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Winthrop Student Honored With One of America's Largest Graduate Scholarships

Winthrop University

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Winthrop Student Honored With One of America's Largest Graduate Scholarships

Quick Facts

- The 76 new recipients of the Foundation's graduate and professional scholarships were chosen after a nationwide selection process that drew 1,290 nominees from more than 600 colleges and universities across the country.
- Luepkes, who graduated from Winthrop in May with a degree in political science, was involved in numerous activities and causes during her undergraduate years.
- In recognition of her achievements and outstanding commitment to public service during her time at Winthrop, Luepkes received the 2005 Mary Mildred Sullivan Award.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University graduate **Catherine Luepkes** of Racine, Wis., was recently selected to receive one of 76 scholarships awarded through the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. She will now pursue a doctorate at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

The 76 new recipients of the Foundation's graduate and professional scholarships were chosen after a nationwide selection process that drew 1,290 nominees from more than 600 colleges and universities across the country. Each scholarship is worth up to \$300,000, which is among the largest scholarships offered in the United States.

"Support for exceptional students, particularly those with financial need and a great drive to succeed, can have a profoundly positive effect on society," said **Matthew J. Quinn, executive director of the foundation**. "These students have overcome tremendous obstacles, and we are proud to help them continue their education and prepare to make valuable contributions to our world."

Candidates underwent a rigorous assessment at two stages by independent panels of academic experts, including graduate school deans, admissions counselors, and faculty. The selection criteria included academic achievement and financial need as well as a will to succeed, leadership and community involvement.

Through the scholarships, the foundation aims to help highly motivated, highly driven individuals overcome one of the biggest challenges to their careers – the cost of advanced professional or graduate training. The value and duration of each scholarship, which can total as much as \$50,000 per year for up to six years, varies based on the cost of attendance or other grants each student receives.

The recipients will pursue graduate and professional study in a range of fields, including philosophy, painting, medicine, business, law, and architecture, as well as other specialties in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

Luepkes, who graduated from Winthrop in May with a degree in political science, was involved in numerous activities and causes during her undergraduate years. A student activist, she founded **Amnesty International** at Winthrop and took the organization to Birmingham, Ala., to participate in a national conference on the civil rights movement and human rights. As a student, she undertook research on flawed water and sanitation systems in Chad, Cambodia, and Afghanistan that leave millions vulnerable to treatable diseases. She also presented papers frequently, including to the annual meeting of the **American Political Science Association**, a rarity for an undergraduate.

Luepkes also was active in the **Student Socialist Union, Stand up Against Violence** and the **RH Factor**. In recognition of her achievements and outstanding commitment to public service during her time at Winthrop, Luepkes received the **2005 Mary Mildred Sullivan Award**.

"I am motivated by the hope that we can have a world where every year six million children do not die from malnutrition before their 5th birthday and more than 50 percent of Africans will not suffer from water-related diseases such as cholera and infant diarrhea," **Luepkes** said.

Luepkes doesn't stop at the abstract intellectual level, said Winthrop sociology professor **Jennifer Crew Solomon**; she "converts her knowledge and her convictions into action."

Personal traumas fueled Luepkes' interest in political science and equity issues. Her oldest brother died when she was 12, and her mother died when she was finishing high school. Years later, watching TV footage of a woman fleeing the genocide in Serbia and Kosovo, Catherine says, "I saw my mother's face in hers." But Catherine is determined to look forward. "In life," she says, "the individual must learn to change, rebel, refigure, create and learn, but the other half of life involves healing, reconciling the past and letting go. Today, I live for both revolution and reconciliation."

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