



## **WJA Foundation Announces Over \$60,000 in Student Scholarship Awards**

**New York, NY. October 24, 2024.** The Women's Jewelry Association (WJA) Foundation is proud to announce its 2024 – 2025 scholarship recipients, who have been awarded a combined total of \$63,000 in scholarship funds to support their educational and professional growth in the jewelry industry.

Scholarships were awarded in six distinct categories, each designed to support the diverse needs of the jewelry industry's next generation of talent. These scholarships include the Helene Fortunoff Women in Retail Scholarship, Radiant Minds Technology Scholarship, WJA Diversity Scholarships for GIA Education, the Gabriel Love Foundation Scholarship, the Cindy Edelstein Jewelry Design Scholarship, and Student Scholarship.

The Helene Fortunoff Women in Retail Scholarship has been awarded to Heather Ingraham of the 1916 Company. Ingraham is enrolled in the Women's Leadership Program at Yale University. This scholarship, established by the Fortunoff family in memory of their late mother, Helene Fortunoff – a trailblazing woman in the jewelry industry and a founding member of WJA. The scholarship supports rising retail leaders by providing them with opportunities to advance their careers in a retail through education and management training.

The Radiant Minds Technology Scholarship has been awarded to Karina Mogha, a Software Engineering student at the Flatiron School. This scholarship is a collaboration between Jewelers Mutual Group, the Black in Jewelry Coalition, and the WJA, aimed at empowering women of color to succeed in tech-related roles within the jewelry and watch industry. The scholarship covers training or certification programs in areas such as software engineering, user-experience design, data analytics, and web development at an approved institution of the recipient's choice.

The WJA Diversity Scholarships for GIA Education provide funding for students from underrepresented communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ professionals, to pursue on-campus or eLearning courses through the Gemological Institute of America (GIA). This year's recipients are Dea Amira, Abiola Fasehun, Ashley Harris, Shaneli Jain, Rishvi Jayathilake, and Oksana Membreno. Recipients can select from a range of GIA programs, including the online Applied Jewelry Professional (AJP) diploma, Diamond Essentials, the Graduate Colored Stones diploma program, and the Jewelry Design certificate course.

The Gabriel Love Foundation Scholarship has been awarded to Lisa, a student at Studio Jewelers, Ltd. This \$5,000 scholarship, established and funded by the Gabriel Love Foundation of Gabriel & Co., a New York-based fine jewelry brand, supports students to aim to use their careers in jewelry to give back to their communities through charitable efforts. The scholarship helps recipients grow professionally within the jewelry industry while contributing to social causes.

The Cindy Edelstein Jewelry Design Scholarship, created in memory of long-time WJA Board member Cindy Edelstein, has been awarded to Kelsey Merkeley, Creative Director and Designer of



NVR NUDE. This \$5,000 scholarship supports emerging fine jewelry designers and artisans. Established in honor of Edelstein's dedication to mentoring and supporting entrepreneurs, the scholarship provides funding for jewelry design, metalsmithing, or business courses aimed at enhancing artistic skills and growing their designer jewelry business.

Finally, the WJA Student Scholarship has been awarded to Lillyana Stefanakis, who is studying CAD/CAM at the Gemological Institute of America. The Student Scholarship supports students enrolled in jewelry or metalsmithing programs at accredited colleges, universities, or training schools.

The Women's Jewelry Association Foundation is honored to help these talented individuals continue their educational journeys and looks forward to seeing the positive impact they will make in the jewelry and watch industry.

The funds for WJA Foundation scholarships are raised through individual donations and a variety of fundraising initiatives held throughout the year, including the upcoming **Future of Forty Gala Fundraiser** on Wednesday, November 13, in New York City. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <https://wedoauctions.com/bidapp/index.php?slug=wjagala#>.

**About the Women's Jewelry Association Foundation:**

WJA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that offers a variety of scholarships and grants to support the career growth and educational endeavors of professionals in the jewelry and watch industries. To learn more and donate to WJA Foundation, please visit: <https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com/foundation>

**About the Women's Jewelry Association:**

The Women's Jewelry Association (WJA) is a trailblazing organization dedicated to empowering and advancing women within the jewelry and watch industries. In 1983, WJA was founded on the belief that women could create lasting change by connecting, mentoring, and recognizing one another's accomplishments. Today, WJA stands as a global network of professionals spanning diverse roles, from designers and manufacturers to retailers and media representatives. The organization's mission is to facilitate professional growth through networking, education, leadership development, and a wide range of member services. Through its numerous chapters across the U.S. and around the world, WJA offers a spectrum of benefits, including networking events, educational programs, mentoring initiatives, scholarships, and grants. For more information about WJA, or to become a member, visit [www.womensjewelryassociation.com](http://www.womensjewelryassociation.com).

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