

## PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE: ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP BRUNCH TURNS 30

**F**our and a half years ago, Dylan Renaud was a senior in high school unsure about a lot of things, in particular about how — even if — he could attend a four-year college. Growing up in a family of six boys, he knew there were things he could always count on his parents for — such as bandaging up a bleeding forehead from a sibling fight — but there were other things that he understood he could not rely on them for. Paying for college was one of them.

One day in April, everything changed when Renaud received a piece of mail outlining that not only was he accepted at NJIT, but he also was invited to become a member of the Albert Dorman Honors College. He read further through the lines of text and there it was — scholarship money — and a lot of it. Tuition, room and board — all covered.

“For me, those few lines of text represented a pathway to a future I could have never dreamed of,” he recalled.

Renaud shared his personal journey with scholarship donors and their student recipients April 27, 2018 at the 30th Scholarship Brunch. The annual event provides an opportunity for donors to meet the students in person for a glimpse into how their generosity impacts their lives. In the last 11 years, benefactors have contributed \$201 million to NJIT,

establishing more than 225 scholarships, and enabling the university to provide increased and vitally important financial assistance to more than 1,250 students each and every year.

“You have the opportunity to provide a student with the tools to transform their life,” Renaud said. “I sincerely thank you for providing me with the opportunity to change mine.”

At NJIT, scholarship support enabled Renaud to engage himself in research, and this in turn took him to work in laboratories and give presentations at places such as Okinawa, Japan, the United Kingdom, Heidelberg, Germany, and more. He met and spoke with Nobel Prize winners, worked in the groups of international leaders in optics and materials physics, and saw parts of the world he never fathomed he would see. He co-authored six peer-reviewed scientific papers, and gave several conference talks and nearly a dozen poster presentations. Additionally, he received fellowships including two National Science Foundation awards, a German DAAD RISE Fellowship, the Goldwater Fellowship and a number of other awards from organizations including Edmund Optics, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and more.

Renaud was accepted to pursue his graduate studies at the University of Cambridge, Rice, Columbia, MIT and Harvard. He recently began his Ph.D. in applied physics at Harvard University.

Also speaking at the event was Tiaja Harley, who graduated in May with a B.S. in civil engineering and a minor in theatre arts and technology. Harley grew up in Newark as the eldest of eight children and is a first-generation college graduate.

*Robert C. Cohen '83, '84, '87, vice president of Global R&D and chief technology officer at Stryker Orthopaedics and a member of the NJIT Board of Trustees, was the guest speaker.*



*Dylan Renaud '18 described how scholarship support helped to achieve his goals at the 30th annual Scholarship Brunch.*



*Tiaja Harley '18*

She is the recipient of the Reif Family Endowed Scholarship, the Marjorie A. Perry Scholarship, the NJIT Urban Scholarship, NACME Scholarship, PSE&G Scholarship and the Jim Wise Scholarship. She is now working for LANE Construction in Virginia Beach as an associate engineer.

“Going to college would not have been an option for me without the scholarships I received,” she said. “It allowed me to attend school relatively for free, with minimal loans to accommodate my housing. This support I received has taken a big load of stress off me and my family.”

Guest speaker Robert C. Cohen '83, '84, '87, vice president of Global R&D and chief technology officer and a member of the NJIT Board of Trustees, said that today is the most interesting time for innovation, as demonstrated by advances in 3-D printing, augmented reality and simulation.

“You have the opportunity to leave here with an education that’s exceptional,” Cohen told the student scholarship recipients. “You are entering the workforce at an extraordinary time.”

Kiera Nissen, an environmental engineering major, was this year’s recipient of the Albert Dorman Future Leader award, established by the namesake of NJIT’s Honors College to acknowledge and recognize both academic excellence and the leadership skills and capacities of a student in the graduating class of Albert Dorman Honors College.

For more information about establishing and supporting scholarships at NJIT, contact: Darlene Lamourt, Director of Donor Relations, at 973-596-3403 or [darlene.lamourt@njit.edu](mailto:darlene.lamourt@njit.edu). ■

