

HONORING OUR PAST, CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE

Normandale produces diverse and high-achieving group of Jack Kent Cooke Scholars

By Steven Geller

Normandale's leaders and faculty take pride in making sure students transition successfully to their next school and that they know some options that are available to them.

One option is to apply for a Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Scholarship; it provides up to \$40,000 each year to about 45 deserving students selected in a nationwide search.

Six high-achieving Normandale students have received this scholarship since 2006, one of the most among any two year college in Minnesota.

Here are the stories of these exceptional students and what they've achieved since departing Normandale.

Anna De Golier – '06



De Golier came to Normandale from Belarus. When she received the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship in 2006, De Golier

used the scholarship funds to attend Cornell University, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology.

De Golier was known as a student leader at Normandale. She was president of the Phi Theta Kappa chapter, led fundraising efforts for victims of Hurricane Katrina, volunteered at a women's shelter, and organized blood drives for the Red Cross.

After graduating from Cornell, she moved to Hawaii and took a job as

an embryologist at the Pacific In Vitro Fertilization Institute. She worked there for nearly four years before pursuing her master's degree as an adult and gerontology nurse practitioner at the University of Hawaii. Anna is currently a registered nurse at the Advanced Reproductive Center of Hawaii.

Barb Teed – '07



Teed was a mother of five and grandmother of four when she was at Normandale. She typifies the diverse and dedicated student population at Normandale.

Teed had lived in Bloomington for 30 years and was on the security staff at the Mall of America for 10 years. She loved the diversity of all the people she encountered. When Teed found out that she had to have a college degree to move up in management, Normandale was her first choice.

She started out in the hospitality program but Stephen Wiley, an anthropology instructor, inspired her to switch her major to anthropology because it fit her interests in other cultures.

In 2007, Teed received the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship. Along with being a scholarship recipient, she was a reporter for the Normandale Lions' Roar newspaper; a regional president of Phi Theta Kappa and a member of the organization's All-USA Academic Team; a first-place winner in an investigative newspaper contest, and an honoree as

a top community college student in Minnesota.

Teed used the scholarship to go to The New School in New York, where she received a bachelor's degree in journalism. She also received a master's in writing and journalism at Hamline University. She is currently a writer for the Twin Cities Daily Planet.

"You can always reinvent yourself, no matter your age," said Barb, "Normandale gave me the self-confidence to do that."

Callistus Ditah – '09



Ditah came to Normandale from Cameroon. In 2009, he received the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate

Transfer Scholarship.

With the help of the scholarship, he attended the University of Minnesota with aspirations of becoming a physician. After graduation from the University of Minnesota, he attended the University of Oxford and went on to complete medical school at the University of Michigan.

He currently works at the University of Wisconsin as a general surgery resident.

Two tragic events influenced Ditah's decision to become a doctor. When he was seven, his father was critically injured in a traffic accident. Also, he had an older brother with serious medi-

cal issues due to a medical error, which almost cost his brother's life.

Ditah viewed the transition from Normandale with a heavy heart. At the time he graduated, he stated, "I wish I could stay here for two more years. I'll always be attached to Normandale."

Mahmoud Hatab – '10



Hatab started at Normandale in 2008, two years after his family came to Minnesota from Lebanon. He had two cousins that

told him that Normandale would give him quality academic experiences.

Hatab credits the Academy of Math and Science for guiding him through Normandale and for receiving the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship in 2010.

He used that scholarship to go to the University of Minnesota, where he majored in genetics, cell biology and development. Hatab attended three years of medical school at the University of Minnesota and also received a full-state web development certificate.

He has used those experiences to work as a health unit coordinator at Park Nicollet Health Services. Hatab enjoyed his time at Normandale.

"It was an amazing two years, the best experience of my life at the time," said Hatab. "Normandale was a really good place to be."

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Jack Kent Scholars

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Olya Homonchuk – '13



Homonchuk's journey has taken her from Ukraine to Minnesota to Cornell University, and Oxford University in

England. She first came to Minnesota in high school as part of an exchange trip to St. Paul.

When Homonchuk was looking at colleges, she decided to come back to Minnesota and thought Normandale would be a good fit.

She was involved in Phi Theta Kappa, Student Senate and many other Student Life opportunities. In 2013, Homonchuk received the Jack Kent Cook Scholarship.

With that scholarship, Homonchuk went to Cornell University on a full-ride scholarship. She graduated in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in applied science in labor and industrial relations.

Homonchuk moved on to the

University of Oxford, where she received a master's in comparative social policy.

Homonchuk is currently a Clarendon Scholar and Doctor of Philosophy candidate in social policy at Oxford. She's been a research assistant at Cornell, a paralegal at a large law firm, and an intern at the Embassy of Ukraine to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

Homonchuk is thankful for her education at Normandale.

"While at Normandale, I became so much more than I ever imagined," said Homonchuk. "I am living my dream because I was continuously told by my Normandale mentors that I could do it. They never doubted my success, and I am forever thankful to my Normandale support team."

Sheena Jimmick – '17



Sheena Jimmick has been fascinated by the stars and planets ever since she was a child and her father would take her

outside, point up at the night sky and explain how far away they were in light years.

In high school, Jimmick pursued the-

atre and she was in the Minneapolis cast of the Rocky Horror Picture Show for seven years. But her passion for planets was in the back of her mind.

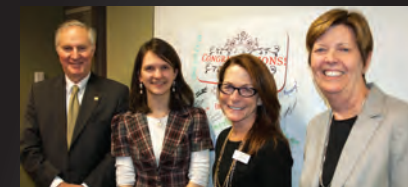
She gave up theatre to pursue a path in science. One of her friends gave a glowing recommendation for Normandale's science, technology, engineering and math courses (STEM).

"It was hard to believe Normandale could be as good in the STEM areas as my friend described, but she was right," said Jimmick. She started at Normandale as a first-generation adult student and though initially overwhelmed, she could see the resources and support Normandale would provide her.

Physics Instructor Tony Weinbeck helped her prepare for the STEM academic path and encouraged Jimmick to apply for the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship, which she won in April 2017.

Jimmick is currently at the University of Minnesota where she is majoring in astrophysics. She wants to study exoplanets, one of the fastest growing fields in astrophysics which is full of potential for discovery.

"My time at Normandale was a phenomenal experience, and I can't imagine I would be on this path if I had gone to a different school," said Jimmick."



"I am living my dream because I was continuously told by my Normandale mentors that I could do it. They never doubted my success."



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