



# SIUE School Of Nursing Virtually Honors Scholarship And Awards Recipients

April 24 2021 9:00 AM

The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Nursing (SON) hosted its 2021 Scholarship Ceremony and Tea virtually on Tuesday, April 20 in celebration of the accomplishments and aspirations of its students and sponsors.



The program announced 54 scholarship awards, totaling approximately \$45,000. Attendees, including SON faculty, staff, students, parents and donors, learned about the future aspirations of scholarship recipients and heard audio presentations from SON alumni who previously benefited from scholarship support and are now achieving professional success and advancement.

“On behalf of the entire SIUE School of Nursing community, I am delighted to welcome you this afternoon,” said SIUE SON Senior Director of Development Patti McDonald. “It has been a difficult year with unprecedented challenges. You are some of our most talented and dedicated students of nursing, and you most certainly will make a difference in the future of healthcare in our region, state and world.”



SON Dean Laura Bernaix, PhD, RN, extended her sincere appreciation for the School’s donors and partners, noted the SON’s second consecutive year of record-setting enrollment in all of its programs, and applauded faculty and students for their flexibility and adaptability amid the pandemic. She also recognized SON students’ active engagement in the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine throughout the region.

“I hope you have been doing well and are staying safe,” Bernaix said. “It has certainly been a trying time, and I am proud to say the SON has thrived, despite the many obstacles the pandemic has created. It is exciting to honor our high achievers and celebrate the strong partnerships that positively impact our continued growth.”

“Our record enrollment speaks volumes of our high-quality programs, which are specifically designed with strategically-hired faculty, to ensure our students are receiving the best possible education. Our simulation and lab programs continue to grow. We are in the process of planning and designing the new Health Sciences Building that will come to fruition in 2023. That magnificent facility will open numerous opportunities for the SON to expand its simulation program and increase participation in interdisciplinary collaborations.”



Among the awards presented was the Sandra Jeanne MacDonald Crome Scholarship Endowment, a new scholarship established by Wayne Crome to honor his wife, Sandra. Sandra had previously established a scholarship to honor her sister, Roberta Lee MacDonald Dial, RN, BSN Award. The 2021 recipient of both awards was sophomore Jennifer Robards, of Dieterich.

“Sandy loved her job and was a big booster for the University,” said Wayne. “My wife was very interested in medicine. She was the go-to in the family for medical needs. I thought this scholarship would be a nice way for her to continue helping people in perpetuity. It is an honor to help deserving students in this way.”

Robards’ appreciation and future aspirations were shared during the program: “The vision I have for my career is to always do my best and never stop learning. After graduating from the SIUE School of Nursing, I would love to work at St. Louis Children’s Hospital. While there, I will be the best nurse possible for my patients and fellow healthcare providers. I will be a caretaker and educator, and show compassion to others.”



The Gems of Nursing 2009 Award was created by a group of male SON students. Others have joined in their support of this scholarship. Donors include Nick Hogan, Cody Gowler, Mat Hettinger, Michael Rickher and Zach Davis.

This year's award recipient was senior Balam Bue, of San Antonio, Texas. His message of purpose read: "My purpose is to make a difference in the lives of individuals and their families by working closely with people, and gaining experience as I ambitiously pursue my education to obtain an MSN."

Senior Ranita Donaby, of Centralia, and junior Justine Oestricker, of Collinsville, were awarded the Cecil Howard Griffin, Florence Bowmazer Griffin and Dr. Anne Griffin Perry Scholarship. Perry was interim dean of the SON from 2013-14 and an SIUE Hall of Fame honoree in 2017. She established this scholarship to honor her parents who put her education first.

Donaby stated, "Upon graduating nursing school, I plan to work as an OB nurse. About a year in, my goal is to further my career in becoming a midwife."

Oestricker shared, "After graduation, I hope to become a pediatric nurse at a children's hospital. I'd love to work in the PICU or operating room."

The program ended with a video collage of "thank you" messages from all of the scholarship recipients.