

Two Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars Make Their Mark in The Arts and Entertainment



TaeVon Gibbs

It would not be a surprise if TaeVon Gibbs, a junior at Wofford College, would one day be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Costume Design. Likewise, KiMani Bridges, a 2024 graduate from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, could someday win a Grammy Award for music composition. Both TaeVon and KiMani attribute their successes to the Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars Program®. As these two promising talents continue to make strides in their respective fields, their stories serve as inspiring examples of what can be achieved with dedication, skill, and the proper support.

TaeVon Gibbs

TaeVon is one of 30 students selected from universities nationwide to work on the set of the feature film, *Major Barbara*, directed by award winner Jay Craven. The movie is the latest installment of Craven's Semester Cinema Program, which pairs industry professionals with college students to collaborate and create an ambitious film for national release. TaeVon was chosen to design costumes for the movie after Craven visited Wofford College. "One of my professors is the film's assistant director, so I had a personal recommendation to be a part of this film," TaeVon explains.

TaeVon says of his journey, "The Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars Program® helped me get where I am today. It taught me about hard work, networking, resourcefulness, and self-belief."

TaeVon, who graduated from Fern Creek High School in 2020, missed many senior year celebrations due to the pandemic. "It hurt not being able to attend any extracurricular activities

because I was very involved in school," he recalls. The continued support offered to Scholars as part of the College Transition Enrichment Program helped him navigate through his challenging freshman year at Wofford. TaeVon added, "You always reached out and ensured we were still connected and getting the resources we needed."

TaeVon initially struggled to decide on a college major but eventually found his passion in the film industry. He is the first in his family to attend college, thanks to the full-ride scholarship he received. TaeVon has maintained strong grades and is an active campus leader at Wofford College.

What's next? The movie recently wrapped up filming, and TaeVon says a rough-cut version will be completed by August. The movie will then be marketed to Amazon Prime Video and HBO Max for a planned release in the spring of 2026.

In the meantime, TaeVon is preparing for his senior year and is on pace to graduate in May 2025. Reflecting on his future, TaeVon says, "Now that I have experience on the set of a feature-length film, I have a foot in the door that many people interested in working in the film industry do not have. I am very grateful for this opportunity." He thanks WYSP supporters, saying, "I wouldn't have gotten the opportunities you provided me anywhere else."



"The Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars Program® helped me to get to where I am today... It taught me about hard work, networking, resourcefulness, and self-belief."

— TaeVon Gibbs

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Impactful Partnerships

Baird, one of Lincoln Foundation's valued corporate partners, recently hosted an open house to connect college



WYSP Scholars at Baird corporate office

Scholars with prospective job and internship opportunities. The goal was to expand their understanding of the vast career options available to them in Louisville.

Six Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars, along with students from Simmons College, attended the open house at Baird's downtown offices. In addition to Baird, representatives from Norton Healthcare, Stock Yards Bank, and Greater Louisville Inc. shared insights and tips on interviewing techniques and ways to best present themselves to potential employers. Invaluable information was provided on the various internships that are available to college students seeking practical experience in their chosen fields.

The event was a success and Baird officials plan to expand it in future years by involving more college students and corporate partners.



WYSP Scholars pictured with Baird Leaders

“As many degree programs require an internship or practicum, our CTEP Scholars requested assistance with this. Baird, Norton Healthcare, Stock Yards Bank, and GLI took this to a whole new level. Our Scholars are reaping the benefits of this service.”

— Jacquelyn Ellis, CTEP Coach

WYSP Scholars *(Continued from page 1)*

KiMani Bridges

KiMani, described as “inventive” and “striking” by The New Yorker Magazine, has been honored with the prestigious Koven Fellowship at Juilliard, where she'll begin her graduate studies this fall. This fellowship is awarded to those with exceptional artistic talent and leadership potential. KiMani's journey started at duPont Manual High School where she was among five teen composers selected for the 2019-2020 Luna Composition Lab Program. She has since received the inaugural Lift Up Our Voices Scholarship for Underrepresented Composers, and her composition “STATIC” premiered at the Louisville Orchestra's Classical Series in May 2022.

Much of KiMani's success can be attributed to the Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars Program®. She fondly remembers the Summer Institutes, a college-like experience that helped her find her passion for the arts. “I had a blast at the Summer Institute at Centre College,” she recalls. The program also equipped her with essential skills for college, including oration, presentation, and time management. KiMani stated, “If the Scholars program did not exist I still would have gone to college, but I would have struggled. The program helped me move through high school and develop skills to effectively communicate and self-advocate.”



“Because of WYSP, I have the academic and life skills to talk to different people, give presentations, and speak for myself. I have friends that I will have for life.”

— KiMani Bridges

KiMani's career took off with the Luna Lab program. In addition to international performances, her works have been performed by the Louisville Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the LA Philharmonic. Approaching music composition from a theatrical viewpoint, she incorporates elements of dance and acting, creating characters and storylines within her pieces. Looking ahead, KiMani aims to keep her career fluid, exploring residencies with orchestras and international opportunities while working with her Juilliard faculty mentor, Amy Beth Kristen.

KiMani is grateful for all those who support the Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars Program®. Reflecting on her journey, she says, “Because of WYSP, I have the academic and life skills to talk to different people, give presentations, and speak for myself. I have friendships that will last a lifetime. It just really helped in unexpected ways. This program provides things you can't get anywhere else. I appreciate all you have been doing.”

Financial Literacy Education Focus of WYSP Speech Contest



Speech contest winner, Jillian B., pictured with speech contest judges

For the second consecutive year, Whitney M. YOUNG Scholars showcased their impressive oratory skills in front of their proud parents and families. Shifting from last year's debate competition format, this year's event was a speech contest. The topic focused on the merits of teaching financial literacy in high school, which each Scholar concluded was highly necessary.

Contest winner Jillian B., a 10th grader from duPont Manual High School, argued that financial literacy

courses should begin before students enter high school. She said, "Most high school students will get their first job during their freshman or sophomore year; meaning that before they even learn about managing personal finances, they will have money to manage." She continued, "If those students learned about financial literacy in middle school, they would be able to understand how important it is to be responsible with their money."

Second place winner, Alisha M., a Ballard High School student, made the point that helping students understand how to budget will positively affect students in the future. Contestant Joy O., a Ballard High School scholar, added, "Budgeting can help students develop responsible spending habits and avoid falling into debt traps later in life."

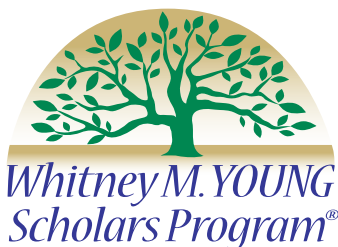
Three community leaders, Dr. Patricia Carver from Bellarmine University, Mr. Mitchell Kuntz from Park National Bank, and Mr. Chris Davis from First Southern National Bank judged the contest. The judges evaluated Scholars based on the quality of their presentations, public speaking skills, and knowledge of the subject matter.



Speech contest 2nd place winner Alisha M. pictured with Marshall Bradley and Venita Benboe



Venita Benboe and Marshall Bradley pictured with speech contest judges



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Save the Date For The Next Give For Good Louisville: September 12, 2024!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the annual Give For Good Louisville. The community-wide, online fundraising event is scheduled for Thursday, September 12, 2024. Lincoln Foundation plans to be among the hundreds of local nonprofits raising funds on that day. Funds raised during Give For Good support our Scholars' dreams of a college education and a meaningful career. We are grateful to the many donors who have supported Lincoln Foundation in previous years and ask for your continued support.



Whitney M. Young Scholars Program® (WYSP)



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