



The Leroy F. Aarons Scholarship Award

About the Leroy F. Aarons Scholarship Award

Leroy F. Aarons dedicated his life to journalism. He believed that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community could advance if the news media fairly and accurately portrayed the lives of LGBT individuals and their issues. This simple but visionary idea became the foundation for the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA).

Aarons knew that coverage of the LGBT community, as well as that of other minority communities, required increasing sophistication and training for journalists. He realized early that improving coverage had to start in the training camps for young journalists – journalism schools at the nation's colleges and universities.

In NLGJA's 15th year, the Leroy F. Aarons Scholarship Award was established to honor Aarons' memory and to continue the work he began when he founded NLGJA in 1990.

The scholarship award for the 2009-2010 academic year will provide up to \$5,000 in tuition funding to an LGBT student who plans a career in journalism and is committed to furthering NLGJA's mission of fair and accurate coverage of the LGBT community.

Contributors

NLGJA is grateful to its members, friends and corporate sponsors who have contributed to the NLGJA Scholarship Fund, including CNN's inaugural gift of \$100,000 in January of 2006.

Administration

NLGJA partnered with The Philadelphia Foundation (TPF), a community foundation established in 1918, to administer the NLGJA Student Scholarship Fund. The Delaware Valley Legacy Fund, a component fund of TPF serving to advance philanthropy within the LGBT communities, will disburse the scholarship awards upon receiving recommendation from NLGJA during each award period.

Criteria

Applicants must be planning to pursue a career in journalism and be able to demonstrate their passion and commitment to the profession. Selection will be based on journalistic and scholastic ability. Applicants also must demonstrate an awareness of the issues facing the LGBT community and the importance of fair and accurate news coverage.

For undergraduates, a declared major in journalism and/or communications is desirable but not required. Non-journalism majors may demonstrate their commitment to a journalism career through work samples, internships, and work on a school news publication, online news service or broadcast affiliate.

Quick Reference for Applicants

Postmark Deadline

Friday, January 9, 2009

Application packages should include one original of all required materials *plus five copies*.

Complete application packages must be submitted to:

Leroy F. Aarons Scholarship Award
NLGJA
1420 K Street, NW, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20005

E-mail info@nlgja.org
with questions about applying.
Please include your name and a
phone number in your message.

NLGJA is an organization of journalists, media professionals, educators and students who work within the news industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of LGBT issues. NLGJA opposes all forms of workplace bias and provides professional development to its members.

Learn more about NLGJA, its student opportunities and its special student membership rate by visiting nlgja.org

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Who Can Apply

- High school seniors who have been accepted to attend a U.S. community college or four-year university, or who can show proof of application to a community college or four-year university and will attend full-time beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year.
- Undergraduate students who will attend a U.S. community college or four-year university full-time during the 2009-2010 academic year.
- Undergraduate students who have been accepted for their first year of a U.S. graduate school and have submitted a tuition deposit for the 2009-2010 academic year. Graduate students must be enrolled in a journalism program.

Note: The scholarship committee will take professional experience into account during the evaluation period. Preference will be given to those individuals who have not spent a significant period of time working as a full-time professional journalist.

Restrictions

The scholarship is available only to U.S. citizens or permanent residents who plan to attend a full year of school in the U.S. The scholarship may not be used to pay for course work or credits earned abroad. The scholarship award may pay for tuition only. The amount of the scholarship award will not exceed the student's annual tuition costs. Undergraduate applicants enrolled in non-news sequences must demonstrate their commitment to pursuing a journalism career through work samples, internships, work on a school news publication, online news service or broadcast affiliate. Graduate students must be enrolled in a journalism program.

How to Apply

A complete application package should be submitted to NLGJA at the address below. Email and other electronic applications will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be considered. All materials should be typed; no handwritten materials will be accepted. Application package materials will not be returned.

Application packages should include:

- One-page résumé.
- Five work samples as described below.
- Transcript provided in sealed envelope.
- High school seniors must provide a copy of a letter of acceptance to a U.S. community college or four-year university.
- Three letters of recommendation. One must be from a teacher or professor. High school students may obtain letters from counselors and/or principals.
- An autobiography in the third person and written as a news story describing the applicant's commitment and passion for journalism and career goals. The autobiography should be no more than 1,000 words and should be 11-point typed and doubled spaced.

Application packages should include one original of all required materials *plus five copies*.

Complete application packages must be submitted to:

Leroy F. Aarons Scholarship Award
National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association
1420 K Street, NW, Suite 910

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More About Work Samples

- **PRINT:** Samples written by the applicant and published in a high school, college or community newspaper, magazine or online news service. Print entries should be no larger than 8.5x11 inches.
- **TELEVISION:** Should be submitted on VHS format tapes or DVD. Clips submitted on DVD must be able to be played in either a DVD player or using a standard PC or Mac media player. Please test all DVDs prior to submission. Work samples may contain more than one story but should be no longer than 10 minutes.
- **RADIO:** Should be submitted on standard audio cassette or compact disc. Work samples may contain more than one story but should be no longer than 10 minutes. No HTML addresses will be accepted for audio files. Please test compact discs prior to submission.
- **PHOTOJOURNALISM:** Images should be examples of published work from a high school, college or community newspaper, magazine or online news service. Published submissions and/or original prints must be reduced or printed to 8.5x11 inches or submitted on a compact disc.

Application Fee

There is no application fee for student members of NLGJA. Scholarship applicants who are not already NLGJA student members must complete a membership application and submit the membership form and a student membership payment of \$25.00 with their full application package. Application packages received without a membership form or dues payment will be considered incomplete.

Visit nlgja.org/membership/new.html to download a PDF of the NLGJA membership application.

Where to Ask Questions

Questions should be e-mailed to info@nlgja.org. Please include your name and a phone number. Or, call 202-588-9888.

NLGJA Convention

The recipient of the Aarons Scholarship Award will be required to attend and participate in the Student Project at NLGJA's National Convention. NLGJA's Student Project brings together student journalists and mentors from major media outlets to cover the National Convention & LGBT Media Summit. The expense-paid experience is designed to further the student's understanding of NLGJA's mission of fair and accurate coverage and provide additional practical experience.

NLGJA's 2009 National Convention & 6th Annual LGBT Media Summit will take place in Montreal, Canada from August Sept. 10-13. Student Project participants will be required to arrive onsite on Tuesday, Sept. 8 for the start of the program.

Deadline and Schedule

Completed applications must be postmarked no later than Friday, January 9, 2009. The recipient will be notified about their award prior to February 1, 2009. The scholarship award will be announced through a national press release and in various NLGJA publications. The recipient will be honored at Headlines & Headliners: NLGJA's annual New York Benefit. Travel and accommodations will be provided. Date and event location TBA.

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Excellence Contract

Scholarship recipients will be required to sign a Contract of Excellence with NLGJA. The contract commits the student to a level of academic achievement and to a continuing role as a member of NLGJA.

Specifically, the contract requires the scholarship recipient to:

- Maintain a 3.2-point grade average during the academic year that the scholarship is awarded. If the grade point average falls below 3.0, the student may be ineligible to receive subsequent scholarship disbursements.
- Provide NLGJA with transcripts for each term covered by the scholarship.
- Originate and complete a project designed to advance the mission of NLGJA. A project can be done in conjunction with class work or work done for student publications, broadcast or online media. Examples of a project include:
 - o Produce a project or other body of work for a campus or LGBT news organization that focuses on diversity themes.
 - o Produce a project or other body of work for a class that focuses on diversity themes.
 - o Participate in a campus diversity event where the student will speak or organize a program focusing on the importance of news coverage of diversity issues.
 - o Work with a local or student NLGJA chapter to produce a significant program focused on news coverage of diversity issues.
- Work with an assigned mentor to meet the terms of the contract. The mentor will be responsible for working with the student to conceive and produce the project.

Terms of Awards

Awards usually will be disbursed in equal increments at the beginning of each quarter or semester. The Delaware Valley Legacy Fund (DVLf) will work with college or university financial aid offices to determine the best schedule for distributing awards, which will be sent directly to the institution. No payments will be made directly to students. The scholarship award will not exceed the cost of tuition.

Return of Awards

Recipients who are unable to finish the academic year because of illness or family emergencies may be asked to reimburse DVLf for awards provided for the uncompleted quarter or semester. Students suspended from school for inadequate academic performance, disciplinary action or who were charged with a criminal offense will be asked to repay their entire scholarship. DVLf will return the unused funds into NLGJA's distribution account or endowment, dependent on NLGJA's recommendation.