

Family Of SIUE Alumnus Michael Yancey Creates Scholarship In His Name

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EDWARDSVILLE - A passion of Michael E. Yancey, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville College of Arts and Sciences alumnus, which was to support and encourage young people, will continue. This legacy is being made possible because of his family's contribution of \$25,000 to establish the [Michael E. Yancey Sphinx-man Scholarship](#), a diversity-focused endowment.

In memory and honor of Michael, the fund will award an annual \$1,000 scholarship to a sophomore with preferences given to Black and Native American applicants, according to Khalid Yancey, Michael's brother. Michael earned his bachelor's in mass communications in 1993 from SIUE, was a pioneer in helping launch [SIUE's Alumni Ambassador Program](#) and was a prominent member in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., after pledging during his student days at SIUE.

“Michael left a good mark,” said Yancey. “He loved working with young people. He wanted to help mold and build character in them. His fraternity was one significant way in which he helped young men.”

The youngest of nine siblings, Michael was a born leader with natural intelligence. “He loved to organize,” explained Yancey. “He was also extremely smart. Because of high test scores while in elementary school, Michael was enrolled in Wade Elementary for the gifted and talented (in St. Louis).”

Completing his secondary education, Michael spent several years in the workforce. His interest in communications led his search for higher education, which ended at SIUE, chronicled his niece, Telia Starks.

“He wanted to attend a university that had a robust communications department, catered to older students and was close to home,” she said. “Michael found all of this and more at SIUE.”

While at SIUE, Michael pledged the Iota Pi chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha in 1989, according to Starks, an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the sister sorority of Alpha Phi Alpha. Upon graduating from SIUE, Michael worked at several jobs including Merck & Co., one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. A job opportunity at the pharmaceutical company transferred him from St. Louis to Newark, Del.



“Later, Michael landed his dream job as Greek Life program coordinator at the University of Delaware,” shared Starks. “The job allowed him to mentor and guide several hundred students who made up the Greek letter organizations on campus. It was an advantage that Michael was an active member of a fraternity.”

While in Delaware, Michael would go on to hold numerous leadership positions within his fraternity. He led the Gamma Theta Lambda chapter in various capacities, including chapter president and membership intake director. Additionally, he served the Mid-Atlantic Association of Alpha Chapters (MAAC) as Area VII director for all Delaware chapters, and served as facilitator and trainer for the Eastern Region.

“Michael was a pivotal and well-known figure in the University of Delaware, Xi Omicron chapter,” Starks noted. “He was an alumni advisor for almost 20 years and was credited for bringing more than 100 brothers into the fraternity chapter.

“Michael was also instrumental in leading the initiation of an additional 150 brothers in the state of Delaware. He was recognized as Chapter Brother of the Year, received the William Young Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Xi Omicron *Winds of Change* Award, which was later renamed the Michael E. Yancey *Winds of Change* Award. Furthermore, Michael served faithfully as the president of the Gamma Theta Lambda Education Foundation, Inc., which is the charitable non-profit arm of the Wilmington Alumni chapter. His leadership brought a revival to the Foundation, which provides support for numerous high school students in their matriculation to college.”

“Because of Michael’s life’s work of reaching out and helping young men through his fraternity,” Yancey noted, “the family thought it fitting to set up this memorial scholarship in his name.”

Other criteria for the scholarship include:

- First-generation student
- A second-year student attending SIUE in pursuit of a four-year degree
- Have a GPA between 2.4 and 2.9
- Submit a 300-word biographical essay
- Three letters of reference, including one from a volunteer community service agency

“At the Lovejoy Library, we are thankful for the Yancey family and their generous gift,” said Library and Information Services Dean Lis Pankl, PhD. “It is such a wonderful expression to honor Michael Yancey’s life by creating this new diversity scholarship that will help SIUE students for years to come.”

The scholarship will be awarded for the first time in spring 2022. For more information and to donate, contact SIUE Director of Development Shane Taylor at staylaa@siue.edu or visit siue.edu/give-now/yancey.