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FIRST GENERATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Often times, first generation students are more motivated than their peers to do well in high school and get into college. But even when they succeed, the financial challenges they face actually going to college are simply daunting.

Florida Atlantic University wants to change that. Through the Kelly/Strul Emerging Scholars Program, full scholarships were recently given to 20 Florida first-generation students.

The program, started in 2017, has grown through increased donor support. Last year, four scholarships were awarded to students

in the class of 2021 and this year 20 students, in the class of 2022, will have support.

FAU President John Kelly and first lady Carolyn Kelly, along with Boca Raton philanthropists Aubrey and Sally Strul, developed the program.

"Some of Florida's most talented high school graduates accepted to Florida Atlantic University will never step foot on campus," said scholarship co-founder John Kelly. "Not because they lack desire or are unwilling to work hard for a college education, but simply because they can't afford it."

Three of this year's honorees live in Miami-Dade County. They are Megan

Tongo of Alonzo & Tracy Mourning Senior High School in North Miami Beach, Luisana Munoz of American Senior High School in Hialeah, and Luz Brito of Hialeah Gardens High School.

Through the program, "students receive tuition, four-year on-campus housing and additional resources needed to graduate debt-free from FAU." They join a support system called The Path that helps to ensure their success. Through The Path, supplementary tools, including career planning, mentoring, and financial literacy are provided to help the recipients through their college years into their post-graduate lives.

A former first-generation student, Aubrey Strul, understands the difficult burden of college debt and actively works to build the fund. The Struls jump-started the program with an initial investment of \$1 million. Since then, generous donors have significantly increased the number of students the Kelly/Strul Emerging Scholars Program can assist.

Donations to support first-generation FAU scholars are welcome online at <http://kellystrulscholars.fau.edu/give/>. Or you can call 561-297-4897.

If you have news for this column, please send it to Christina Mayo at christinamay@gmail.com.

