

## **History of the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation: A Tale of Success**

This year the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation (RSF) celebrates its sixtieth year of existence. During those six decades RSF has given out more than \$4.5 million in scholarships to more than 2,000 Contra Costa County high school and community college students. In recent years the Foundation has experienced tremendous growth, all of which would certainly have been welcomed by founders who hoped for a bright future for the organization.

In 1965, a group of fifteen Rossmoor residents chaired by Harry Brooks met to create the Foundation. It agreed upon founding documents and articles of incorporation and filed them with the State of California to create a 501.c.3 organization, thus rendering all donations tax deductible.

With notable foresight, the foundation not only developed an investment account to augment donations; it also crafted the fund to exist in perpetuity. The foundation then formed two committees: one to determine eligibility of prospective applicants, the other to monitor its financial affairs. Today, RSF consists of 27 trustees, all volunteers, who share its work.

In 1967, the first year it gave out scholarships, RSF received fifty applications, interviewed thirty students from Del Valle High School and Diablo Valley College, and ultimately gave \$300 scholarships to five students. Over subsequent decades the amount and number of scholarships gradually increased both due to the generosity of RSF donors (including some grants and bequests) and to the success of its investment account. RSF also added more high schools and another community college to create a pool of eight--Antioch, Concord, Mt. Diablo, Pittsburg, Ygnacio Valley, Deer Valley High Schools, and Diablo Valley and Los Medanos Colleges.

This year--in part because of increased publicity efforts, in part because of the big hearts of RSF donors--proved to be RSF's best. In the spring RSF trustees interviewed 154 student applicants at these eight schools, and ultimately gave out 119 scholarships. The basic scholarship is now \$3,500.

And why have RSF trustees been doing this for so long? Perhaps it is best characterized by a note and photo recently sent to the Foundation by 2025 RSF scholarship awardee Mikayla Hubbard, a former Los Medanos College student who was President of the Black Student Union there. Several weeks ago she wrote: "I have moved into my dorm at Cal State Long Beach," where she will major in marketing. "Thank you so much for helping me get started on my university journey. I am forever grateful to the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation." "You're quite welcome," RSF trustee Jane Emanuel responded; other trustees echoed these words.

Submitted by: Wayne A. Wiegand, RSF Trustee