



# Friends of the Bardwell Scholarships

Spring 2010  
Issue 18



*Graduating from HWC with Associate of Arts degrees are (left to right) back row: W. David Work, Phillip Burgess, Steven Ellerson, Darias Summersies Front row: Barbara King, Gale Washington, Sunday Joseph, Lawana Loving, Leonetta Clark.*

## Bardwell Scholarship Graduates 2010



*Graduating from Northeastern Illinois University with a BA in Social Work is Edilberto (Tito) Vasquez.*

## My Journey

**F**irst and foremost I want to thank God, my family, and the entire Bardwell Family for supporting me on my journey. Ten years ago I would have never have thought that I would be where I'm at in life today. I was lost on the streets of Chicago involved in gangs, drugs, and violence.

Even though I was doing what I did, I was always going back to school in my mind. I tried going to HWC back in 1998 but ended up dropping out, and I tried again in 1999 but ended up doing the same. I attribute this to being too involved in the gang lifestyle and being in and out of jail. It wasn't until about 2003 that I felt like I was ready to take my education and my future seriously.

That's when I decided to give college another shot, but this time I had a problem. Since I had dropped out various times before, I only had two semesters of financial aid left. I was devastated. Here I was ready to move on with my life, wanting to do something positive for once, and now this. Fortunately somebody at the college mentioned to me about the Bardwell Scholars Program, but I asked myself who's going to believe in me when I have messed up so much? I was at a point in my life in which I didn't believe in myself much. However, I decided to go ahead and apply.

To make a long story short, I met with Hedy. At first she was reluctant about supporting me due to my past academic background. Truthfully I didn't blame her at all; I was a mess, but I was ready. I wanted to prove to myself and society that I was a good person that just made some bad mistakes. Eventually Hedy and the Bardwell Scholars Program chose to help me. They paid for my tuition and books for various semesters. I became a Senator in the Student Government Association, a member of the Organization of Latin American Students, and averaged a "B" GPA. I finally was on track, thanks to the financial and moral support that Hedy was giving me. Through Bardwell I got to meet and know most of the college's administrators. I felt like I was at home at Harold Washington.

Finally the big day came in May, 2006; it was time for me to graduate. I was so proud that I had come this far. Hedy was there for me till the last step, and I will never forget that. Not only did she help me with school, she also purchased a desktop computer for

me as a graduation present. It was a blessing because I didn't have a computer at all. I went to work shortly after HWC, but I felt something was missing. I actually missed being in school. So after being out of school for a year, I chose to go back and get my Bachelor's in Social Work with a minor in Sociology from Northeastern Illinois University. Once again The Bardwell Scholars Program was there to help me. Hedy paid for me to attend summer school as well as helping me get a laptop computer for school. I loved being back in school, and through my experience at HWC, I couldn't have been more prepared for this step.

**This past weekend on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, this one time gang leader, drug addicted criminal became an educated professional, ready to give back to a community that I once was a menace to.** I graduated with honors, "Cum Laude", and want to thank everyone that has made this possible, especially my Bardwell family. Bardwell is more than just a scholarship; it is a family of people who have been through numerous ordeals but have moved forward to educate themselves to make their lives better. I can't wait for the day that I transition from a Bardwell Scholar to a Bardwell Donor. Until then I am so grateful for everything that Bardwell has done for me. Thank you and God bless you all.

***Edilberto Vazquez***

***AA HWC 2006***

***BA NEIU 2010***

***Bardwell Scholar***



***Edilberto Vazquez with his family***

## The Impact of My Experiences at HWC on My Life and My Future

The impact that HWC has had on my life and my future cannot be expressed in words. It was not just a learning institution but a place filled with a diverse range of people. Once you entered the building color had no weight. I believe my coming here was the best choice I could ever have made. It was through this school's diverse teaching faculty, Hedy Cohen, head of the Bardwell Scholarship Program, the Student Government Association and the club Inescapable Mutuality that I was able to develop as a man, leader, professional, and friend.

First, I think of the instructors and professors at HWC; there are too many to name. They provided me with continuous direction, support and encouragement in my courses and my career of choice. They impacted my life in ways that I never dreamed. Before HWC I thought of college as just a place of learning; now I see it as so much more. The teachers never allowed me to sell myself short. It was clear that their class requirements were never about themselves but instead about me and my capabilities. I learned from them that anything the mind can conceive, it can achieve and that I would persevere.

Second, there is Hedy Cohen and Bardwell Scholarships which truly exceeded my expectations. My plan was to get some assistance with my books but instead I received a mentor. From the first day I met Hedy Cohen, she has been supportive of me one hundred and ten percent. She has inspired me even more to move ahead in the field of Addiction Studies. I can see through her the reward that I will receive. From her, I have developed as a person, man and husband.

Third, there is the club Inescapable Mutuality. The individuals who are a part of this group entrusted me to lead as president of Inescapable Mutuality. I was provided with the room to enhance my skills as a leader and a professional along with being able to do one of the things I love most in life, expressing myself through music. I also developed many long lasting friendships that will never be forgotten.

In closing, attending HWC has truly been an experience that I will never forget. Now that it is approaching the end, I cannot help but feel a sense of loss while at the

same time this experience has prepared me to move on to a four year university. So many people here have touched my life. At HWC I learned there are people in the world that truly care and who accept you based on the character that you possess. **HWC provided me with an excellent education, an understanding that I have a place in this world, and a right to be whomever I choose to be. These things alone will take me further than I could ever have imagined.**

*Phillip Burgess  
AA HWC 2010  
Bardwell Scholar*



*RBS/HWC graduate Phillip Burgess*



*Advisor Debbie Miles with RBS Barbara King*

## The Power to Be Heard

Sometimes hope for oneself lies dormant, buried in the tiniest crevice of your mind. You become a mother and suddenly your innermost dreams are deferred. Life unravels at a warped speed and you dutifully ride those waves, uncertain of your path. Nineteen years ago I graduated from high school with honors and had every intention of returning to school to obtain a college degree.

The goal of college became a living, breathing reality the summer of 2005. I remember that day; the sun was bright and I felt wrapped in the warmth of hope, individualized hope, of what the future could bring for me. I awoke that summer morning, pushed back the challenges of life, dressed in dark Levi jeans, a fresh white t-shirt and K-Swiss gym shoes. I gladly jogged to the blue line train hoping to re-connect with confidence and the sound of my voice. The education would be a bonus.

I knew this wasn't going to be easy as I'd literally become a robot with a routine. I performed all aspects of the titles I held: mother, wife, and assistant manager. I thought about everyone but me, and did whatever it took to complete a task. I wore hard work like a brand new pair of shoes. My work ethic has always been commendable and I innocently assumed I could get ahead this way. It took years of watching others be promoted until I dared to ask for what I wanted. I wanted the manager position; everyone knew I could do the job. All I had to do was open my mouth and ask. I got the job, but the one stipulation attached was school. I knew I couldn't afford to go, so I asked my job to support this venture. A semester elapsed, and the funds for college tuition quickly dried up. I was pretty good at conveying my thoughts on paper, so I applied for the Bardwell Scholarship. As the old saying goes, "Be careful of what you ask for; you might just get it."

I added to my list of credentials Bardwell Scholar. The administrator of this scholarship became the foreman to rebuilding my bridge of confidence. She believed I could complete the task and shored up the financial support to make attending HWC possible. Slowly, but surely, the bridge became a reality held sturdy by A's and B's. My confidence grew with each class I mastered. Things were looking good on the outside, but a storm was brewing inside. I avoided communication courses like the plague, and steered all conversations away from me. I wanted to be heard, but my voice had the annoying habit of shaking like waves in a tumultuous

storm. I was afraid that something as simple as speaking would deter my goal. To graduate I had to take Speech 101, Sociology, and Philosophy, all classes designed to force ME out of my comfort zone. When faced with the dilemma of a lower grade, I began to speak, ask questions, and offer my opinion.

Each time I was placed in the spot light, I remember walking away drenched like I'd been locked in a sauna. Each time I was forced to speak it became a little easier. I don't think I will ever enjoy speaking in front of a room full of people; but NOW I know I can do it.

As my last days of study at HWC are coming to a close, I think about the things I will take away from my experience. The first is hope for a better future; this educational journey never ends. The second is confidence; it doesn't dry up, it grows. And the third is the sound of my own voice; trust and believe that the volume has been turned up. Please tune in. I know I will.

**Barbara King**  
AA HWC 2010  
Bardwell Scholar



RBS/HWC graduate Gale Washington

## Thank You

Hello fellow Bardwell Scholars: My name is Gale Washington, I want to say thank you to Hedy Cohen and the committed staff and faculty at Harold Washington College, I received my Associate of Arts degree on May 8, 2010, becoming the only person in my family to ever graduate from college. Once again, I say thank you and to Hedy may God continue to bless and keep you under his wings. You truly are one of his angels.

**Gale Washington**  
AA HWC 2010  
Bardwell Scholar

## Education, My Center of Attention

As a young determined woman who is putting her best foot forward during these trying times of economic failure, education is definitely at the center of my attention. I have never been one to underestimate the importance of having a quality education. However, now more than ever, I clearly understand the unlimited struggles and strains that will come with the lack of a quality education. I, myself, have overcome many trying times and struggles which quickly made me realize that the opportunity to possess a quality education has always been there but has been up to me to reach out and grab a hold of it.

My name is Lawana Loving; I am currently a Spring 2010 graduate of HWC. I have earned my Associate in Arts Degree with a concentration in Business Administration. Though this first step towards my educational endeavor has been completed, it has not been a walk in the park. During my time at Harold Washington, I wore many hats and had the pleasure of meeting and building relationships with many wonderful people. While attending classes, I also hold down a full time job (40+ hours a week), raise two children, am active in my church, and am an active member of PTK. Every now and then I even manage to find an hour or so to just relax.

As I proceeded down the road to my future I was introduced to "the wonderful" Ms. Hedy Cohen of the Roger Bardwell Scholars program. Hedy has been such a magnificent inspiration in my life. She has helped me realize more than ever that the impossible is only impossible if you allow it to be. Hedy has such a strong outlook on helping people reach their goals of success. She is not only a mentor, she is a person who genuinely cares and with a backbone as strong as Hedy, one has no alternative other than success. So, thank you Ms. Cohen for just being you.

Juggling work, children, school, and other activities is not an easy task but, life is not easy and no one said that it would be. We, as people, can do and succeed at anything we put our minds to. I believe, if we want it badly enough, we can reach out and grab hold of it. With that said, I have graduated from HWC and am entering the doors of DePaul University with a 3.7 GPA, a Bardwell Scholar, a PTK member, and a woman with an determined mindset to succeed.

*Lawana Loving  
AA HWC 2010  
Bardwell Scholar*



2010 HWC/RBS graduates with founder/administrator Hedy Cohen



# Bardwell Lunch

The Bardwell Scholarship Program held its annual luncheon on April 9, 2010 to honor the supporters that over time have contributed to the efforts of this Scholarship. It was great to finally meet the many men and women who have been contributors and, additionally, many of the past recipients. As a new recipient, it was a privilege to hear stories of how this scholarship has contributed to the lives of the many students; dreams have been realized thanks to help from RBS.

The music and food was provided by the past and present recipients of the scholarship. Phillip Burgess and Sunday Joseph provided the instrumentals and Dell Henderson made her singing debut to a very appreciative audience.

The scholars had a chance to meet and greet the supporters of this Scholarship and listen to stories of past and present students who have been able to meet their goals thanks to this assistance.

In moving closer to my academic goals, I realize that the Bardwell Scholarship Fund is a great contributor to my success and to the success of other students that are faced everyday with the obstacles of realizing their educational goals. Thanks to the efforts of the men and women that have contributed their time, funding, and efforts and their sense of great commitment to education, we the students of Harold Washington College, are a step closer to realizing those dreams.

Ms. Hedy Cohen, in her efforts, has been the glue that has kept us all together. With the time and dedication that she has placed on each individual student, it has been my pleasure to have met her and be counted as one of the scholars who is fortunate as to have worked alongside her to honor our supporters. Additionally, many of the activities that I have been closely involved in such as volunteering for Spanish tutoring and helping at HWC graduation, have been recommended by Hedy in her efforts to make certain that students become a contributing members of HWC and their community at large.

As I continue my academic pursuits, I would like to thank everyone responsible for the Bardwell Scholarship, Harold Washington College's staff and faculty, and the many students that have made my educational experience an amazing journey. I will continue to assist this scholarship n every way and hope to see you all at next year's luncheon.

**Maria Gibbons**  
HWC student  
Bardwell Scholar



# veon, Spring 2010



## Bardwell Scholars



## What I've Learned at Harold Washington College

There is no shame in asking someone for help. I've always valued independence and autonomy above all virtues (and perhaps still do) but my pride in being a 'lone wolf' was based on alienation and ignorance – after all, real wolves run in packs! From my first registration until as recently as last night's homework, I've had constant reminders that I can draw strength from others without compromising my integrity. My personhood is expanded rather than diminished when I seek knowledge or aid from outside my own capacity, because the likelihood of ultimate success increases vastly.

Ask and, more often than not, you shall receive. Another awakening for a lifelong cynic was the discovery that people care and that if I was persistent, polite and earnest enough, I could find vantages of great value given freely by people who invest in the success of others not just because it's their job, but because it's in their very nature as individuals. Every single person who helped me at HWC exemplified this principle to me in one way or another. The debt that I owe them is too great be repaid directly – I can only redeem it by making their investment worthwhile, dedicating my victories to them and extending their compassion to others.

One of the best ways to get through your problems is to help others with their own. This is an oft-forgotten lesson from my experience recovering from alcoholism years ago, one that requires constant renewal in practice to be effective. There were many times when I entered a classroom feeling rotten, and got some perspective and refreshment by giving a pep-talk to a peer who was feeling worse; or when my struggle with some coursework was eased by the sense of empowerment I got from tutoring someone having a problem with something else.

The only thing standing between me and success is myself. Having opened up and discovered so many sources of knowledge, aid and appreciation in my new academic life, I've had to take full responsibility for my attitude toward worldly achievement, and acknowledge that despite the world's imperfection, intransigence and downright evil, I cannot duck my obligation to "be the change I wish to see in the world," as Gandhi so famously put it. I had to change myself and my outlook before I could address my worldly frustrations, and the

HWC faculty, staff and students have played an integral role in that development. With the self-confidence and intellectual tools I've acquired on this campus, I feel ready to meet any challenge – and perhaps more importantly, ready to deal with those challenges on life's own terms, for better or for worse. In light of what I've staked and won at HWC, I regard this college as my first alma mater – to me, this place is more of a launch-pad than a mere stepping stone!

**W. David Work**  
AA HWC 2010  
Bardwell Scholar



RBS/HWC graduate W. David Work with his teacher and mentor, John Madsen

Classic teal or black Bardwell T-shirts are available in sizes S-XL for only \$10. Also available: Polo shirts (\$20) and lapel pins (\$8) to support RBS. Stop by Room 1139 at HWC to do your shopping or call 312-553-3049.

## Small Steps, Giant Leaps!

As I prepare for the Harold Washington College graduation ceremony, I find myself reflecting on the long and challenging journey I have traveled that has finally brought me to this first step. I have finally completed my Associate in Arts, with honors no less! This is a small step and yet it is a big step. It has not been easy getting here. I know that many people are working hard to reach this point. I also know that many others never will. So yes, while it is a small step, I totally realize the significance of my achievement. And it is just the first step because I am now enrolled at Northeastern Illinois University working on a bachelor's, with a master's in mind also.

I was just a young child of about 6 years-old, but I can still remember my mother and my aunt graduating from nursing school. I remember how happy my family was for their achievement. My mom was always volunteering or helping someone in some way, so she was excited to work in a field where she would have the opportunity to help others on a regular basis. My aunt would later become a teacher. My grandmother always talked about how her daughters went into noble professions. The two of them certainly inspired me but I did not immediately follow either path.

I attended Chicago State University after high school. My major was nursing at that time but I would later change it to education. I was not very focused at that point and I withdrew from school in order to work full time at the United States Post Office. My temp assignment ended after three years. By this time, I had a young daughter. I worked for Ameritech for nearly 3 years but family problems and my mom's illness interfered with my success there. In October, 2000, I began working at a finance company located at Illinois Center. After an unfulfilling 2 years, during which I started to feel that I would be happier teaching, I enrolled at HWC to pursue a degree in education.

This is where the story gets interesting. I was working 40-48 hours a week at this finance company, and I would literally run the three blocks to class each night. I would talk to the instructor on the first day of class and explain that I worked two blocks away and that I might be 5-15 minutes late for class each night. They were always so supportive and understanding. So imagine me, rain, sleet, or snow running breathlessly to class. This was

the case for about 5 semesters. Some semesters, I could only take one class, others, I would take two classes.

I had been employed there for almost seven years, when the company went through an acquisition and later announced mass layoffs. Because of this, I was finally in a position to take full course loads. I enrolled full time and finally completed my degree, but not before my funding ran out. This is where Hedy Cohen comes in. She gave me the backing I needed to continue and advice in transferring to NEIU. Hedy also gave me encouragement and put me in touch with the network of wonderful fellow students known as Bardwell Scholars. In fact, were it not for the Bardwell Scholarship Program, I'm not sure how long it would have taken me to complete this first goal.

It has always been my personal belief that while we are all different, we have so much in common and one commonality is that we each have interesting life stories to tell. Some stories are light, others heart-wrenching, but all can be inspiring, uplifting and most of all unique. My story, like our collective stories, is a series of small steps and giant leaps!

**Leonetta Clark**  
**AA HWC 2010**  
**NEIU Student**  
**Bardwell Scholar**



**Leonetta Clark and her daughter Mia at graduation**



## Bardwell Scholarship Featured on Chicago Tonight

The Bardwell Scholarship program received an unprecedented moment in the spotlight when they were featured on the May 20 edition of Chicago Tonight on WTTW, Channel 11.

Bardwell Scholars Edilberto "Tito" Vasquez, Diane Richardson, Sunday Joseph, Phillip Burgess, W. David Work and Leonetta Clark, along with President Wozniak and Hedy Cohen, were interviewed for the story by producer Jay Shefsky on May 13.

Tito Vasquez, Phillip Burgess and Diane Richardson were each featured in one-on-one interview segments, testifying to the immeasurable positive impact RBS has made in their lives.

Tito Vasquez has one of the most dramatic and inspiring stories of all the Bardwell Scholars. A young father and former gang member whose life almost came to a violent end, with Hedy's help and encouragement he was able to graduate from HWC and pursue a bachelor's degree in social work at Northeastern University.

Phillip Burgess, who graduated from HWC this spring, testified to Hedy's stern unwillingness to let returning students like himself hold themselves back with self-defeating tendencies.

Speaking from his office on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of Harold Washington College, President Wozniak recounted the founding of RBS soon after the tragic accident that took the life of Roger Bardwell, his friend and mentor.

"At the memorial service, there was an amount of (donated) money that came in, and Hedy announced almost right away that she thought it would be appropriate to share it with community college students," said Wozniak.

Hedy talked about how the scholarship was founded to honor Roger Bardwell's memory as an educator and an everyday hero.

"We decided we needed to do something to keep his name in education, and to keep his ideas," she said. "I think John (Wozniak) learned leadership from Roger . . . I learned mentoring from Roger."

Channel 11 gave its viewers a chance to see some of that mentoring in action, filming Hedy talking with her students, asking them questions, and giving the

characteristically sage advice that has earned her the nickname "Momma Hedy."

Bardwell Scholar Diane Richardson said that Hedy Cohen "believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself." Richardson, went on to earn a master's degree from National Lewis University and works as an advisor at HWC.

**Readers who wish to see the RBS segment from Chicago Tonight can do so at [www.wttw.com/chicagotonight](http://www.wttw.com/chicagotonight), by entering "Bardwell Scholars" in the video search field.**

**W. David Work**

*Greg King and WTTW Channel 11 contributed to this article.*



*Channel 11 cameraman Roy Alan with reporter/producer Jay Schefsky and RBS Phillip Burgess and Diane Richardson*

## For Every Vision A Mission

**F**or every vision there must be a mission. Harold Washington College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, has a mission of helping students get to their vision. HWC is not just about the academics alone, but it's about building good leaders and developing good relationships with people. My entire time at HWC was an interesting time which transformed my life.

As an immigrant to the United States, I was curious about how to achieve my dreams in this strange land. With the help of God and the people of Harold Washington College, I felt motivated, challenged and focused to make my dream a reality. In my philosophy of life, I believe that life is a gift that must be well utilized. Therefore, any life without a dream is not worth living.

My journey at HWC started at the advising desk with Debbie Miles. Debbie informed me to be part of Phi Theta Kappa which I did with the help of Dean Leslie Villaseñor. I turned out to be President of Mu Pi Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa, which allowed me to know almost everybody in the school. Being the President of Mu Pi Chapter, I was introduced to the President of HWC, John R. Wozniak, who I see as a role model through his humility towards his students and staff of the school.

My experience as president of the honor society opened me up to so many opportunities within and outside the school. I was privileged to come across Hedy Cohen through Leslie Villaseñor at the annual Roger Bardwell luncheon which was another beginning in my life. My experience with Hedy transformed my life because she was always on checkmate with what is going on with me academically, financially, socially e.t.c. Hedy has been a mother and a mentor to me throughout the time I have known her. Her motivating spirit encourages me a lot especially when it comes to making things happen for me or for any student. She is always there to assist and to support.

The Roger Bardwell Scholarship is an interesting scholarship managed by Hedy Cohen. The scholarship takes care of both tuition fees and books for students who need help in furthering their education. What makes this scholarship so interesting is that there are no exceptions to students who can get the scholarship. This scholarship is a diverse scholarship which is not limited to the United States.

In general, Harold Washington College has laid a good foundation for me in my academic and social life. I have learned greatly from my professors, both academic and non academic staff, the security officers, and the janitors of the school. I am so impressed with the diversity of the student and staff as well. It has been a great pleasure to be a student at Harold Washington College for the last two years and to be a graduate of the school.

**Sunday Ifeoiowa Joseph**

**AA HWC 2010**

**Bardwell Scholar**

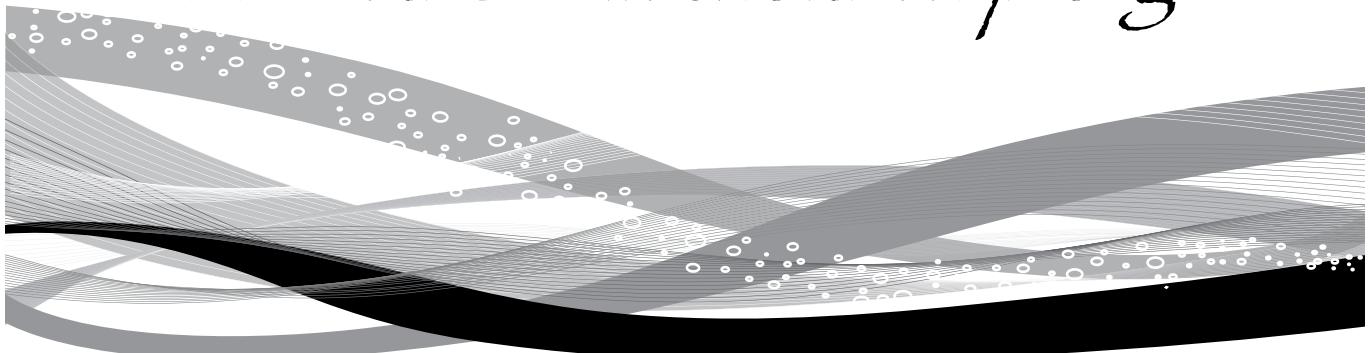


*Sunday Joseph and Yunuen Rodriguez at the RBS luncheon*



*RBS/HWC graduate W. David Work and Sunday Joseph*

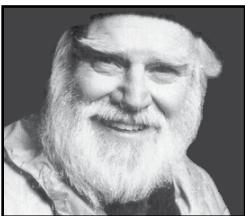
Visit the new website for the Bardwell Scholarship Program  
*[www.bardwellscholarship.org](http://www.bardwellscholarship.org)*



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.

*(Bardwell Scholarships operate under the tax exempt status of Harold Washington College.)*

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



**Roger W. Bardwell Scholarship Fund**  
**% Ehlert Financial Group**  
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**Lincolnshire, IL 60069**



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

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30 E. Lake St., Room 1139 Chicago, IL 60601 312-553-3049

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

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