

Rotary Scholarship History and Impact

Created by

Steven M. Graham

Education and Scholarships Chair

Rotary District 5710, NE Kansas

In 2021

Rotary was founded in Chicago, Illinois

- Paul Harris, a lawyer practicing law in Chicago, asked several business associates in his office building to meet and discuss their lives.
- Four businessmen met on February 23, 1905 and started what eventually became known as the first Rotary Club.

Scholarships go back to Paul Harris

- On January 27, 1947, Paul Harris died at age 78 after a long illness. Rotary was 42 years old.
- Paul Harris wanted Rotarians to donate to The Rotary Foundation, instead of sending flowers.
- Upon Harris' death, members contributed to the Paul Harris Memorial Fund.
- Within 18 months, members contributed \$1.3 million (~\$14.5 million today).

The Rotary Foundation's First Program

- The Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship Program was created in 1947.
- Nearly 38,000 men and women from ~100 nations studied abroad.
- The purpose of the prestigious Ambassadorial Scholarships program was to further international understanding and friendly relations among people of different countries and geographical areas.
- The program sponsored several types of scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students.
- It was the world's largest privately funded international scholarships program.

District 5710 Ambassadorial Scholars

- Records of Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars from 1974-2012 show a total of 37 scholars over that 38 year period from District 5710.
- Did we have scholars before 1974? I assume so but don't know.
- You may wonder, "What are they doing today?"

Where are they now?

- During the summer and fall of 2021, Steven Graham reached out to past Rotary Ambassadorial and Global Grant Scholars to determine how the Rotary scholarship affected them, where they studied and what they are doing now.
- These are the responses from those who responded plus a couple updates by Steven from a few who did not.

Signe Balch

- Signe Balch, from Baldwin City, KS, received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship and studied abroad in Denmark in 1991-1992.
- Currently, Signe is a mobile large animal veterinarian (think James Herriot in the 21st century) on the Front Range of Colorado. It is a job that brings her into contact with a wide variety of animals and owners. She definitely puts her Rotary experience to work everyday.

Signe Balch, cont'd.

- “I was the recipient of a Rotary Foundation Scholarship in the early 1990’s, which allowed me to spend a year in Denmark studying the Danish language and culture. I still consider that experience to be one of the touchstones of my personal and academic development.
- I was fortunate to be assigned to a very welcoming local Rotary club in Humlebaek-Niva where I was treated as an honorary daughter in the family of the scholarship coordinator of that club.
- I was also invited to all Rotary meetings and excursions that were held throughout that year. Each of the club members was exceedingly generous with their time and friendship.

Signe Balch, cont'd.

- This, along with my studies, allowed me to immerse myself into life in Denmark and discover the nuances of a people that would have been nearly impossible otherwise.
- Such immersion broadened my understanding and appreciation of how people with different perspectives, even within the same culture, can and must learn to respect and work with one another.
- I see its (i.e. the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship's) effects in how I approach my work, my continuing educational pursuits and even in how I raise my children. Its effects have been lasting and I continue to be very proud to call myself a Rotary scholar.”

Chris Hansen

- Chris Hansen received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship in 1999 and studied in South Africa.
- Chris is co-founder of The Colorado Energy + Water Institute at Steamboat, which brings together U.S., Canadian and Mexican senior leaders from policy, industry, nonprofits and academia in an intentionally intimate setting to engage in a meaningful conversation about our energy and water future.
- Chris also serves in the Colorado Senate, representing the east-central and southeast neighborhoods of Denver of District 31.

Chris Hansen, cont'd.

- “Thank you for this opportunity: My year as an Ambassadorial Scholar in Johannesburg, South Africa changed the trajectory of my life and opened my heart to new people and a vibrant continent.
- I studied engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand, did 42 Rotary Club speeches all around Southern Africa and had the chance to meet President Nelson Mandela.
- I am forever grateful to District 5710 for this experience.”

Justin Kastner

- Justin Kastner, from Manhattan, KS, earned a M.Sc. at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1999-2000, using the Rotary Scholarship.
- Later, he earned a Ph.D. at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada.
- Justin is currently an associate professor in the Department of Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology at Kansas State University (KSU).
- Justin is also an ordained Anglican minister.
- Rev. Dr. Justin Kastner enjoys helping others in their ongoing and enduring academic, career, and life development.

Justin Kastner, cont'd.

- Dr. Kastner is committed to public service, having worked in international trade policy at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva and offering instructional expertise regarding the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.
- The interdisciplinary Frontier program, pioneered with Dr. Jason Ackleson, Director of Strategy for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Policy, and KSU adjunct faculty member, and Dr. Kastner has provided hundreds of students and trainees with experiential learning via Frontier Field Trips to international trade ports of entry, private firms, nonprofit advocacy groups, policymaking offices, libraries, and museums.

Jason Heinrich

- Jason Heinrich received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship in 2000.
- He studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science, earning a master's in Environment and Development Studies in 2001.
- Jason is Senior Partner at Bain & Company in Chicago, Illinois.

Jason Heinrich, cont'd.

- “The Rotary Scholarship provided a life changing opportunity to expand my worldview.
- It opened new professional and academic experiences that I would not have had access to otherwise.
- I can't thank the Rotary clubs enough for the opportunity.”

Lynn (Schwarz) Hennigan

- Lynn Schwarz Hennigan graduated from Kansas State University and earned a Masters in Applied Science, Farm Management Consultancy, at Lincoln University in New Zealand in 2005-2006.
- Since then, Lynn has worked as a Tax Preparer, an Extension Ag Economist with the Kansas Farm Management Association, a Real Estate Agent, a Certified Financial Planner, and now as Founder of Lit52Money.com located in Sabetha, Kansas.
- Lit52Money.com is a lean start-up providing information to build financial literacy in 5-10 minute snips of time. Their mission is for one-third of new American high school grads to benefit from this graduation gift each year.

Lynn (Schwarz) Hennigan, cont'd.

- Impact in Lynn's words:
- "Well, in 15 years, not a week and hardly a day goes by without some touch back to the year that Rotarians invested in me to study abroad. It enriched my personal culture.
- My studies and mentors in New Zealand gave me a different perspective on farm management and rural development-- something I have shared over and over again.
- Bravo Rotary for such a wonderful program!"

Mary Kate (Ludwig) Butterfield

- Mary Kate (Ludwig) Butterfield was from Beloit, KS, and earned a BA in History from Kansas State University.
- After her study in Ireland, she earned a J.D. from the Loyola University Chicago School of Law.
- Mary Kate is currently an Assistant United States Attorney in Kansas City.

Mary Kate Butterfield, cont'd.

- “I studied at National University of Ireland, Galway as an ambassadorial scholar. It would be impossible for me to overstate the impact of the Ambassadorial Scholarship on my life: my husband also served as an ambassadorial scholar (he studied urban planning/design at the University of Hong Kong). We met at the outbound scholar orientation held in Kansas City back in early 2007. We had an instant connection and kept in touch while we were simultaneously abroad: he in Hong Kong and I in Ireland. I then moved from Ireland to Chicago for law school and Bradley, my husband, moved to Chicago shortly thereafter.

Mary Kate Butterfield, cont'd.

- We were married in 2015 and lived for two years in Sydney Australia, where Bradley was an active member of the Sydney Cove Rotary Club.
- We now live in Kansas City and we have been looking to get involved in Rotary in a more meaningful way again.
- The Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship opened my eyes to the joys of experiencing life and culture abroad. It sparked in both my husband and myself a passion for learning about new parts of the world and giving back.”

Ryan Klataske

- Ryan is from Manhattan, KS, and earned a BA from KSU in Spanish and Anthropology and a MA in Anthropology from Michigan State University.
- He studied in Namibia, Africa, in 2009-2010. Ryan earned a Ph.D. from Michigan State University in 2017 and is an Anthropologist & Ethnographer.
- Ryan is a Teaching Assistant Professor at Kansas State University in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work.
- Ryan and his wife Rachel are both members of the Manhattan Rotary Club and have two beautiful children.
- Ryan related the impact of his Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship during the 2021 Rotary District 5710 Conference in Manhattan, KS.



Jamie Smidt

- Jamie Smidt was from Abilene, graduated from Kansas State University in Ag Communications and Journalism.
- Jamie studied at the Pontificia Universidad Católica in Chile.
- Her Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship graduate study abroad program went from February-December 2011.
- She worked for USDA in 2012. In 2013, she moved to Germany where she was an editor and conducted research at Universität Hohenheim.
- Jamie is currently a Doctoral Candidate at the Technical University of Munich at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, Germany.

Jamie Smidt, cont'd.

- “I had traveled a lot before being awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, but never to South America. The opportunity to live and study in Chile for a year, and travel to a number of nearby countries, was a rich introduction to the people, languages, culture, economics and landscapes of South America.
- My Spanish was forever changed by the unique “Chilenismos” (Chilean Slang). To this day, native Spanish speakers know I spent time there.

Jamie Smidt, cont'd.

- It was also fascinating to see the structure of Rotary clubs outside the United States. I attended meetings in Santiago that were somewhat reminiscent of meetings in Manhattan, Kansas.
- I also attended a Rotary meeting on Easter Island that certainly did not resemble Rotary meetings in Kansas! Outside of formal meetings, the work Rotarians do is unmistakable.
- I'm forever grateful for the scholarship and my lifetime connection to this global organization."

McKenzie Snow

- McKenzie Snow was from Wichita and graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelors in Political Science.
- She studied at the University of Lund in Sweden, majoring International Development and Management in 2011-12.
- McKenzie is currently Special Assistant to the President's Domestic Policy Council in Washington, D.C.
- Previously, she was a Senior Advisor for Education at OMB.
- Also, she served as the K-12 Policy Director at the U.S. Department of Education.

Global Grant Scholarship Program

- The Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship Program ended in 2013.
- It was replaced by the Rotary Global Grant Scholarship, which expands on the Ambassadorial mission, by now ensuring that every Rotary Scholar advance Rotary's International mission to "promote service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill and peace".

District 5710 and Global Grant Scholars

- Since 2013, District 5710 has had seven Global Grant Scholars, so nearly one a year.
- Since 2019, the District has not had enough dollars to fund Global Grant Scholars.
- Under a recent agreement with past DG Barr and present DG Henricks, the District will save money for three fiscal years and then fund a Global Grant Scholar in 2023-2024, again in 2027-2028, etc.

Myriah Smith

- Myriah Smith was from Derby, KS, and graduated from KSU with a major in Spanish studies.
- She earned a Master's degree in Panama in 2013-2014.
- Myriah has worked as an English Teacher, Spanish Interpreter, and Conference Interpreter over the years in Panama.
- Currently, she is a Freelance Interpreter in Panama.

Dr. Christian Cruz

- Dr. Christian Cruz conducted a Rotary funded doctoral research program in Bolivia and Brazil in 2013 – 2014.
- Christian was working on Wheat Blast Research, on behalf of K-State's Department of Plant Pathology and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Christian finished his Ph.D. and post-doc and is now an Assistant Professor at Purdue University.
- Christian came to Kansas via Ecuador and Venezuela.

Dr. Christian Cruz, cont'd.

- “First of all, I want to thank all the Rotarians who have helped me directly or indirectly throughout my life. For instance, the elementary school where I studied in Guayaquil-Ecuador received contributions from Rotarians during its construction back in the 80s.”

Dr. Christian Cruz, cont'd.

- “The Rotary Global Grant Scholarship that I received in 2013, while I was a Ph.D. student, allowed me to do research in Bolivia, meet great people, and gain soft skills.
- Four years later, I began my position as an Assistant Professor at Purdue University, where I have developed a successful program in plant disease epidemiology that is gaining recognition.
- The entire experience marked me forever, starting from the meticulous selection process that I will never forget and meeting great people in the U.S. and overseas. I plan to become a Rotarian once I have settled and obtained tenure.”

Dr. Christian Cruz, cont'd.

- Christian shared a picture that he took in Bolivia back in 2013, which he continues to use in many of his scientific presentations.



Chelsea Mertz

- Chelsea Mertz is from Topeka, KS, and earned a degree in Political Science and Government from KU in 2010.
- Chelsea served in the Peace Corps in Malawi after graduation.
- She received a Global Scholar Grant and earned a master's degree from the London School of Economics in International Relations and Human Rights in 2014-15.
- Chelsea Mertz is currently a Senior Project Manager at PAI supporting CSO partners engaging in advocacy and accountability efforts with the World Bank's Global Financing Facility in Washington, D.C.

Chelsea Mertz, cont'd.

- “The Rotary Global Grant Scholarship that I received enabled me to connect my passion for improving maternal and child health to my chosen career path. Prior to my time as a Rotary Global Grant Scholar, I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Malawi where I served as a community health advisor at a rural health center. My role was to support antenatal clinics as well as direct women’s health and empowerment programs for youth in my community.
- That experience led me to focus my career sights on advocacy for women’s health and rights. After Peace Corps, I connected with several Rotarians in District 5710, as well as the Rotary Club of Topeka, and shared my Peace Corps experience and my hope to continue working in this field.

Chelsea Mertz, cont'd.

- I had set my sights on attaining a master's degree from the London School of Economics in international relations and human rights. My ultimate focus was on international women's health and rights advocacy.
- The dedicated members of the club as well as the district helped me throughout the grant process and saw me off to London.
- There I was hosted by the Rotary Club of The City & Shoreditch. I had fantastic hosts and was united with many other Rotary scholars from around the world, many of whom have become good friends of mine.

Chelsea Mertz, cont'd.

- I am now based in Washington, D.C. where I work for an organization that advocates for women's, children's, and adolescent health and rights around the world.
- The Rotary Foundation scholarship made it all possible through the power of connecting people and serving communities.
- Rotary will forever have a proud place in my heart and will keep me connected to fellow scholars and Rotarians for years to come.”

Jessica (Munoz) Northam

- Jessica Munoz Northam was a Drama Therapy major at K-State.
- Jessica earned her MS at Barranquilla, Colombia from 2015-2016, using her Rotary scholarship and is a Trauma Specialist and Expressive Art Therapist.
- She worked with internally displaced women and children (due to the many years long war on drugs) suffering from PTSD in Colombia.
- She has conducted workshops for Rotary in South America, worked with refugees in the U.S. and assisted hurricane victims in Puerto Rico.
- She and her husband have just moved to Spain for his studies.
- Jessica presented a Breakout Session during the 2021 District Conference.

Caitlyn (Webb) Thomas

- Caitlyn (Webb) Thomas is from Colorado Springs, CO.
- She graduated from KSU with a BA in Economics with a minor in Spanish as well as a Bachelors in Business Administration/Accounting.
- Caitlyn received a Rotary Global Grant Scholarship in 2017 and studied at the London School of Economics in 2017-18.
- Caitlyn is now an Operations Manager at Orchard, in Austin, Texas.

Caitlyn (Webb) Thomas, cont'd.

- “Serving as a Global Grant Scholar created a remarkable opportunity to connect with Rotarians in London, and across the UK. It facilitated a deeper learning of culture and international relationships, which accompanied the extraordinary experience of earning a degree from the London School of Economics.
- Even now, I continue to draw from the relational and value-driven lessons I learned during my time in London and with Rotary.”

Gloria Funcheon

- Gloria Funcheon was from Wichita, KS, and earned a BA in History and International Relations from KSU.
- She then earned a MA in Russia, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies from KU.
- Gloria received a Global Grant Scholarship in 2018.
- She studied at SOAS University of London and earned a master's in Development Studies in 2018-19.
- Gloria is currently a Communications Specialist with Mercy Corps in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Gloria Funcheon, cont'd.

- “The Global Grant Scholarship from the Rotary Foundation dramatically changed my life by giving me the opportunity to undertake higher education. As a masters student at SOAS University of London, I was able to gain more technical skills and built a stronger professional network in the field of international development and humanitarian affairs.
- While in London, I had closer proximity to my target region, so I was able to take several trips as a development consultant and election observer to Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I also was able to work part-time for Mercy Corps in London providing administrative oversight for their humanitarian programs in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Gloria Funcheon, cont'd.

- Finally, I was lucky to meet my spouse in London! A true Italian, he managed a pasta restaurant I frequented too often.
- We now live in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where I work for Mercy Corps managing the communications strategy for a USDA-funded early childhood education and nutrition program.”

Genevieve Akins

- Genevieve Akins was from Topeka and earned her bachelors in Women's and Gender Studies at St. Olaf College.
- Using her Rotary Global Study Grant, she earned a Master's degree in Equality Studies at University College Dublin in Ireland in 2018-19.
- Genevieve currently is a Legal Assistance for Victims Advocacy Coordinator at the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) in Topeka, KS.
- She previously worked as a Mental Health Specialist at the Family Service and Guidance Center in Topeka, KS.

Visit the District 5710 Website

- Go to Rotary District 5710 website
- Go down the left column to **Foundation**
- Under **Foundation**, click on **Global Grant Scholarships**:
 - The first page tells when we will search for scholars and once again fund them to study abroad
 - Read information about Global Grants
 - Read the Global Grant Scholarship Supplement
 - Look at the list of scholarship winners since 1974
 - Review this PPT.

In Summary

- District 5710 has sponsored 37 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars and 7 Rotary Global Grant Scholars since 1974.
- These scholars all distinguished themselves during and after their studies sponsored by Rotary.
- Most went on to further their education
- Most became very involved in international projects
- Rotary had a life-long/very positive impact on these men and women
- They have impacted untold numbers of lives and that was the goal!

What are the results of scholarships?

- “Rotary changes us and those we serve. I believe we can change the world one life at a time.” Paul Harris
- That is what we are doing with our Rotary Global Grant Scholarships and we certainly can see the impact of the scholarships in the lives of our former students.
- Thank you for your support of Rotary Scholarships.