



Community Foundation of Wabash County

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Press Release

P.O. Box 98, 218 E. Main Street
N. Manchester, IN 46962

Phone: 260/982-4824

Fax: 260/982-8644

Website: www.cfwabash.org

E-mail: marketing@cfwabash.org

Contact: Maryhelen Chadwick (mhchadwick@yahoo.com)

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Foundation names 2009 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship winners

The Community Foundation of Wabash County has chosen the two recipients of the 2009 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship. Marissa Johnson of North Manchester and Laura Merriman of Wabash will receive four years of full tuition to the Indiana colleges they choose and an \$800 yearly stipend for required books and equipment.

Merriman and Johnson were chosen from a pool of 26 eligible applicants. Selections were made based on academic performance, extracurricular/work/community service activities, references and an interview. After the Foundation's scholarship committee narrowed the field to two nominees and one alternate, the finalists' names were submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana, Inc. (ICI) for approval of the nominees. ICI is a nonprofit corporation that represents 31 regionally accredited degree granting, nonprofit, private colleges and universities in the state.

The scholarships were awarded March 27, 2009 at the Honeywell Center.

Johnson is the daughter of Sharon Shock of North Manchester. The Manchester High School (MHS) student plans to study psychology or pre-law as an undergraduate and go on to law school. Several of the attributes she used to describe herself in her application are often associated with practice of law. She says she is a great communicator with good listening skills and a strong work ethic.

"(My interest) in law has evolved from my love for debate, but more importantly because I see a need for justice and righteousness in the world," says Johnson, "...my goal isn't for the glitz, glamour or money, it is for the idea of protecting and giving back to the community."

Johnson has participated in many academic, athletic, music, drama and volunteer activities throughout her high school career. She has served in leadership positions in many of them.

Merriman is the daughter of Paula and David Merriman of Wabash. The Wabash High School (WHS) student plans to major in studio art or environmental science with hopes of pursuing a career as a photojournalist or an environmental scientist.

"Photography allows me to use the environment to inspire," Merriman wrote in one of her essays, "I am also considering a career in environmental science because I have a love of the outdoors and nature."

Merriman has had an extremely busy schedule during her time at WHS. She has excelled academically while participating in athletics, music, drama and many other activities. She has held several leadership positions and appreciates the rewards that come from being committed to her goals.

"During high school I worked very hard to maintain a high GPA while participating in varsity sports," Merriman says, "When I was awarded First Team Academic All-State this year in volleyball I felt as if all of the hard work had paid off."

The scholarships are the result of a statewide Lilly Endowment initiative to help Hoosier students reach higher levels of education. Lilly Endowment, Inc. scholarships are awarded only in Indiana counties served by a Community Foundation. Since the program began 10 years ago, 2,697 scholarships have been awarded. The Community Foundation of Wabash County has awarded 28 Lilly Scholarships. The Foundation is responsible for the application process and candidate selection. It also maintains contact with these scholars as they conduct their studies and beyond.

For more about Merriman and Johnson and the other Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship finalists, visit www.cfwabash.org.

The Community Foundation of Wabash County is a nonprofit public charity established in 1954. It serves the citizens of Wabash County by implementing their charitable aspirations, making grants, investing and safeguarding charitable assets, providing information regarding charitable endeavors, and convening citizens and linking resources to address issues confronting our shared lives. The Community Foundation of Wabash County is located at 218 E. Main St., North Manchester, Indiana. For more information, visit www.cfwabash.org.



Photo Caption: 2009 Lilly Scholars accept their awards at the Honeywell Foundation. Helping them celebrate are (from left to right) Kenny Shock, Sharon Shock, Marissa Johnson, Community Foundation of Wabash County Assistant Director Shelly Leifer, Laura Merriman, Paula Merriman and David Merriman.