

Alumni association awards third scholarship; first recipients are thriving in college

by Ruth E. Thaler-Carter, BHS'71

Thanks to the amazing generosity of Brighton High School (BHS) alumni and the equally amazing energy of Brighton Schools Alumni Association (BSAA) founder **Robert Lambrix** (BHS '57), the BSAA Scholarship Fund is seeing a truly stellar success in only its first two years. The fund has raised \$100,000 to date through direct donations and matching funds from alumni all around the country.

Launched in 2007, the scholarship provides \$1,500 each year for four years to an outstanding BHS graduating senior who plans to attend college at either four- or two-year institutions. "The demand on students has never been greater than today, and uncertainties regarding their post-BHS educations have never been more complex," said Lambrix.

Performance and practicality

An energetic up-and-coming young actor with a practical approach to the future is the 2008 recipient of the BSAA Scholarship. Frankie DiCiaccio, the son of Frank and Maria DiCiaccio and Donn and Donna Wells, is attending Northwestern University this fall. He received his BSAA scholarship check at the BHS June 6, 2008, awards ceremony and was the guest, along with his parents, of the BSAA at that evening's recognition dinner for the BSAA/BHS Alumni Hall of Fame.

"The BSAA is proud to add



Frankie DiCiaccio to its growing roster of outstanding BHS graduates and scholarship recipients," said Scholarship Committee co-chair **MaryJane Link** (BHS '58).

For DiCiaccio, who plans to major in musical theater, the BHS experience was instrumental in learning "how imperative a role academic stimulation plays in my life," he said. "Our core classes here constantly demonstrate real-life application of the subject matter, which has given me a great sense of value for my education ... While my Brighton training in the performing arts has given me an appreciation for my musical theatre niche, I also understand that, to be truly successful, I must be intellectually challenged by a diverse academic courseload ..."

Throughout his Brighton career, DiCiaccio balanced his interest in theatre with strong academic performance. He participated in Crazy Pitches, an a capella singing group, for four years, including two as co-director; the Welcoming Committee for three years, including two as a co-president; dance for eight years; and Vocal Jazz and Concert Choir for four years each, including one year as president of the choir. He was also a National Merit-commended student, was one of 20 students invited to participate in NYSSMA's All-State Vocal Jazz, and won first place in the senior division of the Alice B. Wilson Poetry Contest in 2007. He graduated from BHS with a 3.88 GPA, 2100 board scores, and a strong overall academic program at BHS, including nine enriched-section courses, three Advanced Placement classes, and five years of math and science.

DiCiaccio also shone in the community activity/volunteer arena, an essential element of the BSAA Scholarship: He participated in the Kick

Cancer's Button Club for three years; Brighton Summer Performing Arts for three years, including as a teaching assistant/assistant director for a year; and Natural Helpers for seven years. Classmates also chose him as an anchorman of the daily BHS student TV production, "The Morning Show." He also worked part-time during high school, at Aja Noodle Company and the Charbroil Family Restaurant.

First recipients report back

Rachel Mantel and **Jennifer Milton**, the first recipients of the BSAA Scholarship, are thriving in their sophomore years at Ohio State University and Connecticut College, respectively.



Milton is a Student Advisor for incoming freshmen this year. "It's sort of hard to believe that now the freshmen are looking up to me as an upperclassman, but, in a way, this has made the transition from freshman year to sophomore year a little easier for me," she said.

Milton has declared a double major in English and music, and also plans to pursue a concentration in creative writing. "I basically stuck with my original goals that I had going into college, mostly because I've absolutely loved every class I've taken in both of these departments," she said. "I really feel a strong sense of belonging here

at Conn, have made amazing friends, and have had the privilege of learning from brilliant professors.”

Music is still “a huge part of my life,” Milton added. Last year, she played in band and orchestra, took violin lessons, sang in an a cappella group, and took music-theory classes. She is still doing all of that, except for leaving her flute at home. “I’m taking five classes (add on music lessons and orchestra, and it comes to about 23 credits for this semester), so I don’t want to spread myself too thin.” She hopes to fit band into her schedule for the spring semester.

Milton also will be working at the library and participating in the English Department’s Student Advisory Board. One of her courses will certify her to become a tutor in the college’s Writing Center. As if all that were not enough, she is also looking into a volunteer program through the music department that will let her teach beginning music students in an elementary school.

“Needless to say, time has a habit of slipping away much too quickly while I’m at Conn, but I’m going to enjoy every moment,” Milton said.

Mantel is majoring in animal sciences at Ohio State, a switch from

her original plan. “Through my first year at school, I realized that veterinary medicine is not what I want to do, but I still want to be involved with animals,” she said. “I am leaning toward animal nutrition or animal pharmaceuticals.”

Last summer, Mantel decided to try something different from her usual seasonal job at a vet hospital. “My riding coach at Ohio State—I ride on the equestrian team—told me about a job possibility in Tennessee, so I jumped on it, and had the best summer of my life!” She worked at an outdoors/sleepaway summer camp for kids aged 6-14, outside Nashville, as barn staff and head counselor of the youngest-girl cabin (ages 6–8) for the majority of the session, until becoming barn director toward the end of the summer.

Mantel credits her experience at BHS for her success so far. “I never would have been able to step up and do what I did this summer if it weren’t for everything I learned while being active on Student Council,” she said. “If I were to give an incoming high-school freshman one piece of advice, it would be to become extremely active in at least one club, and eventually become an officer.”

You can help

The BSAA welcomes contributions to its scholarship from individuals, businesses, and graduating and reuniting classes. The class of 1958, for instance, is making a substantial contribution to the BSAA Scholarship—hoping to reach \$5,000—through its 50th reunion, being held this fall. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Supporting the BSAA Scholarship is easy. Just send contributions to the BSAA, 2035 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14610.

For more information about the BSAA and its projects, go to www.brightonalumni.org.



Nominations open for Alumni Hall of Fame

If you know of a Brighton High School (BHS) graduate who has done interesting or important things with his or her life, be sure to nominate him or her for the Brighton Schools Alumni Association (BSAA)/BHS Alumni Hall of Fame. Nominations are now open all year-round.

The BSAA is refining the nomination form and the new version will be available shortly.

For full details, go to http://brightonalumni.org/bhs_alumni_hall_of_fame.htm or call (585) 442-6055.