

NEWSROOM

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SUPPORT SURPASSES \$3 MILLION

STUDENTS SAY SUPPORT LEADS TO "SUCCESSSES AND JOY"

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | February 28, 2024*Above: Yaijah Abdulbaaqee '25**Read time: about 2 min*

"I owe all of my successes and joy about my college experience to you and your generous donation, which assisted me to remain a Captain at CNU for my third year." Those are the words sent in a letter of thanks to the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation. The author is Yaijah Abdulbaaqee '25. The junior from Virginia Beach is studying [psychology](#) and may continue on to graduate school.

"After I graduate, I hope to follow my dreams and live the life I've always envisioned, all the while giving back to my community and to those who made sacrifices for me," she wrote.

Abdulbaaqee is grateful to be one of dozens of female students at Christopher Newport to receive a Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholarship, a program now administered by the CNU Education Foundation.

The Atlanta-based Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation has provided financial need scholarships to more than 350 Christopher Newport students since 1995. Selected recipients must be female and major in biology, chemistry, and/or psychology. Christopher Newport is one of approximately 200 institutions in the South that offer Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholarships, and those awards will surpass the \$3 million mark this academic year.

"Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans made the world a better place with her giving," said President William Kelly. "We are

grateful beyond words that the Whitehead Foundation has provided so many of our students with the resources to complete their education and then go on to follow in Mrs. Whitehead's footsteps by living lives of significance and service."

According to the Foundation, "Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans was a generous philanthropist and accomplished businesswoman. She was the wife of Joseph B. Whitehead, one of the original bottlers of Coca-Cola. At his death, she assumed management of his business affairs, establishing the Whitehead Holding Company and the Whitehead Realty Company and leading the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Atlanta. She also became one of the first female directors of any major U.S. corporation when she was appointed to the board of The Coca-Cola Company in 1934, a position she held for nearly 20 years.

"Mrs. Whitehead felt a keen sense of duty to those in need. Bowed by the grief of losing her first husband and two sons, she devoted herself to faith and philanthropy. Tucked in the pages of her personal scrapbook is a quote she lived by: 'I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again,'" the Foundation said.

Thank you letters to the Foundation from students such as Abdulbaaqee indicate her kindness is deeply appreciated. "My family is proud of me and I am proud of myself to have made it this far," Abdulbaaqee wrote. "I'm eager to see what my future will hold."

Trinity Nixon '25, who is from Richmond, is preparing for a career in healthcare. "Thank you for helping me achieve my dreams. With your generous support, I can live a life of bountiful possibilities," Nixon wrote.

More than 12,000 women are supported by the Foundation each year, and it has distributed grants totaling over \$1 billion since 1954. The story of the Foundation and its many acts of generosity may be found on its [website](#).
