

THE EUGENE McDERMOTT SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The University of Texas at Dallas

Scholars' Quotes

The McDermott Scholars on The McDermott Scholars Program

On Scholarship

A diverse and thorough foundation of scholarship is the backbone of any successful or interesting individual. The McDermott Scholars Program provides the support for you to explore and define yourself as an academic throughout your four years at the University.



In high school, you concentrate on academics like it is your job. Well, now it is.

The "Scholar" label I now carry is one of which I am incredibly proud, yet at the same time feel the great responsibility that comes with it. I, for one, am proud of that responsibility.

As a Literary Studies major, I was at first concerned that the coursework at UTD would lack the intensity and challenge I was looking for. I soon found out I had nothing to worry about except maybe the intensity and challenge of my coursework. This school may be known for its electrical engineering and computer science programs, but those of us in the liberal arts know better: The heart of UTD is made of more malleable stuff.

The University of Texas at Dallas prides itself on its academic prowess. It is without question that the Program is based on the ability and desire to succeed academically. The drive for academic excellence reflects the understood importance of a quality education.

On Leadership

Through the Program, I have not only felt encouraged to be a leader, but I have also had the opportunity to meet some of the most inspiring leaders of this day, including the Texas Governor and legislators, Countess Bernadotte, and even Mrs. McDermott herself. The selfless devotion and leadership of these individuals truly remind me of my responsibility and duty to show service through leadership.

Leadership is a commonality you find throughout the world. The McDermott Scholars Program encourages each of us to define ourselves as leaders, and allows us to meet and interact with successful leaders at the national, state, and community levels.

Looking for a challenge? You have four years to transform a campus and touch lives. Go! (And the best part is, you will.)

Meet with the governor; hob-nob with the provost; be recognized from the floor of the State Senate. Not bad for the first half year.

During the summer following my freshman year, I had the opportunity through the McDermott program to intern at Dallas City Hall with Council Member Mary Poss. To see all the gunk, grind, and glory of city politics in action was an experience worth remembering.



Leadership is not something you can simply teach; yet it is something that when thrust into it, as we have been on campus, can develop on its own, and can thrive.

It seems as though the ultimate goal of the Program is to create the "leaders of tomorrow." Leaders leave a positive influence on their peers and community. Appreciating knowledge, understanding the global community, and aiding others are all aspects of leadership that the Program instills in the Scholars.

On Cultural Enrichment

One of the best parts about the Program is the plethora of cultural opportunities we have, ranging from symphonies and operas to monuments and museums. The most enriching cultural activity I experienced through the Program was the McDermott trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where we truly saw and tasted a unique culture that is central to the American landscape. Through our exposure to American art, music, and landscape, we are learning to view the world outside the scope of our own experiences and see life through the eyes of others.



To say the program fosters cultural enrichment is a severe understatement. After only my first few weeks as a Scholar, I'd soaked up all I could of the land, people, and tastes of New Mexico. By the end of the first semester through local symphonies and operas, and of course, a trip to London, I'd soaked up that much more many times over.

The afternoon at the Dallas Museum of Art, dinner with a Nobel Laureate, and an evening with Turandot — how do most college students spend their Friday nights?

Opera. It's not just entertainment for your grandparents anymore.

The opera house is open, on one side the mountains of New Mexico, on the other the lights of Santa Fe. The set is simple, dark, but suddenly — crack! — soldiers enter and the stage lights up and the swell of the chorus fills the house. From that moment on, Lucia had my heart; I was enchanted.

I never thought I would enjoy opera as much as I now do.

The ongoing emphasis on immersing oneself in all types of culture as well as the richness offered in the Metroplex is one of the most valuable parts of the Program. Through all the symphonies, operas, plays, and exhibits, the words "music" and "art" have gained another dimension. Just being exposed to the culture makes us richer.

On Community Involvement

To see that sparkle in their eyes when at last they understand — and to know that this is the light of the future. (Regarding volunteering at Herbert Marcus Elementary)

Expect to be offered a summer internship from any company in Dallas because you will be.

I have had the chance to work with deans, professors, and staff to develop the first French classes at UTD and to create a network between UTD and the French community of Dallas. It is exciting to help this new program grow.

There are aspects to my community that I would have never imagined there. There is art, there is activism, there is service, and there is always the potential for more, and the Program has helped me see all of these.



On International Experience

Our Christmas trip to London was incredible! We had the opportunity to spend one week experiencing the rich culture of London through visits to castles, cathedrals, museums, musicals, plays, a symphony, and the world premiere of an opera. The sights we saw were breathtaking, but most memorable to me is that we were able to leave our mark in London through service, both at a local soup kitchen and with Habitat for Humanity. We helped to build a house, but more importantly, we were able to build our spirits through our service.



For my first time out of the country there's no question I'm glad I made it as a McDermott Scholar. Every moment of our excursion "across the lake" was enjoyable and valuable and it was that much more satisfying knowing that it was the collaborative product of the efforts and abilities of my peers.

Studying abroad provides the McDermott Scholar with boundless opportunity for growth, reinvention, and change by allowing him or her to temporarily abandon all cultural roots. Laying aside all that is familiar is the quickest way to learn new and surprising things.

London in the winter, Guanajuato, Mexico in the summer, and I haven't even begun my semester abroad. I'm not learning about the world — I'm experiencing it!

Been to Paris, Texas? How about New England? The real places are only one proposal away.

In considering whether or not to accept the McDermott Award, I asked how a university with so few language classes could meet my desire to learn French. The response came back, "Easy. We'll just send you to Nice." And to Nice they send me this summer, but with a few stipulations: I must travel around France, Europe, and Britain while I'm at it.

The world is open to us. Anywhere, anything is now possible, placed at our fingertips for us to create.

In tenth grade, I had a world history teacher who constantly told the class to visit her when we traveled and saw the world. I did not take her seriously until the McDermott Program made it seem possible. In just two years, the Program has sent scholars far and wide. Few people can say that they have experienced the majestic palaces of London, the sand dunes of Egypt, or the wild beauty of Uganda. Traveling abroad reveals how much more there is to learn about our world.

On Service

Through the Program, I have had the opportunity, along with my peers, to spend time as a mentor and tutor at Marcus Elementary School. My time with the kids has been so rewarding! It is a mutual learning experience as I teach my three first-graders how to read and they teach me how to speak Spanish. I cannot wait to see how my kids develop socially and scholastically over the next four years!

Not only does the Program serve as a tool through which you can find a niche in the community to serve, but it allows for you, without limit or imposition, to devote as much time as you can or choose to towards your individual endeavor.

Service to the community and the world at large garners rewards well beyond any other the Program offers. After all, privilege means nothing unless it is shared with others.

Serving food to London's homeless, assisting at a Habitat build, adopting an



elementary school. Our greatest opportunity is not what we receive, but what we can give.

Few experiences are as fulfilling as helping a child learn to read. Try it once a week.

The friendship I have built with the girl I tutor at Kramer Elementary School is amazing. We don't come from the same country or speak the same language, but still we teach each other. To touch another's life in this way is beautiful.

With all that we have received from the McDermott family, and with all that we can achieve thanks to this educational foundation, giving back is not simply a service we can perform, it is a duty.

After having been given the opportunity to sculpt and create our own college experiences, the scholars greatly value being able to serve the community.

The London trip was memorable in itself, but being able to help build a home and serve the community at a soup kitchen made the trip complete. Additionally, many of the scholars have found a new passion through working with the adopted elementary school children. Knowing that we will have four years or more to create those lasting relationships with the students, allows us to really invest quality time and be able to share what the Program has made available to us.

DID YOU KNOW?

The McDermott Award covers tuition and fees for four years, including summers. Many Scholars complete their Bachelor's degrees early and begin pursuing Master's degrees within that time frame.

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