

# YALE Bulletin & Calendar

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## Yale boasts five new Rhodes, Marshall Scholars

Five Yale affiliates -- three current students and two alumni -- have won the coveted Rhodes or Marshall Scholarships this year, and one student, Shayna Strom, has been doubly honored as the winner of both awards.

Strom and Sunita Puri, both seniors from Davenport College, are among the 32 American students chosen as Rhodes Scholars in a highly competitive application process.

Jennifer Nou '02, Strom and Yale alumni Zachary Kaufman '00 and Krishanti Vignarajah '01 are among the 40 American college students selected winners of the Marshall Scholarships in a rigorous national competition. Strom has declined the Marshall Scholarship to attend Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar next year.

### Rhodes Scholars

Puri and Strom were chosen from 925 Rhodes Scholarship applicants representing 319 colleges and universities. The scholarships, which are the oldest of the international study awards available to American students, provide two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England.

Created in 1902 by the will of British philanthropist and colonial pioneer Cecil Rhodes, the award is presented to students who meet the criteria set in Rhodes' will: "high academic achievement, integrity of character, a spirit of unselfishness, respect for others, potential for leadership and physical vigor." Overall, Rhodes Scholars are expected to make an effective and positive contribution throughout the world and, in the words of Rhodes himself, "esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim."

**Shayna Strom**, who is from Penn Valley, Pennsylvania, was just getting used to the thrill of winning the Marshall Scholarship when she was selected a Rhodes Scholarship winner after an "intense" two-round interview process -- first at the state level and then at the district level.

"I'm just absolutely shocked," she says of her honors. "I keep thinking I'm going to wake up and it's not going to be true."

The Yale senior also was incredulous when first told she had won a Marshall Scholarship. She was not at home when the call came in announcing she had won, so she ended up getting the

good news from her roommate, Maggie Sherriff.

"I drove my roommate crazy after she told me," admits Strom. "I must have asked her seven times, 'Are you sure, are you sure that's what they said?' "

Luckily, there was no doubt about her selection as a Rhodes Scholar, as she was told in person that she made the final cut.

An ethics, politics and economics major, Strom has a strong interest in urban issues. She was a founder of Yale's Ad-hoc Poverty Policy Organization, working with a city alderman to teach younger Yale students about New Haven and poverty policy through community sensitivity training and advocacy efforts. As the recipient of a Davenport College Class of 1956 Summer Service Fellowship, she worked last summer for an NGO in Bangladesh, where she researched programs to aid the rural poor.

She is a former co-coordinator of the student cabinet at Dwight Hall, the student-run umbrella organization for volunteer activities at Yale, and currently serves on its board of directors. She has also been involved with the New Haven Commission on Children, Youth and Families, the Ward 7 Community Investment Group and Stand Up and Vote! -- among other community activities.

An accomplished flutist who has performed with the Berkeley College Orchestra, the Bach Society Orchestra and various Yale chamber music groups, Strom is also a singer and performer with the Yale College Opera Company.

Strom plans a career that will allow her to continue her work on urban poverty issues.

**Sunita Puri**, who comes from Los Angeles, is majoring in cultural anthropology and intends to earn a doctorate at Oxford in anthropology or development studies, with a focus on South Asia. At Yale, she founded and is editor-in-chief of Shakti, a South Asian literary magazine, and she chairs the South Asian Studies Action Committee. An ethnic counselor for Yale freshmen, she has also worked as a peer counselor for the student-run counseling service Walden, and for ECHO, a counseling service for students with eating disorders.

One of Puri's major interests has been the issue of domestic violence, and she won the national Rivers Prize for undergraduates for research on domestic violence in South Asian communities in New York and New Jersey. Her paper on the subject was published in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.

Puri has spent summers working as a counselor and victim advocate for battered women in the United States and England, as an HIV/AIDS peer educator in New Delhi, India, and doing research on the Burmese refugee community in New Delhi.

A classical pianist, Puri has performed both solo and with various campus groups and is also a performer and teacher of the harmonium, a classical Indian instrument.

Puri says that much of her focus at Yale and beyond has been on activities geared toward inspiring other people, and she hopes that her selection as a Rhodes Scholar will encourage other ethnic students. "What has made me happy is the Rhodes' committees open-mindedness about me," she says. "A lot of Rhodes Scholars go to England to study British literature or history, but I'm going to study how the British marginalized minorities. I'm happy that they were so accepting of that."

Davenport College dean Peter Quimby notes that Strom and Puri share a common characteristic. "One thing that stands out about them," he explains, "is the degree to which they are passionate about the causes they are interested in. They are also both deeply committed to helping others."

"We are thrilled with the news about Shayna and Sunita winning the Rhodes," says Mark Bauer, assistant director for the United Kingdom Fellowship Programs in the Office of International Education and Fellowship Programs at Yale, who helped guide the Yale seniors through the rigorous application process. "Each is a scholar of tremendous ability who has also distinguished herself in public service and community affairs."

The total value of a Rhodes Scholarship averages about \$28,000 per year. Notable past winners of the award include former President Bill Clinton, Supreme Court Justice David Souter and actor and songwriter Kris Kristofferson.

## **Marshall Scholars**

For Jennifer Nou of Calhoun College, the news that she had won a Marshall Scholarship came as a complete surprise.

"I was just heading out to the Yale-Harvard game when my phone rang," she recalls. "It was one of the [Marshall] committee members, saying he just wanted to update me on the process. Then he went on to say that I had been selected. I had felt that my interview went badly, so I just kept thinking that it must be a joke."

Established in 1953 by the British government in thanks for American help in rebuilding their country after World War II under the Marshall Plan, Marshall Scholarships provide an opportunity for American students who have demonstrated academic excellence to continue their studies for two or three years at the British university of their choice. The scholarships are worth about \$50,000 each.

Marshall Scholars are chosen on the basis of their intellectual distinction, the likelihood that they will become leaders in their fields, and their potential for making a contribution to society.

"The exceptional academic achievements of this year's scholars are matched by their commitment to public service, artistic talent and triumph over adversity," the Marshall committee noted in a press release announcing the winners.

**Jennifer Nou** comes from Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and is majoring in economics and political

science at Yale. She intends to work toward a master's degree in politics at Oxford University. Long interested in public service, her goal is to eventually work in the public policy sphere. She has a particular interest in the issue of women and welfare.

At Yale, Nou founded a service group working on behalf of battered women called End Domestic Violence. She is an outreach coordinator for the Yale Women's Center, the president of the Yale chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and a former vice president of the Yale Mock Trial Association. She has won top prizes in national mock trial competitions as well as first place in Yale's Henry James TenEyck Oratory Speaking Prize. Last summer, Nou worked as a social worker for the Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis. She has been a math tutor for a middle school student and a research assistant for several Yale professors. She also worked in the Boston region for U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone from her home state of Minnesota.

The alumni winners of the award have also distinguished themselves at Yale and beyond.

**Zachary Kaufman**, of Morgantown, West Virginia, has been working at the U.S. Department of Justice since his graduation. As a program analyst for the Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training division of the Justice Department, he has played significant roles in the field of international relations. He has served as solo representative in Rwanda to assess the department's assistance program there and has briefed such agencies and officials as President Bush, the National Security Council, the FBI and the CIA on matters of international law enforcement.

At Yale, Kaufman majored in political science. He was president of the student body 1998-1999 and he authored two successful proposals to reform the University's financial aid system. A 1998 national team champion of the National Collegiate Wrestling Association, Kaufman was co-captain of the Yale wrestling team and founded a wrestling program for New Haven youth. He will study international relations at Oxford.

**Krishanti Vignarajah** is a native of Sri Lanka, who grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and currently lives in Peru. Since graduating from Yale, she has been working with Horizon International, an organization promoting development efforts in South America.

At Yale, she majored in political science and in molecular, cellular and developmental biology, earning a master's degree as well as Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. She was the founder and co-coordinator of an organization to promote health care opportunities and was vice president of both the Yale College Mock Trial Association and the Yale Debate Association. For two years she served as the executive editor of the Yale Journal of Ethics, and she also served a year as the treasurer of Yale Amnesty International. She also was captain of the junior varsity tennis team. Vignarajah will pursue a program in development studies at Oxford.

"We are just ecstatic for our Marshall winners," says Linda DeLaurentis, associate director of the Office of International Education and Fellowship Programs. She notes that while her office provides Yale students with guidance throughout the application and interview process, "it's

really the winners' talent that got them to where they are. We are very proud of them."

Previous well-known Marshall Scholars include U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, Duke University President Nannerl Keohane, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Thomas Friedman, Stanford Law School Dean Kathleen Sullivan and noted inventor Ray Dolby.