

Hattery Family Foundation—Franki Rutherford Memorial Scholarship

Purpose:

The purpose of the HFF-FRM scholarship is to recognize a student who has a demonstrated interest in the study of inequalities, especially gender, race, class and sexuality. The student should also have a dedication to issues of social justice and the community. The award is also to designated to assist a student who has a demonstrated need not only for financial support, but also faces other barriers to getting a college education as well, including being a first generation college student, an immigrant or child of immigrant parents, especially for the “global south” or areas in which opportunities for higher education are limited; a student from a low-income family; or a student who receives little support from home because of his or her sexual or gender identity (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer).

Qualifications:

- The award is NOT available to first year students.
- The student must have a minimum GPA of 2.5.
- The student must write a letter of application detailing the ways in which the purpose of the scholarship will be met.
- The student must provide at least 3 letters of reference, at minimum one must be from a faculty member.

Relevance of the background of the HFF:

- Two generations ago our family members did not attend college and, in some instances, did not complete high school .
- In subsequent generations, college has become central to our lives.
- The family has a long history of dedication and commitment to issues of equality and social justice.
- The family has an interest in the education of all people and recognizes the barriers of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and especially culture to gaining access to education.

Franki Rutherford’s background:

- Franki grew up in rural Virginia and didn’t have access to an education.
- Franki dedicated her life to working in the community on issues of social justice

- Later in life, in her early 60s, Franki's desire for an education grew so strong that she earned a BA and had completed one year of a master's in women and gender studies when she died tragically of pancreatic cancer

Background of Women & Gender Studies

- Established more than 20 years ago to bring attention, education, and foster activism around women's issues; later expanded to focus on issues of gender and sexuality as well
- Strong commitment to social justice and activism
- Shortly after Franki's death, we began to plan for the development of a scholarship in her name

Background of George Mason University

- Founded in 1972
- Has always focused on offering a college education to those who might be turned away elsewhere because of financial limits, poor high school resources, or poor high school performance; war veterans
- Recently expanded to offer a "college experience" to differently abled young adults. The Mason Life program enrolls dozens of young adults with autism spectrum disorders, down syndrome, and other abilities
- 1/3 of the students are first generation college students
- 1/4 grew up in households where English was not their first language
- Students come from more than 130 different countries, including many Muslim countries—Pakistan, Somalia, the Sudan---where girls and women face significant cultural barriers to getting an education

Rationale:

This is obviously not an ideal situation, as it feels more reactive than proactive.

That said, how it feels to me is that I was working independently on developing a scholarship program, and a potential donor literally fell into my lap. That potential donor, the HFF, shares many of the same aspirations as Women & Gender Studies does and which Franki Rutherford embodies. Additionally, the Mason community provides a student body that in general, fits the profile of the students the HFF seeks to assist.

I think it is premature to make this anything more than a one-time gift. That said, it does provide us with an opportunity to tailor our gift in a way that simply donating to an existing structure or organization does not.

If, over time, this seems like it is fruitful, then I can imagine moving to making it more permanent, perhaps along with other more permanent “gifts” that meet the needs of all of us.

Management of the Award & Responsibilities

(1) Women and Gender Studies will be responsible for the entire application process, including disseminating the scholarship information and application, serving as the repository for applications and fielding questions regarding the application procedure. Women and Gender Studies will also take responsibility for notifying all applicants of the outcome of the decision.

(2) Information about the scholarship, including an application, will be disseminated in four ways. (1) The description and application will be emailed to all students minoring in women and gender studies and to all graduate students who are officially enrolled in our graduate certificate program and concentration. (2) The description and application will be posted on our official website (<http://wmst.gmu.edu>) and to our program facebook page. (3) The description and application will be emailed to all women & gender studies core and affiliate faculty and we will ask them to share the information with students they think would be interested and/or to nominate a student. (4) We will post the description and application in the center.

(3) Women & Gender Studies will take full responsibility for all administration of the scholarship, including working with the foundation account, paying the scholarship, etc.

(4) Women & Gender Studies will provide an annual report detailing the

activities around the scholarship, including the number of applicants, the awards, etc.

(5) Scholarship decisions will be made by a joint committee of HFF members and WGST staff. The committee can consult via email and if phone if necessary. A face to face meeting is not required to make the award(s).