

## Chairman's Corner

It has been a challenging year for the Warren Cherry Scholarship Fund during the 2020 pandemic. However, there were several wonderful experiences for WCSF throughout the year.

A bright spot was receiving a very special \$200,000 gift from former Lincoln School teacher Terry Simmons and her husband. We will be forever grateful for all the good this money will provide for future generations of Evanston families.

On June 28 WCSF honored and celebrated the 2020 class of Cherry scholars at a drive-through parade in the Evanston Township High School parking lot. It was a spectacular day for the scholars, who were joined by their families, friends and the community at the fun-filled event. The Fund awarded \$80,000 to this year's scholars. Thanks to the committee who planned this outstanding celebration: ShaRita Alexander, Joanie Ducayet, Tania Margonza, Bethany Mullins and Robert Reece.

The 27th annual Golf Outing was held on September 14 at the Wilmette Golf Club. With 100 golfers, it was another highlight for WCSF with special thanks to the Golf co-chairs Joe Keitel and Bob Reece and the entire committee for their determination and commitment to have a successful and fun day of golf. And it was! Also, many thanks to Bill Bridges, Jeff Doman, Pat Hughes Sr., John Powell and Bart Rocca,

Congratulations to Fred Hunter, former WCSF board member, who received a doctorate in education. We are so appreciative of Fred's continued support of our mission.

As always, my heartfelt thanks to everyone on our outstanding board and to our wonderful community of friends

Please mark your calendar for the 28th annual Golf Outing on Monday, June 28, 2021.

In closing, even during these challenging times the Warren Cherry Scholarship Fund continues to reach out to young men and women so their dreams may become a reality. Thank you in advance for your support. Every contribution makes a difference..



Patty Cherry Reece



*With the annual awards dinner canceled due to the pandemic, the Warren Cherry Scholarship Fund celebrated this year's scholars with an outdoor drive-through event in June. See pages 2 and 3 for more about the scholars.*

## 21 scholars honored

The friends and supporters of the Warren Cherry Scholarship Fund came together for a drive-through extravaganza on June 28, 2020, to celebrate this year's group of 21 scholars.

With the coronavirus pandemic halting plans for the annual Awards Dinner, the WCSF board sought a way to honor this

year's winners while maintaining safety. The solution: Cherry supporters, families and community members assembled in their cars in the parking lot at Evanston Township High School, where they cheered, honked horns and rang bells as the scholars drove through one by one.

*—Continued on back page*

## Celebrating our own

For many, support for the Warren Cherry Scholarship Fund is a family affair.

Take Catherine and Bart Rocca, for example. The couple has lived in Evanston for more than 40 years — "long enough to consider ourselves to be true Evanstonians," in Bart's words. During that time they both have volunteered for the Cherry Fund time and again.

As a mother who saw their four children attend Evanston Township High School, Catherine devoted many hours on behalf of organizations such as the Evanston YMCA, the Justin Wynn Fund and the Evanston Art Center. "When I had the opportunity to become involved with the Warren Cherry Schol-

*—Continued on page 7*

# Meet the 2020



*Alexandria  
Bolling*



*Alexandra  
Cesar*



*Lauren Janelle  
Davis*



*Wendy Becerra  
Delgado*



*Jeron  
Dorsey*



*Michelle Paola  
Hernandez*



*Ryan Nicole  
Johnson*



*Leila  
Lemieux-Jordan*



*Jermey  
McCray*



*Jasmine  
Medina*

**Alexandria Bolling** is a sophomore at Howard University and is majoring in English with a minor in secondary education. She would like to become an educator and conduct research into what aspects of teaching have positive impacts on students and lead them to be successful.

**Alexandra Cesar** is attending the University of Illinois Chicago and plans to study sociology. She is passionate about helping first-generation students gain access to resources and support so they can be successful in college. She hopes to have a career at a university in academic advising, admissions or student engagement.

**Lauren Janelle Davis** is studying early childhood education at Spelman College in Atlanta. She plans to get graduate degrees in secondary social sciences and education policy, as well as a master of divinity degree. She hopes to reform the education system so all students can get the resources they need to succeed.

**Wendy Becerra Delgado** attends Lake Forest College where she is studying psychology. Her goal is to serve as an advocate and mentor for children struggling with mental illnesses, as well as social and behavioral issues. She is passionate about community service, participates in soup kitchens and fundraising, and teaches Sunday school at St. Nicholas Church.

**Jeron Dorsey** is currently in graduate school at Northwestern University studying sports administration. He would like to use his degree to help youth in the Evanston community bridge the gap between athletics and academics. He is a leader with a passion for mentoring young people.



*Maria  
Guadalupe  
Moreno Mendoza*

**Michelle Paola Hernandez** is a freshman at Marquette University where she hopes to study neonatal nursing and work with at-risk newborns. She believes that there need to be more LatinX healthcare pro-

fessionals who can proudly represent their culture and careers. Michelle would like to work with LatinX children and be a mentor and role model.

**Ryan Nicole Johnson** is attending DePaul University, majoring in education/psychology and minoring in theater studies. She hopes to have a teaching career and help students build life-long relationships with their teachers and peers through the arts. She is an active leader in the DePaul Community Service Association and is the public relations co-chair of the DePaul Black Student Union.

**Leila Lemieux-Jordan** is studying early childhood education at Oakton Community College. She plans to pursue a graduate degree in special education and hopes to help children overcome developmental challenges in the earliest stages of development.

**Jermey McCray** is studying youth development and public administration at Oakton Community College. As a senior outreach director for the City of Evanston, he touches the lives of hundreds of young people each day. He is a natural mentor and leader and has a goal of opening a 24-hour community center to offer help and support to young people in the community.

**Jasmine Medina** is a junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign studying Spanish and working toward a B.A. in teaching foreign languages. She wants to become a Spanish teacher and share her passion for the Spanish language. Jasmine is a member of the Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society and is the academic chair and community service chair for the Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority.

**Maria Guadalupe Moreno Mendoza** attends the University of Illinois Chicago and is studying urban education. She would like to become an elementary teacher and provide students with what they lack in terms of academic support and encouragement. She is active in the Evanston community as a St. Nicholas catechist teacher and works with first-generation students through Evanston Scholars.

# Cherry Scholars

**Nathan M. Norman** attends Northeastern University and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in political science. He works with at-risk youth in Evanston, helping them to find employment opportunities. He is in the Graduate of Leadership Evanston program and is a board member of the Black Male Experience Panel. He is a role model for hundreds of young people.

**Chassa Jenin Alice Pratt** attends the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and plans to study social work. She would like to attend graduate school and work toward a master of social work degree. She wants to work with children through the child welfare system and guide them out of potentially dangerous situations.

**Jennifer Rodriguez-Gomez** attends the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and would like to become a bilingual teacher and foster cross-cultural collaborative learning. Her many experiences with children and her time studying abroad in Spain have inspired her love of teaching.

**Jaydlyn Trinity Rogers** attends the University of Illinois Chicago where she is majoring in English with a double minor in education and creative writing. She hopes to earn her teaching certification and attend graduate school at the University of Houston for African American studies. Jaydlyn plans to teach and expand the Help a Brother, Help a Sister program that she founded into schools in Evanston and Texas.

**Jocelyn Segura** is a junior at the University of Illinois Chicago where she is majoring in human development and learning. Her focus is in early childhood education and she plans to use racial literacy to teach children about race and social justice from an early age. She also plans to work with youth in Evanston for social justice.

**Litzy Segura** is attending the University of Illinois Chicago where she will study elementary education. She is interested in becoming a teacher in Evanston's two-way immersion (TWI) program, helping students learn English while also helping them develop their identities.

**Caitlin Strickland** is enrolled at Elon University where she is studying history with a minor in secondary education. She has just completed a study-abroad program where she had the opportunity to teach high school students in New Zealand. She is part of Elon Teaching Fellows, a special program for the top 25 education majors in her class, and would like to return to teach in or around Evanston.

**Mauranne Elodie Vernier** attends Spelman College and is planning to major in psychology. Her dream is to become a superintendent of a high school or a dean of diversity and inclusion at the college level. She is active in her community helping other students prepare for success in college.

**Alanna Kashon DuCre Williams** is pursuing a master's in education curriculum and instruction from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. With a passion for social justice and equity, her goal is to work as an elementary school teacher and support her students. She is co-founder and executive board member of Students Against Sexual Assault and is an active community organizer.

**Asya Rae Wright** is a freshman at Alabama A&M University planning to major in elementary education and minor in psychology. She plans to teach in Evanston or another diverse community. She has been active in Evanston as a Family Focus volunteer and at ETHS as a Student Council member and HUB greeter.



*Nathan Norman*



*Chassa Jenin Alice Pratt*



*Jennifer Rodriguez-Gomez*



*Jaydlyn Trinity Rogers*



*Jocelyn Segura*



*Litzy Segura*



*Caitlin Strickland*



*Mauranne Elodie Vernier*



*Alanna Kashon DuCre Williams*



*Asya Rae Wright*

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Contributors  
11/1/2019-10/31/2020

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# Rescheduled golf outing still a success

Since nothing is “as usual” in 2020, the 27th annual Warren Cherry Scholarship Fund golf outing was rescheduled from its normal date in June to September 14. But the Cherry luck continued and once again the event took place without a hint of rain at the Wilmette Golf Club. One hundred golfers turned out for a fun-filled day and raised \$42,000 to support the WCSF mission.

Members of the golf committee included Bill Bridges, Jeff Doman, Lynn

Hammell, Fred Hunter, Pat Hughes Sr., Judy Iacuzzi, Timon Jandora, Rose Johnson, Tony Keitel, Marcy Nicholson, John Powell, Kennedy Reid, Bart Rocca, Oliver Ruff, Pam Schanette, Gerri Sizemore, Mimi Spivack and Courtney Wolley. The committee co-chairs were Joe Keitel and Robert Reece.

The day’s winners were:

Men’s longest drive — Silas Hoxie

Women’s longest drive — Judy Provost

Closest to the pin — Marty Fenn

Longest putt — Kevin McGovern

1st place gross — David Porter, Kevin Kirkland, Tom Bush, William Seward

2nd place gross — Tony Keitel, Edward Maass, Matthew Schroeder, Matias Orbea

1st place net — Bill Debes, Kevin McGovern, Jim McIntosh, Dave Morrison

2nd place net — Omar Brown, Dan Chow, Bryant Wallace

Peoria — Bill Bridges, Richard Barnes, Dick MacHarg, Winslow Soule



*Sandy Vitantonio, Robert Reece, Denny Cummings*



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*Joe Keitel*

**Don’t miss next year’s golf outing, to be held Monday, June 28, 2021 at the Wilmette Golf Club.**

# Cherry Scholar shares his story

Cherry Scholarship Family,

My decision to return to college after a hiatus of more than 20 years came with some real trepidations. There were the tasks of getting old school transcripts, finding financial assistance, obtaining letters of recommendation, and most importantly, seeking out the moral/emotional support from my community to tackle such a big goal. This was not a journey I wanted to go on alone, again! This time had to be different, because I did not have members of my inner circle to lean on. But motivating me was the thought that accomplishing this would make me the first college graduate in my family.

In times like this, you must lean on people who believe in you, even when you do not always believe in yourself. Members of the Cherry Scholarship Fund offered me that much-needed support. They held my hand through the process, motivating me with words of encouragement and providing me with needed book fees. They even helped with my overall school debt.

My journey started by attending Oakton Community College after not being in a classroom in more than two decades. I did not always know when and how to pay my fees, but Bob Reece, Bill Speth, Steve Strauss and a host of other committee members helped me.

This support continued while I attended Oakton Community College, Northeastern Illinois University and all the way through to Northwestern University, where I obtained a master's degree. I am currently a physical education/health education teacher, and I do not feel like I am quite finished with my education journey.

Now I look at my degrees hanging on the walls of my house and I feel so humble. I know other young African American men are watching, some even following in my footsteps, so I try my best to lead by example.

The Cherry Scholarship was a needed boost for me. I am honored to have continued support from Cherry committee members, who are always just a phone call away. This journey has taught me the value of giving back to young people, encouraging them and supporting their dreams. I hope to be a tool for those who want to continue their education directly after high school or decades later, as in my case. The Cherry Scholarship Fund taught me that it is never too late to accomplish my goals and be an example for those in my community.

—Alando 'Spud' Massie

## Celebrating

*Continued from first page*

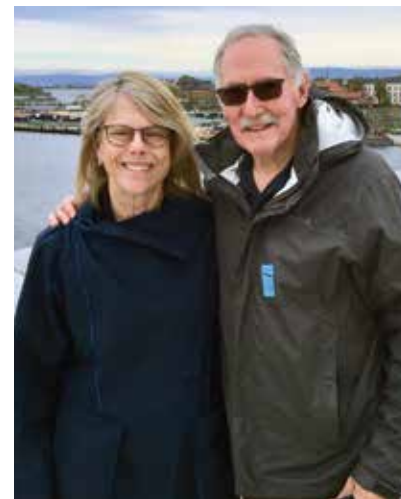
arship Fund, it was a perfect fit for my interest in education and my belief that providing a helping hand could support the goals of others who want to work with the youth of our community," she said. "Most impressive is that the Fund is completely managed by volunteers."

Bart said he met Cherry Fund President Robert Reece when they both were coaching middle schoolers in the Fellowship of African American Men (FAAM) program. It didn't take long for the famously persuasive Reece to bring Bart into the fold. "I have been involved with the Cherry Fund for about 10 to 12 years. My main involvement is as a member of the golf committee, which is the major source of funding for the fund," he said. "The golf event is a very fun activity, and the number of golfers has grown steadily through the years."

Both Roccas value their experience with the Cherry Fund. "It is in several ways a truly unique organization," Bart said. Because it is able to call upon so many volunteers, "every dollar we raise goes directly to fund the scholarships. It has a very rigorous process for identifying and screening the scholarship applicants."

Catherine has seen that process up close. "I have had the pleasure of serving as a host during the scholarship interviews, which has been a wonderful opportunity to learn about a candidate's life and goals," she said. "The gratitude for the Cherry Fund expressed by these men and women and their hopes for their own futures are both heartwarming and humbling to hear."

She added, "The Warren Cherry Fund provides financial and emotional support to the candidates as they build careers in education and youth development, which in turn makes our community stronger. It is



*Catherine and Bart Rocca*

a win-win for all."

Dr. Everett McKissic, for his part, basically married into the Cherry "family." His wife, Rita, was a staunch supporter of the Fund for many years, on the golf committee and as co-chair of the book dramatization fundraiser. She passed away in 2017 and is sorely missed.

"I supported her efforts. She thought the mission of the War-



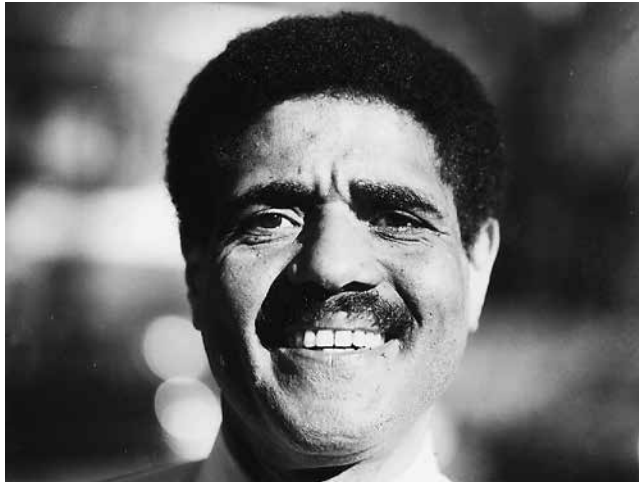
*Dr. Everett McKissic*

ren Cherry Scholarship Fund was an admirable one," Dr. McKissic said of his wife. "I vowed to honor her legacy by supporting their activities. I've been around the 'family' for a long time." That includes years of participating in the annual golf outing with his "golf buddy," Robert Reece.

Dr. McKissic still lives in the Skokie house where he and Rita raised two daughters, who graduated from ETHS. "My wife always had a desire to work in the community, and especially on projects that nurtured kids in some way," he said. "She was on the board of Family Focus, and Cherry was the second venture she got involved with. It fit with her desire to give back to the community, especially the young adults."

Neither the Roccas nor Dr. McKissic expect their support of the Cherry Fund to diminish. "The McKissic family is all in," Dr. McKissic said. "As long as they continue their efforts, we will continue to support them."

The mission of the Warren W. “Billy” Cherry Scholarship Fund, named in memory of a much-loved and respected Evanston educator, is to perpetuate his total acceptance of all people, his commitment to the highest standards of educational excellence,



and his energetic dedication to enriching the children and institutions of Evanston. For more information, visit [cherryscholarship.org](http://cherryscholarship.org).

The Cherry Scholarship Fund is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Contributions can be made online at the Cherry website ([cherryscholarship.org](http://cherryscholarship.org)) and can also be mailed to:

Warren W. “Billy” Cherry Scholarship Fund  
 P.O. Box 0944  
 Evanston, IL 60204-0944

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Scholar Lauren Davis received a special award in memory of Pat Doyle.

## Scholars honored

*Continued from first page*

Special awards were given in honor of two long-time members of the Cherry “family” who had passed away. Scholar Lauren Davis received the award in memory of Pat Doyle, a teacher at Lincoln School who began her career there in the mid-1970s and worked closely with Warren Cherry when he was principal. She retired in 1997 and moved to California, but continued to show love and support for WCSF, including a generous bequest to help the Cherry Fund continue its work. A scholarship in her name will be awarded each year.

An award in honor of Nathalie Nicholson went to her friend, 2020 scholar Caitlin Strickland. A student-athlete who knew firsthand the challenge of struggling with mental illness, Nathalie was a beloved member of the Cherry “family” who epitomized joy, kindness and empathy. Caitlin characterized her as “a strong woman, an independent woman, and unapologetically herself.”

The festive event was capped off with ice cream for everyone, which was most welcome on that hot afternoon.

Thanks to the awards parade committee — ShaRita Alexander, Joanie Ducayet, Tania Margonza, Bethany Mullins and Robert Reece — for making this such a memorable event in these uncertain times.

## Dates to Remember

The Cherry Scholarship Fund is looking for scholars—students who may have struggled in high school, but who love kids and are dedicated to working with young people. Please help by encouraging deserving individuals from the Evanston community, particularly those who will graduate from Evanston Township High School in 2021, to apply for a Cherry Scholarship. Applications are available online at [cherryscholarship.org](http://cherryscholarship.org). And please note that scholarships are now available for part-time and graduate students.

#### 2020-2021 dates:

Applications available – Dec. 1, 2020  
 Application Deadline – TBD  
 Interviews – TBD  
 Award Dinner – TBD  
 Golf Tournament – June 28, 2021