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Scholarship Winners Celebration

On Aug. 5, 2021, the DWPC board and committee members gathered to celebrate the five women who received scholarships this year. Below are details about each of the winners.

Rachel Lorenz

Metropolitan State University

Frances Belford Wayne Merit Award, club award established in 1940; given to Metropolitan State University of Denver student for outstanding journalistic abilities

After a short career in engineering and a long stretch as a stay-at-home parent, a desire to tell the stories of other people led Rachel Lorenz back to school and into journalism. Born in Iowa, Rachel spent two decades in the Midwest, two decades in the South and is now giving the West a try.

She's currently a senior at Metropolitan State University of Denver where she takes classes to hone her reporting skills. Her internships with The Colorado Independent and Colorado Politics have allowed her to learn from award-winning veterans in the industry. Already a nascent freelance journalist, Rachel's stories and photographs can be found in her university's newspaper as well as the Albuquerque Journal, Su Casa Magazine, Denver Gazette, Colorado Politics and other news publications in Colorado. "Journalism has the power to connect people with issues that matter and with the ways they can effect change. I'm honored to participate in such work," she said.

Take a look at her work:

- A story on Colorado's mail-in ballot system was published last summer by Colorado Politics, made the front page of The (Colorado Springs) Gazette on August 17, 2020, and was added to the Solution Journalism Network's database of stories that cover how people respond to social problems. It includes photographs taken by Gibson Shaffer, last year's scholarship winner.
- A Q&A-style feature on Bueno Foods, a media-shy, family-owned food manufacturing company in Albuquerque, ran on the front page of the Albuquerque Journal

on May 15, 2021.

Jesca Gilbert

Valor Christian High School Scholastic Art and Writing Award, national awards program for talented high school students

"I was born into extreme poverty in Kampala, Uganda. I'm a former street kid. My birth mom and I lived on the street and begged for our food until one day she suddenly died and I was left totally alone. Miraculously, a woman from Colorado was filming a documentary about street kids and orphans in Kampala and just happened to meet me. So, she rented a house for 65 street kids and she stayed—for seven years! We built a school for everyone and a working farm and led hundreds of volunteers to work in the slums with us every year.

When I was 10 years old, we moved to Jakarta, Indonesia so I could go to an international school and try to catch up with my peers. There, I became a gymnast and competed throughout southeast Asia, and learned to live in a community with kids from over 65 countries. It was amazing. One summer, I went to Track Camp at Valor Christian High School and that is where I dreamed of attending high school.

I excelled in two main activities at Valor: I won *Colorado State Champion in Poetry Out Loud* put on by the National Endowment for the Arts. They sent me to compete at Nationals in Washington DC during my Sophomore year. I'm also dedicated to Student Council. I was *Sophomore Class President* and this year, I was the first-ever *Vice President of Diversity*. I spent my senior year on a mission to both spread the positive message of unity in a world of racism and healing to my fellow students of color which I look forward to carrying on in college. I will continue my education this fall in the Honors program at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA."

Annie Cao

Prospect Ridge High School Scholastic Art and Writing Award, national awards program for talented high school students

Annie Cao is a student and writer who has loved words since a young age. She has been honored by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards with two national silver medals, seven gold keys, and six silver keys for her poetry and fiction. Her writing has also been internationally recognized by The Kenyon Review's Patricia Grodd Poetry Prize, Columbia College Chicago, the Poetry Society of the UK, Vermont College of Fine Arts, and Ringling College.

She has been published in literary journals such as The Kenyon Review, Diode Poetry Journal, Up the Staircase Quarterly, Hunger Mountain, and The Apprentice Writer. In her writing, Annie frequently shines light on the experiences of women and discusses the themes of identity and challenge that surround girlhood. She believes the purpose of literature should be to capture human stories and help people better understand one another. Annie will be attending Princeton University in the fall.

Madeline Herman
Telluride High School
Scholastic Art and Writing Award, national awards program
for talented high school students

"My name is Madeline Herman and I am from Ophir, Colorado. Ophir is a small town of about 300 people, so I go to school in Telluride, which is about half an hour away. I recently graduated high school and will be attending Colorado College in the fall.

Writing has always been an important part of my life, along with reading. I have always had the desire to create worlds and create realities different from my own. I guess it's a form of escapism and a way I get to explore my imagination. This story, *Among the Cherry Blossoms*, is one that I resonated deeply with. My mom and I have a very strong bond and throughout many of my short stories, there has always been a mother-daughter aspect. I wanted to explore a relationship that had been broken and needed to be healed, but was on a shortened timeline.

Not only is the mother-daughter aspect of the story important to me, the element about sexuality is as well. I have struggled with my own for a long time and recently came out as lesbian. Being accepted for my sexuality was something that I personally never struggled with, but was always terrified of becoming a reality. I needed to write a story where in the end, the main character is accepted for who she is by the person who meant the most to her. Overall, this story is very important to me and I am very grateful to have shared it with people."

Kristina Ten
University of Colorado, Boulder
Ruth Murray Underhill Award, club award established in
1985; given to CU graduate student for outstanding merit in
creative writing

A second-year MFA candidate at the University of Colorado Boulder, Kristina Ten writes about experiences of home, belonging, and borders—between people, between places, and between the realms of the fantastical and the real. She is currently at work on her debut collection of speculative fiction, which will combine elements of fabulism, horror, and modern fairy tale, informed by Russian folklore and her own experiences as a Russian immigrant to the US.

Born in Moscow, Kristina is a graduate of the Clarion West Writers Workshop and the undergraduate writing program at Boston's Emerson College. Her academic interests include object theory, fairy tale as survival strategy, narratives of trauma, gender and sexuality, and the construction and deconstruction of home. Her stories have appeared in print and online publications such as *Lightspeed*, *Split Lip*, *Weird Horror*, and *Diabolical Plots*. Before graduate school, she worked as a copywriter. These days, when she's not writing, you can find her reading, weaving, or hiking with her dog.

Learn more at kristinaten.com.
