

2010 Bill Moon Scholarship Winners Combine Academic Excellence and Service

BY AIMEE CIRUCCI

A little help goes a long way. Bill Moon understood this, and so do the eight talented students who were chosen to receive a scholarship in his name this year. The students' college choices and career aspirations highlight the cycle of service that started with Bill Moon himself.

Scholarship recipient Margie Martinez of Van Horn, Texas, says "I always loved school and wanted to further my education but needed funds to be able to make my dream a reality. I was overwhelmed to learn that I was chosen."

Martinez, an employee at Pilot Travel Center #209, is pursuing a criminal justice degree at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. She hopes to work as a juvenile probation counselor helping troubled young people find the path to a better life. "Friends often come to me for advice about their problems," said Martinez. "I realized I could help young people in the same way."

With humble beginnings Bill and Carolyn Moon launched a family business that would eventually operate the world's largest truckstop, the Iowa 80 Truckstop in Walcott, Iowa. The Bill Moon Scholarship fund had an equally humble start when, in 1989, the Mason-Dixon Truck Stop Operators Association made a \$5,000 contribution for use in establishing an industry scholarship program. In 1993, the Northeast Truckstop Operators Association also made a \$5,000 contribution and Carolyn Moon added an additional \$10,000. The NATSO Foundation began awarding scholarships to industry employees

and their dependents in 1993.

Bill Moon lost his battle with cancer in 1992, but left a legacy that thrives today. Each year, Bill Moon Scholarships are awarded to deserving students with ties to the truckstop industry. Applications undergo independent review, and selections are based on academic merit, financial need, extracurricular involvement, community activities and a short essay. The students chosen for the scholarship receive \$2,500 each.

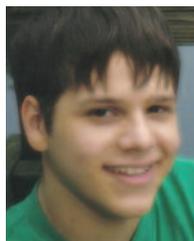


Jamie Denovellis

Like Margie Martinez, Jamie Denovellis "wants nothing more than to make a difference in the world." Denovellis, who works in food service for Pilot Travel Centers #194, plans to pursue a degree in social work at

Salt Lake Community College in Salt Lake City, Utah.

William Howard of Crossville, Tenn., a supervisor at Plateau Travel Plaza, explained the funds would provide vital help for him as an aspiring CPA. Howard is studying accounting at



William Howard

Tennessee Technological University. Also from Tennessee, Leann McConnell will use her scholarship to help with the costs of attending Lipscomb University in Nashville, where she plans to major in chemistry with a minor in psychology. Leann's mom, Michelle McConnell, has worked for Pilot for 15 years.

Lacee Pomerleau of Monticello, Minn., has worked intermittently at TravelCenters of

America – Rogers for 15 years. She applied for the scholarship after being accepted into the nursing program at North Hennepin Community College. The mother of small children said she was "very excited" to earn a scholarship since finances are tight in her household.



Lacee Pomerleau

Also pursuing nursing is scholarship winner Kelly Putnam of Russellville, Ark. Putnam, whose husband is an employee of Pilot Travel Center #430, was drawn to the scholarship because it was one of the few opportunities not earmarked for freshmen. The mother of three expects to graduate from Arkansas Tech University in May 2011.

Scholarship recipient Katie McHenry's father is a longtime employee of Pilot Travel Centers. McHenry applied for the scholarship to pay for her fifth year of college. She explained: "I want to go to grad or vet school to study animal behavior in a research setting, but have to take two to three semesters worth of courses to qualify. My parents have assisted me this far, and I want to pay my own way for the last year." McHenry will continue her education at Towson University in Baltimore, Md.

Lisa Diehl of Scottsburg, Ind., found out about the scholarship program through her father, a manager at TravelCenters of America – Seymour. Diehl was relieved to find out that she was a recipient as she had worried about how she would finish paying for her first year at Ivy Tech Sellersburg, where she is studying graphic design. ●

2011 Bill Moon Scholarship
Applications for the 2011 Bill Moon Scholarships are now available at www.natsofoundation.org. Scholarship applicants must be travel plaza/truckstop employees or their legal dependents. NATSO membership is not required. Applications are evaluated by independent review.