

New Wingate Scholarship Targets Early College Students

Area students in "early college" high schools can vie for a scholarship to complete their bachelor's degree at Wingate University, thanks to the generosity of the late James and Bronnie Braswell and of Wadesboro Attorney George Bower who manages the couple's charitable trust.

The Braswells settled in Wingate in the late 1930s. A land trader and farmer, James Braswell served as president of the State Bank of Wingate and chairman of the Union County Board of Commissioners. His wife was an elementary school teacher.

"They were active in the Wingate United Methodist Church where Mrs. Braswell was my Sunday school teacher," Bower explains. "The Braswells did not have children. They were perpetuity people who chose to live modestly. It was their vision that their resources be used in perpetuity to help others in need."

Early college high school students take a mixture of high school and college courses over four years, enabling them to graduate high school with two years' worth of college course credit. To be eligible for the scholarship students must have participated in an early college program and have earned an associate degree. They must live in Anson, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Richmond, Scotland, Stanly or Union counties.

They also must demonstrate financial need. Priority is given to those with the highest grade-point average, and recipients must maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA and complete a service project or summer internship to keep the scholarship.

According to the trust agreement, the goal of the scholarship is to "continue to promote access to higher education by those who are first-generation attendees and who have demonstrated financial need with the hope that one day they would return to their communities and live as servant leaders."

It's that lifestyle of service that Bower saw in the Braswells and has emulated. An attorney with Poisson, Poisson & Bower in Wadesboro, he served as counsel for Anson County from 1989 to 2002, and has served as town attorney for Ansonville, Peachland, Polkton and McFarlan.

Although he earned his degrees from the University of North Carolina and Wake Forest University, Bower has strong connections to Wingate. His mother and her siblings all attended Wingate, and his wife Cynthia is a 1987 alumna. During Homecoming this fall, at the University's Blue Carpet Gala, Bower will be named an Honorary Alumnus.

Five Wingate University students have already received Gateway Scholarships from the Braswell Trust: Andres Jimenez-Rivas of Monroe, Mallory Martin of Peachland, Anthony McDaniel of Matthews, Jacklyn Acevedo of Albemarle, and Christian Habermeyer of Waxhaw.

To find out more about Wingate and the Gateway Scholarship for Early College Scholars contact Valerie Graham, associate director of transfer and special admissions, at 704-233-8103.

Cobb-Vantress and Valley Proteins Recognized for Outstanding Safety Performance

During the 2019 National Safety Conference for the Poultry Industry in Destin, Florida, two Wadesboro operations, Cobb-Vantress and Valley Proteins, were among a record 230 chicken and turkey facilities that received safety awards by the Joint Industry Safety and Health Council. The chickens were honored in recognition of their outstanding performance through the implementation of innovative and effective employee safety and health programs.

"We received the most applications ever for this year's safety award program. It is impressive to see so many companies implementing new and innovative programs to promote safety in their facilities," said Mick Berning, associate vice president of environmental, health and safety, Cargill, and chair of the Joint Industry Safety and Health Council.

The Joint Industry Safety and Health Council consists of members from the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, National Chicken Council and National Turkey Federation. Collectively, the three organizations represent companies that produce 95% of the nation's poultry products and directly employ more than 350,000 workers.

Based on the latest data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the slaughter and poultry processing OSHA total recordable illness and injury rate for 2017 was 3.8 cases per 100 full-time workers. The 2017 rate of 3.8 represents an outstanding 83 percent decrease from 1994.

Award consideration was based on injury statistics over three years and an evaluation of written applications by academia and other safety experts. Cobb and Valley Proteins were among one hundred and twenty-two facilities that received the highest level of recognition, "Award of Distinction."

The other categories included "Award of Honor" and "Award of Merit."

Lung Illnesses Related to E-Cigarettes Underscore Urgent Need to Regulate these Products

Statement of Matthew L. Myers, President, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported on Friday, August 23 that it is now investigating 193 possible cases of severe and even life-threatening lung illnesses associated with e-cigarette use in 22 states, primarily among teens and young adults. The state of Illinois reported the first death that may be from a respiratory illness caused by an e-cigarette, involving an adult.

It is unacceptable that thousands of e-cigarette products are currently on the market in the United States with absolutely no FDA review of their health risks and no controls over what is in these products or what users are inhaling into their lungs. We are paying the price for allowing the public, especially kids, to be guinea pigs in a giant experiment by a predatory industry. These incidents underscore why the FDA should be reviewing e-cigarettes and determining their health impact before they are allowed on the market, and why the FDA should act as quickly as possible to review products now on the market. That is what the law requires. The FDA and other policy makers must also do everything possible to curb the epidemic of youth e-cigarette use, starting with a ban on all flavored products.

It is important to note that these vaping-related illnesses are occurring at the same time that e-cigarette manufacturers are continuing their irresponsible legal battle to delay FDA public health review. We cannot afford more delays that put public health at even greater risk.

Transgender Woman Transferred to Anson Correctional Institution

On August 15, after months of negotiation and pressure from the community, North Carolina prison officials moved Kanautica Zayre-Brown, a woman who is transgender, to a women's facility, Anson Correctional Institution in Polkton. According to the ACLU of North Carolina Kanautica was held in a men's prison for nearly two years, in violation of federal law and at great risk to her safety and wellbeing. In March the ACLU of North Carolina sent officials a letter demanding that Kanautica be transferred to a facility for women.

"This news is an important victory for Kanautica and for the community that rallied behind her," said Sneha Shah, Staff Attorney at ACLU of North Carolina. "When I spoke to her today, she wanted me to pass on this message:

"I am just so happy and feel so much better. I don't feel like I'm in a monstrous cage anymore. I feel safe. I want to thank my community for their support and DPS for coming through with their promise. Now I can look forward to being able to receive the medical services I need."

Even though Zayre-Brown, who was born Kevin Chestnut, has had sex reassignment surgery she is still listed as Kevin Chestnut under her DPS profile. She went to prison in 2017 as a habitual felon. She has been convicted of insurance fraud and obtaining property by false pretenses.

Zayre-Brown had been jailed in men's facilities in Harnett County and Warren County. At those facilities she had to have high security around at all times, and was only allowed outside a couple of hours a day. Zayre-Brown claimed to have suffered abuse at those facilities.

"We're really glad to be able to help her," ACLU Spokesperson Molly Rivera said. "She's not alone. We know there are other people who are also transgender being held in inappropriate facilities and that's not just in North Carolina: this is country wide."

ACLU's Shah said, "The unfortunate reality is that so many trans women across the country - particularly Black trans women - continue to be disproportionately funneled into the criminal legal system where they are often placed in men's facilities and face severe risk of harm once incarcerated. For Kanautica and many other women who are trans, being in a men's prison means being subject to daily humiliation and fear. It should have never taken the state this long to take action on her case, but we're hopeful that Kanautica's fight can help pave the way for other people who are transgender and incarcerated in North Carolina."

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