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Scholars Selected for Prestigious Program
for African American Male College Students

WASHINGTON, DC March, 1, 2022 – William A. Keyes, president of the Institute for Responsible Citizenship, announces scholars who have been selected to participate in its prestigious program during the summers of 2022 and 2023.

The Institute is an intensive two-summer program for some of America’s best and brightest African American male college students. The scholars live together in a residence hall, work at internships in their fields of interest, participate in a rigorous seminar on economic and constitutional principles, meet privately with prominent public and private sector leaders, participate in personal and professional development workshops, and enjoy a variety of social activities.

Twenty years ago, the Institute welcomed 10 scholars to chart a course that has since transformed the lives of over 300 talented African American men and countless others they have impacted in their careers. Institute alumni have become Rhodes Scholars, Fulbright Scholars, and the recipients of other prestigious academic awards. There are numerous PhD’s, MD’s, JD’s, MBA’s, and alumni working in a wide range of fields, including pastors, doctors, lawyers, K-12 teachers and college professors, and investment bankers.

Admission into the Institute is extremely competitive. The 13 newly-selected scholars represent a range of backgrounds and interests and attend a variety of colleges and universities. This cohort has a few firsts – the first scholar from the University of Buffalo, the first scholar from the state of Alaska, and the first scholar pursuing a career in speech pathology.

“The achievements of our alumni indicate that the program is working. I created the Institute to provide the most talented African American male students the kind of support that many others in our society take for granted. We provide exposure to opportunities, valuable internship experiences, and introductions to people who can support them on their journey to pursue extraordinary success for reasons that are bigger than themselves,” said William Keyes.

Keyes established the Institute in 2001 and welcomed the first class of scholars in 2003. The Institute will be in session from June 5 to July 30, 2022.

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Dylan Abrokwa-Jassor is a sophomore Government & Business Analytics double major at the College of William & Mary. He is a William & Mary Scholar, a prestigious award presented each year to a small group of academically distinguished students. He works on visa acquisition cases at the William & Mary Immigration Clinic. His family’s experiences navigating the U.S. immigration system helped shape his career goals of being an immigration lawyer. He also gains experience in the legal arena by participating in Mock Trial competitions. Dylan and his family are natives of Ghana but he has called Fairfax, VA home since childhood. In addition to his high academic achievement, Dylan has earned national recognition as a violinist.

Porter Alston is a Biology major and Environmental Science minor at Davidson College. In high school, Porter was a North Carolina Scholar, which is awarded to high-achieving graduates in the state, and was selected for the Governor's School of North Carolina, a competitive residential program for gifted and talented high school students. Porter is passionate about environmental justice and preserving the earth’s oceans, air, and forests and has devoted his time outside of class advocating for environmental literacy in schools. He is also drawn to medical matters and aspires to become a cardiothoracic surgeon. His hometown is Winston-Salem, NC.

Derek Brown attends the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is a Kenan Scholar, an award given to only 25 UNC students for their superb scholarship and genuine interest in putting the private sector to work for the public good. He double-majors in Business Administration and Public Policy and minors in Urban Planning. Derek shares that his Christian faith compels him to pursue a career in business as a means to drive social impact for communities in need. He currently volunteers for an organization that uses proceeds from concession stands to support local service organizations. Derek spent most of his childhood in Garner Valley, PA.

Alexander Burt is a sophomore Economics major at Morehouse College, where he is a member of the Howard Thurman Honors Society, a tutor for the Frederick Douglas Academic Success Center, and a member of the 2020-2021 Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Track and Field All-Academic team. After graduation, Alexander hopes to pursue a career in business. He is especially interested in real estate development. His hometown is Brentwood, TN.

Jeremiah Chapman attends the University of Buffalo as a Presidential Scholar, the prestigious award presented to the most talented students entering the university each year. He is also a Jackie Robinson Scholar. As a testament to his high academic achievement, he has served as a teaching assistant for an Evolutionary Biology and Cell Biology lab course as a sophomore. Jeremiah is passionate about children and medicine, which is why he aspires to become a pediatric surgeon. He is majoring in Biochemistry. Attending college in his hometown enables him to stay involved in his community by coaching basketball at his church and volunteering with local organizations, for which he has been recognized for his service.
Simon Debesai, an Ecology and Evolutionary Biology major at Yale University, has conducted research on infectious viruses at the National Institutes of Health. He has also conducted research on policing in Cincinnati, Ohio through Yale’s African-American Studies Department. As a high school student, Simon was an officer of the Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association and co-founded a student advocacy organization that sought to address social issues students faced. A son of Eritrean immigrants, Simon credits his cultural background with sparking his interest in international law as a means to help mend political conflicts in East Africa. His hometown is Silver Spring, MD.

Mar’Quon Frederick is a sophomore Government major at Cornell University. He serves as the political action chair of the Black Student Union and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He has a strong interest in criminal justice reform and plans to pursue public office to dismantle systems that contribute to mass incarceration and inequality. His hometown is Chester, VA.

Jesiah Mathews attends New York University, where he majors in Sociology with a minor in Business Studies. He is studying in Ghana during the 2022 Spring semester. At NYU, he is the Community Service Chair for Gentlemen of Quality and a mentor in the Academic Achievement Program. He created an app, UTrax, to streamline the tracking and verification of community service hours for students. He has also served as a Private Equity Summer Analyst at a family office, and was a Private Wealth Management Analyst at Neuberger Berman. His hometown is Silver Spring, MD.

Kimani Panthier attends Harvard University. He majors in Government. He was the valedictorian and student body president of his high school in Hempstead, NY. At Harvard, he is a representative on the Undergraduate Council and serves in leadership roles in other organizations, including the Institute of Politics, the Leadership Institute at Harvard College, and the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations. Kimani is a fierce advocate for racial equity and feels called to pursue a career in public service.

Wesley Robinson attends Hampton University, where he majors in Communicative Sciences and Disorders and minors in Leadership Studies. He is a Freddye T. Davy Honors College scholar, William R. Harvey Leadership Institute fellow, and a member of the sophomore class executive council. Wesley was inspired by the role speech pathologists played in his life after he was adopted from Ethiopia by an African American family and hopes to become a speech pathologist to provide the same service to others. Wesley hails from Richmond, VA, and plans to return after graduation.

Archie Rook attends Colgate University, where he double-majors in International Relations and Spanish. He is a scholar in the Office of Undergraduate Studies at Colgate which recognizes students for high academic achievements in the face of adversity. Archie promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion through his involvement with Colgate’s Student Government Association. He has career aspirations in foreign policy and international affairs. His neighborhood in which he grew up is purported to be the most diverse neighborhood in the country. Mountain View is a section of Anchorage, AK.
Oliver Spiva attends Amherst College, where he is building a stellar record in Russian and Economics while competing in cross country and track and field. Oliver conducts research at the Russian Center on campus and recently supported a project exploring the intersection of the Black experience in the Soviet Union during the Harlem Renaissance. While a student at Washington Latin School, he was an AP Scholar with Distinction, captain of his running club, and leader of the ACLU club. He speaks Russian and studied Chinese language and culture throughout high school. Oliver gained business experience while working for a local business, Pacers Running. He plans to pursue a career in business and finance to earn money that can be deployed for social good.

Brad Wedzi is a Presidential Scholar at the University of Georgia. He majors in Economics and minors in International Affairs. He is a leader in several clubs and organizations, including serving as the social chair of the Black Male Leadership Society. He is also a Student Ambassador for the School of Public and International Affairs. He hopes to pursue a career in community development. Lawrenceville, GA is his hometown.