

WJA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES ITS INAUGURAL RECIPIENT OF THE 2023 HELENE FORTUNOFF WOMEN IN RETAIL SCHOLARSHIP

The Fortunoff family continues their mother's impactful legacy by providing future retail leaders with education and training to enhance their leadership and management skills.

September 26, 2023 (New York, NY) -- The Women's Jewelry Association Foundation is pleased to announce its inaugural recipient of the 2023 Helene Fortunoff Woman in Retail Scholarship, Ashley Kets, Store Manager at Springer's Jewelers.

Ashley found her retail sea legs when she ventured into luxury retail at Barney's New York in Beverly Hills in the early aughts. She soon felt compelled to lean into the management side of retail, and after a cross country move found herself eventually settling down as the Store Manager of Springer's Jewelers in Portsmouth New Hampshire. There she was encouraged to grow her skillset, acquiring an AJP through GIA. Working for a family owned, women led company has been life changing. She looks forward to continuing to grow with their team and company.

"Ashley embodies many of the qualities that Helene embraced, from her passion for jewelry to her attention to detail in merchandising, quality and customer service" says Ruth and Esther Fortunoff. "In addition, Ashley's desire to become a stronger leader at Springer's and in the jewelry industry as a whole is evident. Helene valued education and promoted women in business. We are proud to continue her legacy and to award the first Helene Fortunoff Women in Retail Scholarship to Ashley Kets."

Ashley plans to utilize the scholarship funds to attend NYU's [Leadership Training for High Potentials](#), a program focused on a variety of frameworks used to analyze and address important leadership challenges.

"I am beyond thrilled and humbled to be the recipient of the 2023 Helene Fortunoff Woman in Retail Scholarship" says Ashley. "Hearing about Helene's strength, trailblazing business savvy and her determination to help future women in the business is doubly meaningful as both a working mother and a retail manager in an often male dominated field. I am honored to be a part of her lasting legacy and will do my best to embody her tenacity and passion for both jewelry and helping others succeed."

This scholarship was established by the Fortunoff family earlier this year in honor of their late mother, Helene Fortunoff, a trailblazing woman in the jewelry industry, and one of the Women's Jewelry Association's founding members. The scholarship supports rising retail leaders by providing them with opportunities to further their careers in a retail environment through education and management training.

Donations to WJA Foundation can be made here:
<https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com/foundation>

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Retailers interested in creating scholarship opportunities in partnership with the WJA Foundation should contact Rachel Jurisz, Membership & Operations Manager, at rachel@womensjewelryassociation.com.

About 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, visit womensjewelryassociation.com.