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6 May 2019

Alan E. Mayers, Ph.D.  
Apartment 423  
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Dear Alan,

I hope this finds you well as the last week of spring classes wraps up at the University.

Enclosed please find statements from five of the students who received 2018-19 awards from the Class of 1954 Senior Thesis Endowment Fund. Mindful of your request last year, I've already asked each of them if you could include their names in your PAW "Class Notes" column, and all of them agreed. (I had to explain to them what "Class Notes" are; it was likely the first exposure most of them have had to the idea of a regular column in the alumni magazine ...!)

If you have any questions, please let me know. I will cross my fingers that we have the opportunity to meet in person at some point. In the meantime, our thanks to '54 for supporting Princeton student's research.

Sincerely,



# Class of 1954 Senior Thesis Endowment Fund

## 2018-19 Recipients

Lila Abreu '19  
Francesca Billington '19  
Elise Freeman '19  
Noshin Khan '19  
Annika Lee '19  
Jacob Schwartz '19

May 2019

## Messages from Recipients Lila

### Abreu '19

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Thank you very much for the generous donation. I am a Psychology major and doing certificates in Computer Science and Cognitive Science. For the last two years, I've been looking into the dynamics of race and romantic attraction for my junior papers and senior thesis. That is, examining whether or not people exhibit racial preferences in dating and attraction, and hypothesizing about why those preferences might arise. I became interested in the topic via a several months-long debate among my freshman year friend circle: I was surprised when some friends of mine ranked the races they were most attracted to, and it spurred a long discussion about the ethics of having such a ranking system, and about whether those preferences are innate or conditioned in some way.

Wanting to study this question helped motivate my decision to study Psychology, and I tackled doing a literature review on the topic for my Fall Junior Paper. Psychology Spring JPs are project proposals, so, for my Spring JP, I proposed a study that I ultimately built on for my senior thesis. This year, I've spent much of the year coding my survey and gathering data. I recruited participants through a platform that Amazon runs called Mechanical Turk. People around the country can sign up with Mechanical Turk to take studies, and researchers pay them based on the length of time they expect participants will spend completing the study. Amazon also charges a fee per participants gathered.

Your contribution has allowed me to build a database of survey results from hundreds of participants, spanning five different ethnicities. Without your incredible contribution, I would not have been able to gather data on nearly as many respondents, and my results would lack power. I've been excited about this research question since my freshman year, and I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to explore this topic. Thank you for making it possible!

### Francesca Billington '19

Thank you for your generous donation and for supporting me in my senior thesis research. For my anthropology thesis, which includes elements of journalistic reporting, I examined refugee integration efforts in Toronto and Stockholm. I spent about two months last summer interviewing NGO founders, journalists, researchers, and newcomers in both cities to better understand how grassroots efforts improve "integration," and what this term and category means to different people and communities.

I travelled to both Toronto and Stockholm -- I was in Toronto for about four weeks and in Stockholm for a bit over five. I chose these cities because of some background I had with refugee resettlement in Canada (from a migration reporting class with Professor Deborah Amos. We visited Winnipeg in October 2017 to report) and a general curiosity about how researchers and journalists talk about integration "models." I wanted to explore somewhere new in Canada, so I chose Toronto, where about half the population is foreign-born. Both Sweden and Canada are often praised for having welcoming, open immigration and refugee policies. But there is also talk of integration in Sweden slightly failing -- I wanted to know whether integration in both cities was an issue the state was dedicated to. What I didn't expect to find in Canada were the responses to family separation at the US/Mexico border;

many Canadians wanted PM Trudeau to scrap a treaty that bars asylum seekers from making a claim in Canada if they've already tried in the US. And in Sweden, I had not anticipated the significance of the then-upcoming national elections, and the rise of the far right party. I slowly found myself turning away from the big policy issues and questions (which still frame my research questions), however, and focusing on the grassroots efforts to improve integration in both cities.

Professor Amos connected me to a fixer based in Stockholm, who was able to offer me a few sources. I connected with many NGO/ startups that created apps and digital platforms to connect newcomers and Swedes -- all working out of the same office space. In the Stockholm portion of my thesis, I focus a lot on these digital spaces. In Toronto, I also used a few of my professor's connections (mostly to journalists). One immigration reporter at the Toronto Star suggested I attend a rally, where I reported one morning. I found non-profits and refugee housing settlements online and through news articles. In general, reading local news was a big asset to helping me find sources -- both the journalists and the people they interviewed became informants for this project. Academics based in Toronto and Stockholm also provided me with articles and research on the topic, so that I could approach these questions from a political and anthropological standpoint, too.

I found that the research and reporting really built on itself. By my last interview, with an economist based at a think tank in Stockholm, I found myself following his research with much more ease than I had just two months before. Engaging with people who have worked on these issues for decades, and applying a contemporary, forward-looking lens, was an experience I did not think I was equipped to do.

This research greatly deepened my knowledge of these complex issues, and I am so grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

### **Elise Freeman '19**

Thank you so much for your generous contribution to my thesis research! I am a French concentrator writing my thesis on the representation of climate change in print advertisements and how this is subversive of certain aspects of traditional advertising. Since I am using French theory to support my argument, I wanted to study the very advertisements that inspired the philosophers I am pulling from. Your donation allowed me to go to Paris for 5 days and study archives of French advertisements in museums and libraries around the city. I was able to solidify print as my advertising medium of choice from this, and gain better insight into the thought processes behind the theories I would be pulling from. Thank you for this vital contribution to my thesis.

### **Annika Lee '19**

Thank you so much, Class of '54! For my art historical thesis, I analyzed the quilting tradition in Gee's Bend, Alabama and the pictorial weavings by Bauhaus artist Anni Albers. A friend of mine had seen a show at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco that showcased the quilts. He sent me some pictures and I was immediately hooked by the story: quilting lineages sustained by women living in an isolated peninsula in Alabama. I also was amazed by the visually stunning quilts. With your generous donation, I traveled to both Alabama and London. The trip to Alabama really exposed me to a lot of the more controversial parts of the Gee's Bend quilt phenomenon that I had not come across in

the existing literature. The controversy surrounded the tactics of *valorizing* the quilts and the measly compensation some of the quiltmakers received without knowing how much money the quilts were selling for in art auctions. This content has not been extensively published or discussed in quilt scholarship, so I am very thankful I was able to talk to helpful museum staff at the Birmingham Museum of Art as well as some of the quiltmakers themselves to learn more about the REAL story of Gee's Bend quilting. In London I got the chance to interview several quiltmakers, study (and handle!) a selection of quilts, as well as visit the Tate Modern's temporary exhibit on Anni Albers. I am extremely grateful for these incredible research opportunities. Again, thank you for your support.

### **Jacob Schwartz '19**

Thank you so much for helping to support my undergraduate research! I am studying the effects of sea level rise on coastal wetlands and ozone depletion related to such processes. When seawater floods coastal freshwater wetlands, reactions take place in the soil and emit halogenated gases that can break down ozone in the stratosphere. Your generous donation enabled me to attend the annual Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico to present on my research and learn from other scholars in the field. The conference was very worthwhile and I was able to connect with many researchers that study environments and processes closely related to those that I am researching. One "takeaway" that I wouldn't have fully grasped would be how collaborative the global science community is as a whole. It was exciting to see people of so many backgrounds and disciplines discussing how to research and solve issues that our Earth faces. Without your gift, this experience would not have been possible so I cannot thank you enough!