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A “Friend” indeed: Scholarship has aided children of ACBA members for nearly a century

By Ron Cichowicz

Although he died more than 90 years ago, Kennedy T. Friend continues to positively impact the lives of countless young people.

Friend, a distinguished member of the Allegheny County Bar Association, died in London, May 26, 1929. But his memory lives on through the Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship Fund, established in his will to support an education at one of two prestigious institutions for deserving children of Allegheny County attorneys.

According to Friend’s wishes, the balance of the income of the trust “shall be devoted to the education at Yale University ... or the University of Paris, France, of such child, or children of the members of the Bar of Allegheny County as may be designated by the said Trustee or their successors.”

Alice Mitinger, a partner at Dentons Cohen & Grigsby and permanent trustee of the Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship since 2012, explained that this means that any child of an attorney who has his or her principal practice in Allegheny County is eligible for this scholarship as long as the student is accepted at either Yale University or the University of Paris and decides to attend one of those schools.

“Of course, being accepted at Yale can be a challenge,” said Mitinger, herself a graduate of the Ivy League School located in New Haven, Connecticut. The first woman president of the Yale Club of Pittsburgh, Mitinger is joined as a trustee by a representative from PNC, the president of the Allegheny County Bar Association and the current president of the Yale Club of Pittsburgh.

“The trustees have no influence on whether or not a student is accepted at either institution,” said Mitinger. “These extraordinary students must be accepted on their own merit.”

Citing the uniqueness of this opportunity for the students, Mitinger said Yale University “doesn’t have anything else like it.” She said that the grants can be quite substantial and are not based on financial need or academic standing.

The significance, value and potential life-changing potential of a Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship is not lost on the parents of the selected students.

One such parent is Adam Ennis, whose daughter Maya is a 2021 awardee. A member of the law firm Steptoe & Johnson where he works in the litigation department, Ennis said that attending Yale is an opportunity nobody should have to miss due to cost.

“I always thought Maya would be a good fit for an Ivy League school with her combination of athletics and strong academic performance,” he said.



Maya Ennis



Aiden Magley

Maya was on the diving team at North Allegheny, the same high school attended by her older sister Jordan, now at Elon University in North Carolina and currently by younger brother Andre, who plays soccer for the school. Their mom Frederique grew up in France. She started her education at the Sorbonne, finished at the University of Pittsburgh and currently works for American Eagle Outfitters as a planning manager.

“Maya called me one day and said the diving coach invited her to join the team,” Mr. Ennis said. “I am extremely proud of everything she has accomplished. She switched from gymnastics to diving as a freshman in high school. Coupled with her academic abilities, all this was made possible.”

Mr. Ennis said his family is extremely grateful for the generous grant given to Maya and complimented the PNC trust officer for being responsive to any questions his family had during the process.

“I would encourage anyone who is eligible to apply,” he said. “I told Maya this is something no one can ever take away from her. The outstanding education, reputation of the school and the connections she’ll make are probably unprecedented. They might allow her to achieve a level of professional accomplishment that might otherwise not be possible.”

As for Maya’s reaction to hearing of her scholarship, she said, “I was over the moon. Yale was my dream school and the scholarship made attending a possibility for me.”

Maya said her enthusiasm was shared by her parents, who were both excited and relieved to hear the news.

“They have always worked so hard to give me everything I needed, and this meant they could send me to an incredible school and leave me with no student debt, which I am incredibly thankful for,” she said. “It was always in the back of my head but I never thought it was achievable until around the end of

my sophomore year when I began to improve very quickly in diving.

“Once I realized it could happen, I became more and more excited about the possibility of attending such an incredible university.”

While being a member of the Yale Varsity Diving Team can be time-consuming, Maya said it also is “incredibly fun.”

“The team provides me with amazing support, a great group of friends and the ability to compete in the sport that I love,” she said.

Maya said she hopes to attend medical school after graduating from Yale. Her interest in psychology and the brain has her leaning toward a major in either cognitive science or neuroscience.

In the meantime, she plans to take advantage of all that Yale has to offer.

“I hope to make connections with as many people as possible while I’m here,” she said. “One of the incredible benefits of Yale is the ability to surround myself with so many intelligent people from around the world. Throughout my time here, I hope to simply learn as much as I possibly can from the people around me.”

Another family who learned one of their own had earned the Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship for 2021 agreed that this could be a “life-changing opportunity.”

Stephen Magley is a principal in the firm of O’Malley & Magley, where he does litigation statewide through offices in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. His wife Betty is self-employed, working in the area of development and directing nonprofit corporate boards. The Magleys have three children: twins Zoe and Nathan and youngest son Aiden. Zoe currently is at Brown University and Nathan is studying classic clarinet performance at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University-Bloomington. Younger brother Aiden is the recipient of the Friend grant.

“I was familiar with the scholarship program through the Bar Association,” said Mr. Magley. “I’m kind of a provincial kid who grew up in central Pennsylvania and went to a small college before entering Pitt law school. I never swam in the waters my kids swim in. I look at them with admiration every day.”

Although Mr. Magley was aware of the Friend scholarship, Aiden was not.

“No, I didn’t know about it or its gravity when I was applying,” said Aiden, a graduate of Pittsburgh’s CAPA School. “All throughout high school, especially watching my older siblings go through it (the application process), I wanted to put myself in the best position I could to apply to some of the better schools in the country.”

Aiden’s efforts paid off, according to his father, as he saw his son accepted by most Ivy Schools and Stanford University. Like most parents with children considering colleges, the Magleys explored “every avenue possible” to try to help them handle the costs. They found scholarship opportunities for \$1,000, \$1,500, even \$5,000.

“We weren’t discounting those, but with a private university price tag, those were not a really big help,” Mr. Magley recalled.

Then came the Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship.

“It was just unbelievable,” said Mr. Magley, reflecting on the generous amount received from the grant. “Aiden is at Yale for what it would cost us to send him to Pitt. It (the scholarship) was a gamechanger for me, but I still wanted Aiden to find his own path. He could graduate from Yale with a lot less debt.”

While cost wasn’t the only factor in Aiden’s decision it did influence the process.

“When I was considering everything, I saw that the schools I applied to had different levels of price tags,” he said. “Realizing my cheapest option across the board regardless of the caliber of the school was now Yale, well that definitely was a bit ridiculous. That didn’t make my final decision for me, but it speaks for itself.”

Aiden said he hasn’t decided on a major yet and that Yale actually encourages exploration for its students and trying new experiences the first couple of semesters.

“The most important part of my experience has been my interaction with the people here, people I’ve gotten to meet from all different walks of life,” Aiden said. “Some are very similar to me and some not at all. It’s very humbling for sure and makes me remember my roots a little bit more.”

Aiden said he hasn’t signed up for many extracurricular activities yet, but will explore various options. In high school he participated in a wide variety of opportunities, including debate, tennis and soccer. Music was, in his words, his other “really heavy engagement,” having taken private lessons for years and performing with the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra and River City Youth Brass Band. Already he has played in a couple of chamber groups at Yale and recently was accepted into the University’s Symphony Orchestra.

Asked to summarize the impact of the Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship, Mr. Magley’s thoughts turned to the program’s namesake.

“Looking at this man, Mr. Friend and to think of the impact this gift continues to have 92 years after his death, there is no way for us to ever thank him or to say, ‘my god, man, 92 years later and you’re still having an unbelievable impact on the community.’”

Aiden agreed, “I would echo what my dad said. The best testament to this amazing gift is to use it in the best way you can to use the education and experience. It’s going to be quite transformative, I can already tell. Just to improve the world around me as much as I can and try to honor his wishes for the best use of his funds as we enter the second century of the program.”

For more information on the Kennedy T. Friend Scholarship Fund, visit ACBF.org/Kennedy-Scholarship-Fund. ■