



☆ POST BEST PRACTICES ☆



# Enriching the STEM Pipeline

**A**warding scholarships to aspiring college students is one of the most widespread ways the Society has fulfilled its long-standing goal to support the next generation of engineers and enrich the STEM pipeline for the nation. In 2018, for instance, SAME Posts awarded over \$1.1 million in scholarships collectively.

Of the many scholarship programs carried out across the Society, the New York City Post Scholarship Fund is the largest and longest standing. Established in 1955, it continues to enable youth toward success thanks to the generous support of many, including key volunteers within the Post who have kept the legacy of the program thriving for over 60 years. The scholarship program also is effectively linked to the Post’s widely-attended Annual Dinner Dance, which this November celebrates its 80th anniversary. The Dinner Dance is the primary fundraiser for the Scholarship Fund, which today exceeds \$3.5 million.

*TME* recently chatted with leaders of the Scholarship Fund to discuss lessons learned and insights for other Posts looking to expand their own support to future STEM leaders.

**TME: What would you say are the keys to the enduring impact of the New York City Post Scholarship Fund, which celebrates its 65th anniversary this year?**

**New York City Post:** The Scholarship Fund was established with a strong foundation that has endured over time, led by three distinguished leaders in the A/E/C profession: Col. Joseph Markel, USA (Ret.); Max Urbahn, FAIA; and Col. F.H. “Bud” Griffis, Ph.D., P.E., F.SAME, USA (Ret.).

Since inception, the fund has provided well over \$5 million in scholarships to thousands of engineering and architecture students to colleges and service academies throughout the country.

**TME: Any particular success stories that you’d like to share?**

**New York City Post:** They are truly too numerous to mention! Suffice it to say, we get dozens of thank you letters each year from the student recipients stating how the scholarship has helped them in continuing their education and fulfilling their dreams.

This year, we will post on our website various short videos from students telling us how the scholarships have helped them. We encourage everyone to watch them!

**TME: How have you gotten industry and donors engaged in supporting the Scholarship Fund?**

**New York City Post:** Because so many of the Post’s board members are the leaders in their firms, decisions on endowing a new firm scholarship can readily be made. In addition, because so many of our supporters have attended our functions over the years and know of the success of the Scholarship Fund, it encourages these individuals to support a scholarship in their own name or family name. Since the scholarships are paid for once but are given in perpetuity, the donors take pride in seeing their “gift” to the students occur on an annual basis.

In addition, our listing of scholarship donors is a veritable “Who’s Who” of the overall construction industry over the past half century. Just looking at the names of firms that may

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no longer exist does impart a sense of the rich history of our industry, its leaders, and its long focus on supporting the future.

**TME: How have you kept Post members engaged with the work of running the Scholarship Fund?**

**New York City Post:** There is a core group of highly dedicated individuals who have supported the efforts of the Scholarship Fund and willingly give of their time. It represents a commitment to the next generation of leaders within the A/E/C industry.

In addition to Bud Griffis, the Scholarship Fund Committee consists of Judy Cooper, F.SAME, Vice President of the Fund; Dominick Servedio, F.SAME; Vincent Mangier, F.SAME; and Ed Schmeltz, F.SAME.

**TME: What advice would you give other Posts looking to start or expand a scholarship program?**

**New York City Post:** The number one need is to get leaders in the industry within the particular geographic area who are willing to commit the time and energy to make this happen.

It is helpful to have both the experienced, well-known men and women as part of the team along with younger, less experienced members. This enables a learning environment coupled with a succession plan for the future.

Many scholarship recipients stay in touch with us throughout their college careers and often into their professional careers. We also invite students who are in the New York area (pre-COVID, of course) to attend our business dinner meetings at no charge.

TME

