



# Friends of the Bardwell Scholarships

Fall 2018  
Issue 35

*Changing Lives One Degree at a Time*

## A Dream Realized

On December 17, 2018, I will graduate as an Electrical Engineer. For some, the path to a degree is a great educational experience. For others, an obligation unsatisfied with the career choice. For me it was an extremely tough journey that has tested my patience, will, determination and my well-being. Eight years in the making.

Shortly after I was born, my parents journeyed from a small town in Mexico and settled in Chicago. They did this in order to give me a better life with many opportunities. Growing up, I didn't know I was undocumented. My experience was just like any other young American. But going into high school, my parents informed me of my legal status. I didn't think much of it, and, at the time, I was not affected by the consequences of being undocumented. Therefore, I didn't understand the concept.

A few months before high school graduation, my parents and I sat down to have, "The Talk", though, not the one everyone's used to. They told me that with even with all their might, they wouldn't be able to fund my education. I was completely torn and saddened for many months, even after graduation. I was not able to work, thanks to my legal status. I was stuck in a hole that seemed impossible to exit. My family was very poor and my sister and parents suffered. I thought about committing suicide a couple of times.

One day I sat down to arrange my thoughts and contemplate what I wanted to do with my life. I concluded that I was going to follow my dreams of becoming an Electrical Engineer in order to help out my family. Half a year after high school graduation, I went out to find a job. After weeks of searching, I landed a job at a cheap fast food joint.

I was underpaid, taken advantage of, and endured horrible working conditions. After a few months, I was able to save up enough money to attend a class at Harold Washington College for the summer 2011. I continued to put up with the discrimination and hard work until early 2012.



My life completely changed when DACA was implemented by Obama on June, 15 2012. This allowed me to apply for a work permit and be able to renew it. Three months later, my permit arrived, after frustrating paper work, a \$500 application fee and a tedious screening process. I began applying for jobs and eventually started working from the bottom-up. I worked full-time in order to pay for tuition at HWC and to help my family financially. Many times, I wanted to give up because it was a slow and stressful process. Eventually, I settled at a pipe organ restoration company where I was paid much more and I was able to afford full-time status in college. I was a full-time student and worker for about three years, helping out my family and building my self up from nothing.

Towards my second to last semester at HWC, I was completely worn out, depressed and stressed out.

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My sister was diagnosed life-threatening cancer and I couldn't keep up with the tuition payments while helping out my family financially. I eventually met this wonderful lady that goes by the name of Hedy Cohen. I told her about my struggles, aspirations, goals and dreams. From that moment on, my life took a turn for the better. Hedy would believe in me when no one would, even myself. She would offer mentorship and comfort in the darkest struggles of my journey. She took me under her wing. With Hedy's support I was able to finish my last semester at HWC and transfer to the University of Chicago at Illinois for the fall 2015.

UIC was a unique and overwhelming challenge. The full-time tuition was 4.5 times more than HWC. I vowed that I wasn't going to give up anytime soon. Eventually with hard work and with Hedy by my side, I was able to move forward and transition from part-time status to full-time a year after. I worked 50 hours a week while balancing out the engineering classes and helping my family financially. I was extremely overwhelmed with work, exhausted and miserable because my peers had already graduated from traditional 4-year college experiences. Hedy wouldn't let my negative thoughts get the best of me; she would give me the motivation and strength I needed to go forward during dark times in my life.

Midway through 2016, I won the opportunity to be part of the U.S. Mexico Foundation's program to visit family members in Mexico for the month of December. This program introduced another turning point in my life because it was an incredibly difficult task to pull through. I had to obtain support from the local congressman and political advocates in order for me to attain travel documents. Once I got the green light, I left for Mexico with a group 100 DACA recipients. After 24 years of being in Chicago without traveling, I was able to experience a new, exotic land. I met my family whom I left at three months old. It was an incredible and overwhelming experience. I got the opportunity to see Mexico for what it is, a beautiful land, not what the media in the U.S. shows it to be.

Slowly, I started making my way out from the smoke and flames. On March 2017, I was able to buy my first car. Shortly afterwards, I acquired an engineering internship at Continental Automotive systems for the summer and another internship at General Electric for the Fall 2017 semester. During my stay at the internships, I grew tremendously as a professional. I was immersed in an environment that I always dreamed of. I got a glimpse of my future.

Now, after so much work, sweat and tears, I have the Fall 2018 semester to complete and graduation is coming up quickly. I am extremely excited and happy. Though, this will end the most difficult chapter of my life, there will still be a few more obstacles and challenges to overcome.

In retrospect, this journey has taught me so much in life. It has positively shaped the way I am as a person, student and professional. It has pushed me to the limits, pushed me out my comfort zone in many instances, and tested my patience, determination and power to accomplish anything. I've met great and influential people who believed in me throughout the way, but no one like Hedy. Without her help, determination and dedication, I wouldn't have made it this far. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank everyone that has supported me throughout my endeavor, the Roger Bardwell Scholarship, and Hedy Cohen.

*Jorge Taylor*  
*AA HWC 2015*  
*BS UIC 2018*  
*Bardwell Scholar*

www.BardwellScholarships

## Thank you to Contributors

Bardwell Scholars is both proud and humbled that, with your help, we are a 100% donor funded organization. Much gratitude is extended to the individuals listed below for their ongoing support. In addition, we thank those who read our newsletters, visit our website, "friend" us on FB, attend our functions, or talk to others about the work we are doing. In a world where many people are doing important work, we thank all of you for choosing to support RBS. As each contribution is of value, we list them alphabetically and equally.

We acknowledge and thank these individuals who have contributed financially to RBS, November 2017- November 2018.

Sid/Sayoko Bardwell	Carol Henes	Marsha Richmond
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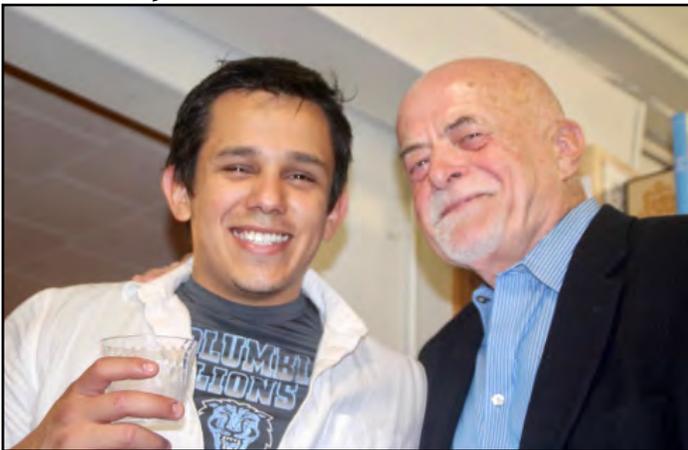
# Roger Bardwell Scholarship Fundraiser



*Linda Haubach, Susan Sidell, Steven Sidell, Fay Ealy, music director, Asim Allakim*



*RBS Esmerelda and Rubi Amaro*



*RBS Daniel Dantes with George Bickford*



*RBS Hailey Stout with Daniel Dantes*



*Liz Feldman with RBS board member Johnny Phan*



*Joanna Ashley, Gary Shovers, and Anne Harkonen*

The Roger Bardwell Scholarship fundraiser, on August 24, 2018, was an evening of great food, melodies and fun. *Bookends and Beginnings*, an Evanston gem located at 1712 Sherman Avenue, Alley #1 sponsored the event. The space offered an exquisite setting with a backdrop of books and treasures. The attendees included new and old friends along with scholars who all came in support of expanding the reach to higher education.

Some of the night's excitement included games and musical arrangements by our very own vocalist, Asim Allakim, accompanied by violinist, Miku Sekizawa, and Jason Nelson on piano. The performance included hits such as; "I Can't Make You Love Me", "Blue Skies", and "Yesterday".

# More “Bookends and Beginnings”

On August 24, 2018, I had the pleasure of volunteering as the bartender for RBS’s yearly Books+Wine fundraiser at the wonderful bookstore, Bookends and Beginnings. Serving wine to all our donors, RBS Board members, and RBS scholars, is the least I can do for an organization that has helped me achieve many academics goals. After studying one year at the School of General Studies at Columbia University in New York City, I was happy to be able to share my experiences and future goals with guest and friends. As a First-Generation, Low-Income and DACA student, times in New York have been challenging. However, the mentorship and assistance Hedy Cohen and RBS continue to provide me, helps me continue to focus on graduating from Columbia University with a Political Science and Latin America Studies degree.

Often, people who donate money do not see how their donations impact people’s everyday life. RBS provides direct mentorship and academic support allowing scholars to continue to break barriers that would not have been broken without the support from countless people.

Currently, I plan to graduate in 2020, and after graduation I plan to join an organization that will influence communities. Whether it is in Chicago, New York City or somewhere else in the country, receiving a bachelor’s degree from Columbia University will open the doors to opportunities that will give me the resources I need to continue achieving my dreams.

The RBS fundraiser held annually in the month of August is a momentous experience, and a perfect time to help build awareness, while raising funds. Through your generous donations, the Roger Bardwell Scholarship can change lives, one degree at a time.

If you were there, we would like to extend a warm. “Thank You”. If you were unable to attend, we look forward to mixing and mingling with you and yours in the New Year.

*Daniel Dantes  
AA HWC 2016  
Columbia University Student  
Bardwell Scholar*



*Shirlene Ward and Rocky Kunz*



*Shelley Sutherland leads “Bingo”.*

# First Experiences

This Fall semester at St. Xavier University I had the opportunity to learn many exciting things like how to take vital signs, and perform different types of assessments. One of my first experiences as a student nurse was attending Smith Village, a retirement community. At Smith Village they provide different levels of care to residents based on their needs. For example, at Smith Village they offer short-term rehabilitation, assisted living, and different types nurses are there to provide care to the residents. At Smith Village, I took a general survey and vital signs on a resident. I had a great time! The picture provided is from an induction ceremony done for students in the Nursing program. I am really grateful with God for the opportunity He has given me to attend SXU. I thank every single person in my life who has encouraged me to continue my studies and support me on my journey to becoming a Nurse.

*Maria Rubi Amaro*  
AA HWC 2015  
St. Xavier Student  
Bardwell Scholar



*RBS Rubi Amaro is on the left.*



*(from left) Diane Richardson, Claudia George, Charles McSweeney, Ellen Goldberg, Debbie Miles, and Masaki Araya at Bookends and Beginnings.*

# First Semester at Columbia

I have felt both honored and humbled by my experience at Columbia University so far. There is a great respect for the institution that translates into respect for those who are here and the work they produce. I officially declared my major in Socio-cultural Anthropology earlier in October and I am excited to start my undergraduate research soon. I am a member of a few clubs and I also hold two work positions on campus. I work for a non-profit funded by Columbia called Community Impact and I work as a tour guide for prospective Columbia students. Living in New York City has been an adjustment, but it has been fulfilling. I am learning from fellow students who are passionate about a variety of fields and are equally interested in learning about my passions, even when opinions differ. It has been different from what I imagined; I faced challenges that I never expected. As I continue to work hard at this prestigious institution, I am committed to embrace every moment of my time here.

Thank you to Roger Bardwell Scholarships for helping me transition to Columbia University in the City of New York!

*Tondalaya Smith*  
*AA HWC 2018*  
*Columbia University Student*  
*Bardwell Scholar*



*Tondalaya at Columbia*



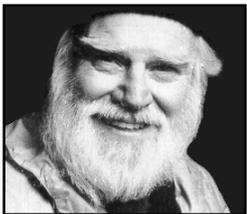
*Tondalaya at 2018 HWC graduation*

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And tell others about the important  
work we are doing

Contributions, which are deductible to the extent the law allows, are always appreciated and enable us to continue this important work. Please ask your employer if they offer matching funds or corporate contributions to nonprofit organizations.

*(The Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship Fund is a registered 501(C)3 tax exempt organization)*

Contributions to the Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship Fund may be made by check and sent to:



**Bardwell Scholarship NFP**

**1326 Monroe  
Evanston, IL 60202**

**or**

**donate on our website through Pay Pal**



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For further information, or if you know someone who might be a candidate for a Bardwell Scholarship, please contact Hedy Cohen:

Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship Fund, Harold Washington College  
30 E. Lake St., Room 1155 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 553-3049

***[www.rogerbardwellscholarship.org](http://www.rogerbardwellscholarship.org)***

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