and wrote biweekly columns in the *Harvard Crimson*. She is also captain of the women's triathlon team, won a varsity letter in soccer, and was also a member of the Harvard women's track and field and cross country teams. She plans to do masters' degrees in Intellectual History and in English at Oxford.

Texas

Liana Wang, Houston, is a senior at Yale University where she majors in Economics. Liana's research examines shifting patterns of inequality in the United States, and the impact of the tax and welfare system in addressing inequality. Liana serves as the first undergraduate co-director of the Lowenstein Human Rights Project, a human rights law clinic at Yale, and has worked with asylum-seekers. A volunteer tax preparer, Liana assists low-income residents in New Haven in filing tax returns. She is also an award-winning columnist at the *Yale Daily News*. Liana is the first in her family to attend college and plans a career as an economist focusing on labor, public finance, and social policy. At Oxford, Liana will pursue the M.Phil. in Politics.

DISTRICT 9

Indiana

Prathm Juneja, Edison, New Jersey, is a senior at the University of Notre Dame, graduating in December with majors in Political Science and Computer Science. Through his undergraduate studies and his work, Prathm grapples with how technology and policy can work together to make government more equitable. Prathm's undergraduate thesis statistically analyzes the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program and its impact on voter turnout rates. Prathm worked as a Legislative and Innovation Intern for the South Bend Mayor's Office. Prathm is a Truman Scholar. At Oxford, Prathm will pursue an M.Sc. in Social Data Science, as well as the Master of Public Policy.

Virginia

Kritika Singh, McLean, is a senior at Northeastern University where she majors in bioengineering. She is a Truman Scholar and a Goldwater Scholar. Kritika is founder and CEO of Malaria Free World, a non-profit focused on malaria awareness and education, and she has worked in research labs at Massachusetts General Hospital in epigenetics and at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. She has published in her field, has a patent, and founded the Northeastern University Global Health Initiative. Kritika aspires to a career as physician-scientist-advocate focused on emerging diseases. At Oxford, she plans to do a D.Phil. in biomedical sciences at the intersection of chemical biology and bioengineering.

DISTRICT 10

Ohio

Vilhelm (Billy) L. Andersen Woltz, Logan, is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he is pursuing double majors in Physics and in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Billy's research focuses on the challenge of building larger quantum processors. He is an advocate for expanding access to science and technology education and founded a computer science camp for students at his former high school in rural southeastern Ohio. An Eagle Scout, Billy is also captain of the varsity track and field and cross-country team at MIT. He plans a career that will allow him to apply his technical knowledge of quantum computing in advising policymakers on science and technology issues. At Oxford, Billy will do the B.A. in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.

Ohio

Henry Wu, Columbus, is a senior at The Ohio State University majoring in Philosophy and Political Science. Henry has written and published extensively on human trafficking and forced migration, bringing together theory and practice to propose important policy reforms. Henry received the William Jennings Bryan Prize for best paper in Political Theory from the Department of Political Science at Ohio State. Henry serves as the co-founder and co-president of Enlighten: Anti-Trafficking, a nonprofit organization that supports individuals vulnerable to trafficking through outreach and education events. The son of immigrants, Henry traces his passion for migrants to his family's own journey to the United States from China. At Oxford, Henry will pursue an M.Sc. in Migration Studies and an M.Sc. in Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation.

DISTRICT 11

Michigan

Anna C. Esenther, Ashland, Massachusetts, graduated from Michigan State University in May with degrees in Economics, Education, Statistics, Psychology, and History. Anna completed Honors Theses in Psychology and History. Anna is currently a first-grade teacher at Inca Elementary in Buckeye, Arizona. Anna's work and research at the intersection of economics and education provides a powerful toolkit to improve education on a broad scale. Anna is also

passionate about challenging the field of economics to become more inclusive, changing the perception of what economics is and who economists are. At Oxford, Anna will pursue an M.Phil. in Economics.

Wisconsin

Claire E. Halloran, Wauwatosa, is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she majors in Materials Science and Engineering. Claire's research focuses on developing engineering technologies to mitigate climate change, including improving solar-to-fuel conversion reactors and creating low-cost batteries. Claire founded the MIT Climate Action Team, a campus group that organizes in support of climate change mitigation policies. She has also served as a peer educator on issues of sexual violence, cultural values, and healthy relationships. Claire plans to pursue a career as a federal policymaker focused on using technology to accomplish rapid and just decarbonization in the United States. At Oxford, Claire will do the M.Sc. in Energy Systems and the Master of Public Policy.

DISTRICT 12

Missouri

Rossella I. Gabriele, Chesterfield, graduated from Washington and Lee University in May with degrees in Physics and Global Politics. Rossella currently interns for Senator Elizabeth Warren's campaign for President of the United States. Rossella conducts her research, and applies her work, at the intersection of public policy and science where she finds "heart-racing innovation and efficiency." Rossella has interned at the Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics as well as the United States State Department and the Office of Senator Mark Warner. Rossella is a recipient of the Johnson Scholarship, Washington and Lee's most prestigious merit-based scholarship. At Oxford, Rossella will pursue an M.Sc. in Social Data Science and an M.Sc. in Global Governance and Diplomacy.

Tennessee

Hera Jay Brown, Williamsburg, Virginia, graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2019 summa cum laude in a major she designed in Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Migration Studies. She is now a Fulbright-Schuman Fellow to the European Union, and before that was a Presidential Associate at The American University in Cairo. While at the University of Tennessee, she was Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Undergraduate Research,

and led efforts to repel a neo-Nazi hate group that targeted the University, announced a rally, and advocated the extermination of queer students. She also authored a white paper on the state of LGBTQ+ affairs globally for the Biden Foundation. Hera is the first transgender woman to win a Rhodes Scholarship. She plans to do a D.Phil. in Migration Studies at Oxford.

DISTRICT 13

Colorado

Jacob D. Reagan, Boulder, is a senior at the University of Colorado majoring in Political Science and Spanish Literature and Culture. As Student Body President, Jake averted a 93% reduction in the student government budget by negotiating a restructuring of the organization's financial and decision-making processes. Jake works as a Spanish language interpreter for the Emergency Family Assistance Association to support monolingual Spanish-speaking clients access critical services and supports. A Truman Scholar, Jake is also an accomplished jazz pianist. At Oxford, Jake will pursue an M.Phil. in International Relations.

Nebraska

Neil B. Band, Omaha, is a Harvard senior majoring in Computer Science. Neil's academic research in quantitative biomedicine applies economics frameworks and artificial intelligence techniques to improve drug discovery and organ donation. He is a campus leader on issues of technology and entrepreneurship, and serves as the founding technology chair of the Harvard Undergraduate Blockchain Group. He is the co-founder of multiple social ventures, including the development of a cryptocurrency that aims to improve payment security in the world's largest Syrian refugee camp. Neil is also an accomplished dancer with Harvard College Bhangra and has choreographed original dances for competition performance. At Oxford, Neil will do a M.Sc. in Computer Science and a M.Sc. in Pharmacology.

DISTRICT 14

Alaska

Cyrus V. Reza, Fairbanks, is a senior at Stanford University, pursuing a B.A. in Classics, B.S. in Mathematics, and an M.A. in International Policy. His research focuses on the role that Kurdish nationalism plays in Iranian regional security interests. At Oxford, Cyrus will pursue

a D.Phil. in Oriental Studies where he will research the role that the Soviet-backed Republic of Mahabad played in the foundation of Kurdish ambitions for self-governance. He plans to enter the military after his graduate studies.

Oregon

Christina K. Pao, Portland, is a Yale senior completing a double major in Political Science and Classics, as well as a M.A. in Political Science. Her academic research focuses on concepts of citizenship and asylum as they relate to women, immigrants, and slaves. Christina has been deeply involved in campus organizations related to sexual assault and survivorship and currently serves as a member of the Title IX Advisory Committee at Yale. A Truman Scholar, Christina also works as chief of staff for a local official in New Haven. At Oxford, Christina will do the M.Phil. in Sociology and Demography.

DISTRICT 15

California - North

Camila Pelsinger, San Francisco, is a senior at Brown University where she is majoring in International Relations. Camila has maintained a perfect grade point average while also completing a concentration in Cognitive Neuroscience. Camila's research takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining violence and focuses on women in New Zealand and the United States who have created restorative justice programs to address gender-based violence in their communities. She has served as Vice President of the University Council of Students and is a leader on sexual violence prevention issues on campus, including as a coordinator with the Brown University Sexual Assault Peer Education program. At Oxford, Camila will do a M.Sc. in Criminology and Criminal Justice and the Master of Public Policy.

California - North

Megan A. Yamoah, Davis, is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology majoring in Physics and Electrical Engineering. Megan's research expertise is in quantum computing for which she has received competitive funding awards. She serves on the executive board of MIT Undergraduate Women in Physics and as the President of the MIT Society of Physics Students. The daughter of immigrants, she is passionate about connecting entrepreneurs from around the world with the resources required to scale their ideas to impact. At Oxford, Megan

will pursue an M.Phil. in Economics to study how innovation can positively affect emerging economies.

DISTRICT 16

California - South

Leanne K.M. Ho, Orange, is a senior at the University of Oklahoma majoring in English Literary and Cultural Studies. Leanne's academic research focuses on the impact of storytelling on social distancing from LGBTQ people. They are a campus leader in incorporating transgender, intersex, and non-binary people into conversations about reproductive health and have advocated for increased resources and opportunities for transgender and gender non-conforming students. Leanne led a successful effort to address gendered campus awards at the University of Oklahoma, and was recently named the first-ever Big Non-Binary Person on Campus. At Oxford, Leanne will do a M.Sc. in Medical Anthropology and a M.Sc. in Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation.

California - South

Francisca Vasconcelos, San Diego, is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology majoring in Physics and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Francisca researches and publishes at the intersection of computer science, quantum physics, and quantum information theory. Her creative and groundbreaking research endeavors to improve computer vision by mimicking the human visual system through pre-processing visual inputs. Francisca serves as Technology Chair of the MIT Society of Women Engineers and is a member of the MIT Women's Club Soccer. At Oxford, Francisca will pursue an M.Sc. in Mathematics and Foundation of Computer Science and an M.Sc. in Statistical Science.

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.