

SPRING 2017

AN Bryce SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Paulette G. Curtis
Faculty Director of the AnBryce
Scholars Initiative at Notre Dame

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Rob and Renee Little

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Kassidy Lawrence '17

Logan McAbee-Thomas '19

Travon DeLeon '20

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

LONDON, ENGLAND



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

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NOTRE DAME AND BEYOND

From San Francisco, California to London, England



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



NOTRE DAME AND BEYOND:

The AnBryce Scholars Initiative at the University of Notre Dame

DR. PAULETTE G. CURTIS, Faculty Director

Greetings to all of you from my humble abode in Brownson Hall on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in the quite humble town of South Bend, Indiana, where nearly everyone is connected to the University and to each other by six degrees of separation and traffic jams last a total of five minutes. Though I am a bigger town/city gal by nature, I have come to appreciate some aspects of living in relatively simple and serene South Bend. The reason I mention these features of life here will become clearer to you in just a bit.

In truth, my mind is a million miles away from South Bend, or more accurately, several thousands of miles away, as I consider the activities of the last month for the students in our program. Building on programming established two years ago, our cohort of first year students travelled to London over Spring Break, where they embarked upon an ambitious immersion experience that took them from the museums of Trafalgar Square to the rich neighborhoods of the East End to the storied halls of Oxford University. Our partners in this venture, Dr. Patrick Clauss and Ms. Rosie McDowell, from the Department of Writing and Rhetoric and Center for Social Concerns, respectively, joined our own Program Manager, Amanda Hammond, in facilitating this wonderful experience. Our students were introduced to the rich history of London, and along the way, consistently interrogated the challenges such a global city poses to anyone thoughtful enough to consider them: economic disparity, homelessness, gentrification, educational inequity. Of course, our students also had a lot of fun, and walked away a closer-knit cohort.

While my colleagues were traipsing through London, Outreach Coordinator Sarah Kubinski and I were tripping the light fantastic in San Francisco with eleven AnBryce students. I am not employing “light fantastic” as a metaphor. The weather was gorgeous and sunny the entire time we were there. While experiencing good weather was not the point of our travels, of course,

it was good for our collective soul, and acted as a wonderful complement to an amazing four-day experience, which saw us examine the entrepreneur’s life in the financial and tech-industry driven Bay Area. We toured Mr. Nasser Barabi’s engineering company, *Essai*; were introduced to the story of how the *Bleacher Report* began at their San Francisco office, courtesy of co-founder and Notre Dame alumnus, David Finocchio; and walked through the fits and starts of the start-up at the “Opportunity Network” company, *Hired*. Each entrepreneur introduced us to their unique industry, talked about their own journey and asked students to consider the challenges of success *and* failure.

When we weren’t speaking to successful entrepreneurs, or getting “schooled” on employment opportunities in California at the ND Centre in Palo Alto by Talent and Employer Relations Specialist, Kaci Kelly, we were getting “cultured,” if you’ll permit me the term. Collectors Pamela Joyner and ND Alum Fred Giuffrida introduced us to their collection of abstract art of African-American artists, a collection that will find its way to the Snite Museum at Notre Dame next year; *dim sum*, a first for nearly all of our students, was preceded by a wonderful insider tour of the complex history of Chinatown by a tour guide from the organization Chinatown Alleyway Tours, which only uses local high school and college students who grew up in the area; and we even managed to get to the former prison complex *Alcatraz* for self-guided tours. Our last evening

at Levi’s Stadium was courtesy of our host and Notre Dame Alumnus, Jed York, the President of the San Francisco 49ers. He and his staff treated us royally, from offering us a tour of the stadium’s truly fantastic facilities to a wonderful, catered meal overlooking the field. What a capstone to an amazing experience, one that began at the lovely home of Rob and Renee Little, who were the most gracious hosts we could ask for. Many thanks to them, our entrepreneur mentors, and to the staff of University Relations, in particular Stu Fortener, Jessica Rizzo and Stephen Smith, for helping us shape the week into something special.

When I returned to South Bend, after nearly a week in the amazing Bay Area, I felt broadened and humbled by the opportunities our students – all of us, really – have for tapping our own entrepreneurial potential and being the captains of our fates. I also felt better prepared to handle a five-minute traffic jam. Bay Area traffic is no laughing matter....

Enjoy our accounts of our wonderful experiences at home and abroad, as well as our usual spotlights and other features. By the time we speak to all of you again, we will have hosted another speaker series, selected our next cohort of AnBryce Scholars, and perhaps most poignantly, graduated our first cohort. What a month it will be.

Til’ we speak again,
Paulette

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: ROB AND RENEE LITTLE



Rob ('91) and Renee Little first heard about the AnBryce Scholars Initiative from University Relations' Stephen Smith.

In town for the Notre Dame/Stanford football game, one cold and rainy Saturday in 2014, they attended the inaugural AnBryce Brunch and met the Welters family and several AnBryce scholars. Humbled, impressed and deeply impacted after those interactions, they soon made the decision to become sponsors of the AnBryce program.

One of the aspects of the AnBryce program that most appealed to Rob and Renee was the opportunity to become active mentors to this special group of young people. Upon learning that the scholars would be visiting the San Francisco Bay Area over spring break, Rob and Renee sought to contribute to the week’s festivities by welcoming the students into their home. Renee shares, “For three wonderful days, our family of six became a family of seventeen.” The students were blown away by the Little family’s generosity and warmth. Following this experience and the deep impressions the AnBryce students left, the Littles hope to help make the Bay Area experience a tradition for years to come.

Rob and his wife Renee relocated their young family to the Bay Area in 2003 when Goldman Sachs offered Rob the opportunity to transfer from their New York office to their office in San Francisco. They were enthusiastic about the opportunity to move to the West coast, as Renee grew up

in Vancouver, British Columbia. And similar to how they describe their initial interaction with each other, the visit to San Francisco was “love at first sight.” Today, Rob is a Managing Director and the Chief Operating Officer of Golden Gate Capital, a San Francisco-based private equity firm. The Littles have four children – Connor, 16; Liam, 14; Lauren, 12; and Claire, 10. They are active with their children’s schools (including De La Salle and The Seven Hills School) and both Rob and Renee seek to participate in various philanthropic organizations. Renee has taken an active role in their parish, St. John Vianney, as a Sunday school teacher. We can also attest to the fact that the children are highly impressive—Connor gave a very funny speech at dinner our first night in California. None of us could believe he is only 16!

Their support of the AnBryce scholars program has had an enormous impact on the entire family. Listening to the students’ individual stories of resilience, fortitude, and courage in the face of often profound adversity, has been inspirational to Rob and Renee, their children and friends. They viewed the opportunity to host the students as an honor and privilege and, like Tony and Beatrice Welters, believe strongly that AnBryce is developing an incredible group of future leaders.

“The opportunity to host the AnBryce students and program leaders at our home was a tremendous joy for us and an experience we will not soon forget.”

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Each year the AnBryce Selection Committee invites a small cohort of academically and financially-qualified admitted students to apply to the AnBryce Scholars program. The scholars are the first in their families to go to college, and have encountered significant socioeconomic challenges in the pursuit of their education. They have exceptional academic records and exhibit notable intellectual promise, creativity, leadership, and sense of service. They join a family of other scholars and take advantage of AnBryce's speaker events, immersion experiences and internship opportunities. **This is the AnBryce Scholars Initiative Spring Spotlight.**



Kassidy Lawrence '17



Kassidy Lawrence ('17) decided in the second grade that she was going to be a lawyer. "When I was in elementary and middle school I was convinced that my grades would be considered when I applied for law school." This self-awareness and drive have helped Kassidy establish a strong work ethic. Part of the Questbridge Scholars Program, Kassidy matched with Notre Dame. She also received a letter to apply for the inaugural cohort of AnBryce Scholars. "My family's worries about how to afford and navigate college were put to rest."

Kassidy acknowledges that she was nervous about all of the unknowns of college, and particularly Notre Dame. She credits AnBryce with making that transition much easier. "They were honest about the challenges first-generation students face but were encouraging that we were capable of achieving great things here. They assured us that we were not only a part of the Notre Dame community, but also the AnBryce family."

Kassidy also learned the importance of being honest about who you are. "My first few years at Notre Dame I was private about my background. When your family does not fully understand the college experience and being surrounded by peers who have trouble comprehending your upbringing can make you feel lost at times. I honestly do not think I would have survived these past four years without the program. After seeing how honest and vulnerable the other scholars were in sharing their story, I wanted to do the same. Sometimes it's uncomfortable to talk about the campus climate and how I've felt a bit displaced, but it's one of the most effective ways to inspire change."

Kassidy still plans to pursue law school, but she is taking her high school motto "service before self" and her time at Notre Dame to heart. Mainly, she also wants to continue to explore the many opportunities for change she has encountered at Notre Dame. She is looking at internships and Teach for America, things she hadn't thought she could do between degrees. "Going on a service trip to Appalachia, volunteering at a home for recently incarcerated individuals, and working at a maternity shelter showed me that I am more privileged than I thought." She hopes to take these experiences and growth back to law school, "I am still set on fulfilling my childhood dream."

DID YOU KNOW?

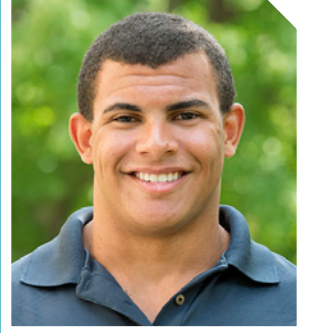
Dr. Paulette Curtis developed the Washington, DC program to provide an immersive experience to those who are unable to travel abroad. Extensive planning and help from the AnBryce Foundation, as well as Anthony and Beatrice Welters results in a wonderful trip that gives the students a much better understanding of the workings of our capital.

"As a global city, we hoped that DC would provide interesting points of contrast to London, as well as serve as a fascinating experience in its own right. Given DC's deep history, wonderful monuments and architecture, and socioeconomic disparities, DC provided a really important experience in the ways that global cities function."
- Dr. Paulette Curtis

Students take a personalized tour of the Capitol, attend lectures at Georgetown University, and learn about the gentrification of predominantly African American U Street. They also visit the AnBryce Foundation headquarters in McLean, VA.



Logan McAbee-Thomas '19



Before Notre Dame, Logan McAbee-Thomas ('19) grew up in Boyceville, "a little tiny town" in Wisconsin. He and his sister lived with their legal guardian, who he refers to as mom, having lost his biological mother when he was young. His high school days were spent playing sports and participating in band and drama. His mom was the one that told him about AnBryce after she received an email from Amanda Hammond, the Program Manager for AnBryce.

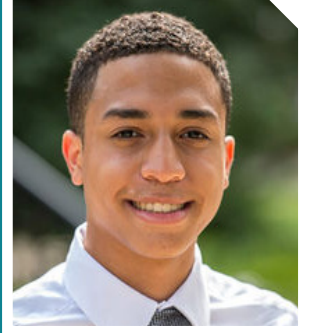
"My first impression was that AnBryce would be just like any other scholarship that would require a few meetings and a grade point average, but I now see that it is much more, it is a family where one can turn to for support and help, as well as an incredible network to help launch us forward."

Now a sophomore and a psychology major, Logan has had a few experiences that really resonated with him. "A couple highlights from the past couple years definitely include the trips that we took to both London and New York. These trips were both so incredible in their own way; London was a beautiful and immersive experience full of culture, while NYU had amazing networking opportunities."

This summer he plans to work at Camp Dogwood, a camp in Virginia that is at the heart of the Welters family's AnBryce Foundation. "For me, AnBryce has provided me with a great group of friends that I can call family. It has shown me there the world is full of people who understand the things that I go through and that it is okay to be different if it means being myself."



Travon DeLeon '20



Travon DeLeon ('20) joined the AnBryce Scholars Initiative last fall, and by all accounts had the shortest commute of any incoming scholar. Travon is a graduate of Penn High School in Mishawaka—which along with Granger, Indiana forms a triangle of communities with South Bend, the home of Notre Dame. In the summer before college he had the opportunity to be part of the United States' National Youth Orchestra. He played at Carnegie Hall in New York City, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Smetana Hall in Prague and Trivoli Hall in Copenhagen. He has played for renowned conductors Valery Gergiev and Christoph Eschenbach and with soloists Emanuel Ax and Denis Matsuev. "Not only was playing the music a beautiful and almost surreal experience, but the lessons I learned and the friendships I made will last a lifetime." It is impressive to note that he did not begin playing the violin until 6th grade.

"I became quite obsessed with the instrument. I wanted to play the pieces that exceptionally talented soloists were playing after their twenty years of experience so I pushed myself very hard. I can easily say that I will never part from my violin. The emotions that I feel when I play can be very intense at times and it's truly a means of expression for me. I have a pretty introverted character and this helps me express myself."

To illustrate the point, Travon had an exceptional experience last month. He was part of the freshman cohort to travel to London over Spring Break and admitted to feeling anxious towards the end of the week that he had not played violin in too many days. On his own, he researched various shops that would allow him to play for a bit on the last day of the trip. As luck would have it, the shop owner who had offered time to play, was not at his usual location, but rather at his office in Somerset House in London.

"As I walked into his little office with probably 100 violins on the wall I thought to myself this is no ordinary violin shop." The shop within Somerset House's east wing was called, Benjamin Hebbert Violins, after the dealer, Benjamin Hebbert, a graduate from Oxford University. "As we walked in, we introduced ourselves and he let me hold a violin he was refurbishing, it was one of Handel's apprentice's old violins. I was in utter shock that he let me hold the instrument. I think after he heard that I could actually play a violin he began giving me the instruments in his collection that he loved a lot. He handed me a Guarneri here, a Vuillaume there, and these were the most famous and prominent violin makers of their time. What really shocked me was when he allowed me to play with one of Paganini's bows. This was especially surreal because in the standard repertoire for classical violin, there is so much Paganini and he's always revered as the best. At the end of the bow there was a small carving of a statue of Paganini and the Napoleonic coat of arms. One last thing worth noting that he allowed me to do was play a viola, not violin, but a viola that is an exact replica of Hilary Hahn's (a very famous classical violinist of today whom I adore immensely) 1865 Vuillaume violin. When I played it, I honestly almost cried. It sounded like her!"

"I remember him saying to me, 'When you study abroad in London, I'm not even going to say if, but when you do, please come back.' The experience showed me the best of London and Londoners—I must go back."

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA!



To begin at the beginning: one of the goals of the AnBryce Scholars Initiative is to help our students build a network of contacts and a collection of experiences that will put them on a similar level to their Notre Dame peers and their fellow college graduates. Almost two years ago, University Relations Associate Director, and great friend of the program, Stephen Smith, came to Dr. Curtis with a question: would AnBryce be interested in spending some time in the Bay Area, developing connections in technology and entrepreneurship? The answer was, obviously, yes; but, we had to find a time that would work for students and those they would meet in California, a trickier prospect. Dr. Curtis knew that we would need to give the students some time to really explore the available options for careers and summer internships, while also getting a taste of San Francisco's vibrancy. We put our heads together and decided to divide our students into three groups—those that would travel to New York City in the fall to meet our sister program at NYU (this trip was featured in our last newsletter), those who would go to London for the Freshman Global Experience, and then those who had a particular interest in engineering, technology, social change and art would go to San Francisco during Spring Break. To say that the trip was a success is a gross understatement. It exceeded every possible expectation, by miles. There were magical moments that were planned and those that could only be described as kismet, or as we frequently said “luck of the Irish.” Dr. Curtis was mindful during planning to be sure to balance the networking and business insights and opportunities with contextual site visits to better understand the city. We named the trip Exploring Entrepreneurism in the Bay Area. Here are some snapshots from our explorations.

WHEN OUR STUDENTS RECEIVED THEIR ITINERARIES, THEY WERE CHALLENGED TO VIEW THIS TRIP DIFFERENTLY

“This experience is designed to expose you to the ways that broadly-educated, successful individuals have harnessed their entrepreneurial potential. The concept of entrepreneurship is broad, and you will be introduced to innovators who work across industries. You will also be introduced to the cultural richness of San Francisco. We expect you to walk away with insight into your aspirational potential, as well as an insight into this very important American city.” - Dr. Paulette Curtis

The students and Sarah Kubinski, the program's Outreach Coordinator, arrived on campus Monday morning, bleary-eyed but looking forward to their travels. We were all excited to escape the snow that had finally decided to fall after a milder winter. The

flight was uneventful until the very end, when an aborted landing made even our intrepid fliers a bit concerned. Once on the ground, Dr. Curtis met everyone at the airport, as she had flown out to San Francisco a day earlier to make some last-minute preparations. Our delightful bus driver and tour guide took us first through the city and out to the Golden Gate Bridge, before letting the students stretch their legs a bit at Pier 39. Requisite pictures taken, we headed east to Lafayette and the home of Rob and Renee Little. The students were speechless at the warm welcome the Littles offered. There were snacks (many of them vegan-friendly!) and welcome bags and a true feeling of “home”. That night the Littles hosted several Notre Dame alumni and parents for an informal dinner. The students had a chance to talk to a local dermatologist, several venture capitalists, an inventor, a periodontist and several entrepreneurs. There may have also been a couple of former football players—it is Notre Dame, after all. We heard from several of the guests, and even one of the Little's sons, who we are certain cannot be only in high school. Zoë sang, Luigi played piano and we may have convinced some former glee club members to serenade us. The evening hit every wonderful note.

Tuesday, we headed to Palo Alto to the new Notre Dame California facilities to meet with Director Patrick Flynn, Jess Rizzo from University Relations and Career Specialist Kaci Kelly for a session on opportunities



in California. The students were blown away by the contacts that Kaci has developed and energized by the opportunities available to Notre Dame students. After lunch at Stanford, we met with Stephen in Fremont to visit the engineering facilities at Essai. Founder, Nasser Barabi has a daughter at Notre Dame and was most generous with his time showing the students the components they manufacture and test right there in Fremont. He shared wonderful advice about the importance of making goods in America and the necessity of surrounding yourself with the best and most committed employees. Dinner was at the beautiful home of Fred Giuffrida (’73) and Pamela Joyner, who are leading collectors of African-American art. We were particularly lucky to see many of the pieces that will travel to Notre Dame's Snite Museum next year as part of the Soulmapping Traveling Exhibition. Both Ms. Joyner and Mr. Giuffrida were amazingly candid with the students about their backgrounds and interests the Arts. I think even our engineers were energized by their passion and their collection.

Wednesday, we moved into the city and started our day at Hired. As luck would have it, VP of Marketing, Rick Silvestrini, is a Notre Dame grad and a specialist in educating college students about careers in technology. He, along with Andre Charoo, VP of New

Markets, gave the students a very real insight into the kind of person who thrives in this dynamic cross-section of technology and real-life problem solving. A big thank you to Dave Finocchio and Mehul Patel for access to this emerging company. We loved learning about a company that is flipping the hiring model on its head. A brisk walk took us to Bleacher Report and a great session with Dave Finocchio on his career path during and after college. He spoke of his passion and the need to



find people who share your vision, along with the necessity of learning many different sides of the business to stay as informed as possible. We will all be taking coding classes now. They arranged for our students to

have lunch with a variety of Bleacher Report employees who impressed our students with their genuine story-telling and outreach. This was a frequent theme all week. The people we met were warm, genuine, honest and passionate. Wednesday afternoon saw us on the ferry to Alcatraz. This was one of the experiences meant to bring culture and color to our week and it did not disappoint. Many were struck by the stark juxtaposition of the prison facility and the city skyline across the water. The audio tour brought the prison conditions to life and the students had a chance to meet a former inmate who was selling copies of his recent book. The experience was both interesting and jarring. This was also our first encounter with athletes—several Orlando Magic basketball players were on the same tour.

Thursday we walked to Chinatown and had a tour with Chinatown Alleyway Tours. These tours are fascinating because they are led by people who live in the Chinatown area and the proceeds go directly back into the community. Rosa, our guide, was marvelously candid and well-informed about life past and present in Chinatown. Our students had many questions from mobility to family-life to food and transportation. She capped off our tour with a visit to the Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Company and we all had a dim sum lunch at Great Eastern Restaurant. After a bit of shopping, we all gathered to head out to Levi's Stadium and dinner with 2003 alumnus, Jed York. Having a prominent football team on campus, I think many students thought they knew what the evening would hold. We were, once again, surprised. Mr. York shared many private sides of the 49er's facility and proved to be a consummate host with his eclectic knowledge of everything from a local's perspective of New Orleans to his work with homelessness, his time spent in New York after graduation and his Ohio upbringing. The students also had a chance to catch up with people they had met over the week and those who have been friends of the program. Two of our students spoke about their AnBryce experiences before our evening and trip drew to a close. Well, that is not entirely true. After Travis Gayle '19, returned to the hotel, he walked down the street for sushi with a recent ND graduate and friend. In the restaurant was none other than Kevin Durant. To know how big a deal this was for Travis, one only has to look to his KD shoes and cell-phone cover, not to mention, you just have to talk to him for five minutes. When talking to Dave Finocchio earlier in the week, Travis shared that his three passions are Technology, People and Sports. One could conclude that this week in the Bay Area combined all three of these in a truly remarkable way.



LONDON, ENGLAND 2017

