Twenty School of Tourism and Hospitality Management sophomores competing for a single $10,000 scholarship from an anonymous donor heard a series of stunning announcements Nov. 14. Not only did Korman Communities founder Steven H. Korman reveal himself as the donor on the night he was honored with the prestigious Musser Award from the Fox School of Business, he also raised the amount to $12,000. And then he awarded the scholarship—to all of them.

Korman’s $240,000 donation—in support of Temple’s recently announced five-year, $100 million fundraising campaign for student scholarships—capped a night emphasizing the university’s commitment to reducing student debt. In his acceptance speech, Korman said he was attracted to supporting Temple because it takes raw talent and provides a chance to succeed. He has chaired the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Dean’s Council for 12 years.

Korman said each finalist was asked to submit a letter to their then-anonymous donor. Common themes were the students’ gratitude for their families’ sacrifices to help them attend college and a desire to give back to Temple. He then read aloud the letter from Sara Sheedy, a Philadelphia native whose father passed away recently and whose family struggles both with their loss and with the financial burden of higher education. Instead of addressing the donor, she wrote to her dad.

“I just know what an honor it is to go here, and I also know how hard it is to go to any college with the cost of tuition, so I can’t even put into words what this means to me and my parents.”

—Sean McGuire

“Words can’t express how much this means to me and my family to not have to worry as much about how to afford college.”

—Sara Sheedy

Surprise scholarship announcements from Dean’s Council chair leave students speechless

Scholarship winners

Jenna Anderson
Da'Twan Bolden
Shane Brennan
Michael DeMarchi
Carlos Deno
Gemma Duffy
David Heggan
Morgan Jenkins
Gabriella Kelly
Michelle Siporin
Chandler Richardson
Victoria Noboa
Kathy Martin
Sean McGuire
Kelly O'Brien
Julia Stief
Patrycja Sypien
Sara Sheedy
Chynna West

Photos by Ryan S. Brandenberg