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## **GRADUATE DEGREES—MORE VITAL THAN EVER—COME WITHIN REACH OF LOWER-INCOME STUDENTS**

62 Students Awarded Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Graduate Scholarships

***Nation's Most Generous Graduate Scholarships;  
Up to \$300,000 to Complete Graduate or Professional Degrees***

Lansdowne, VA, August 13, 2008—Attaining a graduate degree has become an increasingly important step to professional and financial success. Master's degree holders earn roughly 25 percent more than those with just a bachelor's degree. For those with a professional degree or Ph.D., the income difference is even greater.

High-achieving students from lower-income families face an especially difficult path to graduate school. Just 29 percent of high-achieving lower-income high school graduates who also complete college go on to receive graduate degrees, compared to 47 percent of high achievers from upper-income families.

To help the next generation of leaders from lower-income backgrounds achieve their dreams by pursuing graduate or professional degrees, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation established the most generous graduate scholarship program in the nation. Today, the Foundation announces its 2008 Graduate Scholarship recipients.

A total of 62 students will receive awards of up to \$50,000 per year for up to six years. Many recipients are community college graduates who completed their undergraduate degrees with Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships from the Foundation.

The 2008 Graduate Scholars demonstrate a remarkable commitment to public service. Well over half plan to dedicate their careers to public service in one form or another, engaging in such critical pursuits as sustainable development, improving public health, combating infectious disease, and advancing human rights and social justice.

“We must work to remove the barriers high-achieving lower-income students face gaining access to graduate and professional schools,” said Joshua Wyner, executive vice president of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. “I have no doubt that this relatively small group of Scholars will have a meaningful impact on our future. They are ambitious, talented, and committed to giving back. We deny society great talent and broad perspectives when we deny these budding leaders, and students like them, the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

The 2008 Graduate Scholars are richly diverse. Twenty scholars are from outside the US, hailing from Albania, Brazil, Poland, Jamaica, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. The remaining scholars come from 25 US states. The scholars range in age from 20 to 56 and will attend some of the world's finest graduate and professional schools, including Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Yale, Cornell, and Cambridge.

Among the notable 2008 Graduate Scholars:

- **Bonheur Buconyori** was born in Burundi where he survived the genocide, taking refuge in Kenya before coming to the US for college. He is committed to helping rebuild his country after completing his graduate business and public policy studies at Stanford University.
- **Raja Bobbili**, who will study law at Harvard University, grew up in Zambia where he witnessed some of the darkest events faced by populations anywhere in the world. He has already begun to pursue his goal of helping to alleviate poverty and suffering in Sub-Saharan Africa: he established a nonprofit organization to bring sustainable technology solutions to Africa.
- **Alison Chopel** wrote an award-winning novel about her experiences as a homeless teenager. Having worked with Tibetan refugees, Romanian orphans and Dominican street kids, she hopes to make an impact in social health and welfare after completing her graduate studies in international affairs at UC Berkeley.

### **Scholarship Details**

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation awards Graduate Scholarships to approximately 50 students annually. Approximately 1,000 students are nominated for the program each year. The award covers tuition, living expenses, books and required fees. The amount and duration of awards vary by student, based on cost of attendance, length of the graduate program, and other scholarships or grants received.

Students cannot apply directly, but must be nominated by a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation faculty representative at their undergraduate school. Each college or university may nominate up to two students. A review panel of distinguished faculty and university admissions officers judge the nominees using criteria including academic achievement, financial need, will to succeed, demonstrated leadership and public service, critical thinking ability, and appreciation of the arts and humanities.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation has awarded nearly 400 Graduate Scholarships since the inception of the program.

### **Scholarship Recipients**

The 2008 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Graduate Scholarship winners are:

Christina Arnold, Washington, DC  
 Karen Arter, Herndon, VA  
 Ruth Arviso, Pasadena, CA  
 Rositsa Atanasova, Haskovo, Bulgaria  
 Gruia Badescu, Washington, DC  
 Vanessa Banks-Gonzales, Baytown, TX  
 Raja Bobbili, Lusaka, Zambia  
 Jarrod Brown, Morehead, KY  
 Amanda Bryant, Kansas City, KS  
 Bonheur Buconyori, Bujumbura, Burundi  
 Goylette (Julie) Chami, Washington, IL  
 Alison Chopel, Boulder, CO  
 Thomas Chupein, San Francisco, CA

Linda Circelli, La Puente, CA  
Agata Clevenger, Rydal, PA  
Alonit Cohen, Boulder, CO  
Benjamin Cote, Scarborough, ME  
Matylda Czarnecka, Bakersfield, CA  
Jessica Dawkins, Louisville, KY  
Kristen Downs, Baltimore, MD  
Krista Dusek, Honolulu, HI  
Eugene Feygelson, Rochester, NY  
Akiva Freidlin, Brooklyn, NY  
Anisa George, Nazareth, PA  
Ardeta Gjikola, Ann Arbor, MI  
Caprice Gray, New Haven, CT  
Betty Hart, State College, PA  
Robert Howe, Carlton, PA  
Alexandra Johnson, Philadelphia, PA  
William Johnson, Montgomery, AL  
Angel Kelchev, San Francisco, CA  
Roland Lamb, Cambridge, MA  
Shawna-Kaye Lester, Lewiston, ME  
Tafari Lumumba, East Denver, CO  
Magogodi Makhene, Philadelphia, PA  
Lucy Marcil, Columbia, SC  
Cheryl-Lynn May, Skokie, IL  
Mollie McCartney, Walkersville, WV  
Sally-Anne McDonnell, Gainesville, FL  
Claudia Moreno, Evanston, IL  
Jody Morita, Vancouver, Canada  
Mohamed Osman Kassam, Seattle, WA  
Karen Pain, West Palm Beach, FL  
Chiquita Palha De Sousa, Easton, PA  
Yeshey Pelzom, Atlanta, GA  
Sarah Pullen, Oviedo, FL  
Shilpa Reddy, Birmingham, AL  
Catherine Reyes, Medford, MA  
Lisandra Rickards, Kingston 8, Jamaica  
Alex San Pedro, Brooklyn, NY  
Steven Schmidt, Glastonbury, CT  
Linda Siegmann, Tulsa, OK  
Thethan Soe, Woodside, NY  
Michael Tauson, Phoenix, AZ  
Anne Thompson, Washington, DC  
Cristina Toledo-Cornell, Ferndale, MI  
Jaclyn Tordo, St. Louis, MO  
Michael Uy, Laguina Niguel, CA  
Donald Washington, Atlanta, GA  
Tadd Wheeler, Seattle, WA  
Daniel Young, Vienna, VA  
Joyln Zwemer, Frannie, WY

*Complete biographies of the 2008 Graduate Scholars are available at*  
[www.jackkentcookefoundation.org](http://www.jackkentcookefoundation.org).

**About the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation**

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is a private, independent foundation dedicated to helping young people of exceptional promise reach their full potential through education. Established in 2000 by the estate of self-made billionaire Jack Kent Cooke, the Foundation focuses on high-achieving lower-income students from middle school through graduate school. Headquartered in northern Virginia, the Foundation has helped thousands of students nationally since opening its doors through individualized direct service programs, generous scholarships, and grants to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions. With an endowment of \$700 million, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is one of the 100 largest private foundations in the US. For more information please visit [www.jackkentcookefoundation.org](http://www.jackkentcookefoundation.org).

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