Dunbar – Holland Scholarship FAQs

**What is this scholarship and why does it exist?**

The scholarship is a $1000 one-time award given to one or two HS seniors who attended Jefferson for middle school and live in Arlington. It was started in 1994 as the Dunbar scholarship to honor the memory of a teacher who died suddenly. It was renamed the Dunbar-Holland scholarship this year to honor another Jefferson teacher who died suddenly in 2016, Mr. Tom Holland.

**How long has the scholarship been around?**

The scholarship fund was set up immediately following the death of Dot Dunbar in 1994.

**Where does the money come from?**

Following the death of Dot Dunbar, her family, along with Jefferson teachers and administrators made very generous donations. Their donations funded the scholarship for quite some time. Over the last few years, the PTA has chipped in. This year we are beginning a fundraising appeal to raise funds for this scholarship. We will be asking current and former Jefferson faculty, administrators, and parents to donate. We are also seeking support from local non-profit foundations and individual donors who wish to support our alumni in their endeavors.

**Why should our PTA get involved in giving scholarships?**

There are many reasons. We are very proud of the accomplishments of our alumni and want to support them in their efforts to attain a college degree. We also know that having high performing alumni who feel a special tie to Jefferson because of the scholarship, gives us a group of alumni who will take a special interest in our current students.

**Do scholarship applicants have to attend an Arlington public H.S.?**

No. They don’t have to attend an Arlington public HS but they do have to live in Arlington. Last year we solicited applications from all four Arlington HS programs (including HB), Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, and Gonzaga College HS.

**What are the criteria for selection?**

Because both Dot Dunbar and Tom Holland were so committed to their students and community, the scholarship primarily honors community service. However, Ms. Dunbar and Mr. Holland were both teachers and cared about academics, so applicants must have at least a 3.0 GPA to apply. Applicants write an essay and get a recommendation from their counselor and from someone who is familiar with their community service. They do not submit a transcript. In their recommendations, counselors simply verify that the applicant has at least a 3.0 GPA.

**How is the scholarship advertised?**

The head counselors at Wakefield, Washington-Lee, Yorktown, HB Woodlawn, Thomas Jefferson HS, and Gonzaga College HS all received a letter from the Jefferson PTA. They in turn sent the scholarship information to all seniors who attended Jefferson Middle School. When the application is released, a notification is also posted on the Jefferson website and onTwitter.

**When will applications be released and when will they be due?**

Applications generally are made available at the end of April and recipients are notified around the end of May.

**Who judges the applications?**

To lessen the likelihood of bias and because the scholarship has a community service focus, members of the Arlington community who have no tie to Jefferson review and score the applications. We strive to have one member be someone from the theater community who knew Tom Holland and one member be someone from the aquatics community who knew Dot Dunbar.

**Why is the scholarship given only once and not given for each year in college?**

We don’t currently have enough money in the fund to make this a renewable scholarship over the four years of college. Through fundraising, we hope to be able to do so in the future.

**What are some of the former scholarship recipients doing now and do they get involved at Jefferson?**

We have bios on the table of some of the former scholarship recipients. Last year Gretel Truong came back to Jefferson to speak to the students at IB night at the end of the year. Several of the former scholars have expressed an interest in coming back to support their alma mater. There are currently discussions on how they can be helpful.

**Who received the scholarship last year?**

Brenda Hidalgo from Wakefield HS, who now attends VA Tech and Bailey Hall from Washington-Lee HS, who now attends William & Mary.