

Heritage News

The Heritage Society recognizes individual donors whose estate planning includes support for the PDK Educational Foundation. In this bimonthly *Kappan* column, we give current and potential donors a glimpse of the people and programs supported by their generosity.

PDK TRAVELERS EXPERIENCE SOUTH AFRICA

On July 16-24, 16 current and former educators explored South Africa. This was PDK's first trip to Africa since the travel program was restored in 2016. With the summer 2024 trip to Vietnam, the modern travel program is expanding to Asia for the first time.

Of the South Africa trip, Letitia Smith, from Eustis, Florida, said, "I gained a lot of knowledge about Africa. I didn't have an expectation, but it was mind-blowing." Smith joined PDK in 2023 as a graduate student member, and she intends to share what she learned with students when she gets her own classroom.

Graciela Rangel, a Pi Lambda Theta member since 2022, also participated in the trip. "The cultural exchange experience was eye-opening," she said.

Keith Figgs, a retired teacher and PDK member since 1982, was able to add to his understanding of South Africa. "After years of studying in school both geography and world events, I feel I gained a wonderful perspective and knowledge of its history, geography, and its people," he said.

"PDK International trips make sure to go beyond just a cross-cultural educational exchange," said Peyton Yancey, PDK International's membership manager and one of two staff members who worked to organize the trip. "We try to give members a full immersion into the country that can lead to more creative and innovative teaching methods in the classroom."

"This year, travelers got to learn about apartheid at the District Six Museum, walk to the top of Table Mountain in Cape Town, and go on a safari at Aquila Private Game Reserve, all within a week," Yancey said.

"The trip incorporated a wide variety of experiences that no one could expect to organize on their own," said Marvin Davisson, a PDK member since 1991.

The program builds on a long history. The first journey occurred in 1961 when Gerald H. Read, whose name graces the scholarships given to help offset the cost of modern trips, began leading international travel seminars for PDK members.



SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Your gift will reach more than 100,000 current and future educators throughout their careers, by guiding young people on the path to becoming accomplished educators and supporting leaders and academics who seek to leave a lasting legacy. Your support will help PDK elevate and change the narrative about public education, inform the national discourse, and bridge research and practice.

Donation options include cash gifts, stocks and securities, legacy giving, and more. Contact us at give@pdkintl.org or 800-766-1156.

PLANNED GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

By joining the PDK Heritage Society, you will help ensure that future generations of educators will be well prepared to provide their students with outstanding educational experiences. To leave a gift in your will, simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner: "I bequeath \$____ or ____% of my estate to PDK International, P.O. Box 13090, Arlington, VA 22219."

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STUDENT OFFICER SPOTLIGHT

Brooke Hess

Hometown: Sheboygan, WI

This year's Educators Rising Vice President of Communications, Brooke Hess, embodies the program's tagline of Forming Future Leaders. At the 2023 Educators Rising National Conference, she was awarded the national Educators Rising Leadership Award, a competitive honor that she earned for developing a project around people with special needs. She was also recently involved in a panel discussion about student mental health at the National School Boards Association CUBE

Annual Conference in Chicago. "I personally describe Educators Rising as an organization to positively impact children's lives while strengthening the minds of the future educators of the world," Hess said of her focus for the organization. "If we push Educators Rising throughout the community, we can have more people involved and genuinely change people's lives."



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER SPOTLIGHT

Mario Jackson

Hometown: Goldsboro, NC

Mario Jackson is a doctoral student in educational evaluation and policy analysis at North Carolina State University. Born in Jamaica, Jackson initially did not "understand the behaviors or attitudes towards school and learning" in the U.S. His continuing studies have "allowed [him] to recognize how a color-blind society motivated by capitalism and rife with inequities continues to marginalize our most vulnerable students." Upon completion of his program, he "anticipate[s] undertaking research

relevant to challenging inequitable practices and policies and preparing educational stakeholder[s], such as principals, to advance equitable ones."



EMERGING LEADER SPOTLIGHT

DerNecia Phillips

Hometown: Omaha, NE

DerNecia Phillips has 18 years of experience as a public and non-public school educator with service in various roles, including teacher, instructional facilitator, mentor, assistant principal, and principal. Her central philosophy is "every person needs a connection to thrive." Phillips is the founder of DAL Education & Care Solutions, an education consulting company providing coaching to principals and leadership development to schools and education organizations. "As

a teacher, it was my mission to foster an inclusive, liberatory classroom in which learning was a product of the nurturing and challenging environment," she said. "An intentional focus was placed on relationship-building as well as fostering those relationships. As a school leader, my aim was to expound on the power of relationships at a school level."



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