Pa. Wine and Spirits Association makes 4-year scholarship

The Pennsylvania Wine and Spirits Association, making its first foray into the financial support of college scholarships, has aligned with Temple University’s School of Tourism and Hospitality.

A $16,000 pledge prompted the establishment of the Pennsylvania Wine and Spirits Association Scholarship Fund, which will provide a $4,000 scholarship each year for four years to a STHM student of stellar academic standing and financial need.

A committee appointed by STHM associate dean Elizabeth H. Barber selected Samena Islam, a native of Patterson, N.J., as the scholarship’s first recipient. Islam, a 2015 graduate, said she plans to apply the scholarship toward her senior-year tuition costs.

“I’m very lucky, very blessed and very thankful that I won this scholarship,” said Islam, who will pursue a career in either hotel management or the management of a multi-cultural organization. “This scholarship enabled me to reduce my loans and ensure that I graduate on time. I could not be more grateful to the Pennsylvania Wine and Spirits Association.”

The Pennsylvania Wine and Spirits Association chose to support STHM because “we are essentially in the hospitality industry,” said Myron Waxman, the association’s executive director. “The School of Tourism and Hospitality Management was a great fit for us. Couldn’t have been better.”

The Pennsylvania Wine and Spirits Association comprises distributors, importers, vintners and distillers who supply more than 95 percent of wines and spirits purchased by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board.

The scholarship will be awarded annually in the memory of Marie Baker Brown, a prominent local figure in the tourism and hospitality industries. Mrs. Brown, who passed in September 2006, had served as the director of government affairs at the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, among other ventures, and championed the virtues of the city of Philadelphia as a tourism hotspot.

--Christopher A. Vito

Tourism industry leaders award $5,000 in scholarship funds to the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management

The School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University has been awarded $5,000 to finance a scholarship.

The funds were arranged by Fred Tibbitts and Associates; Ross Kellman, Vice President of Hospitality and Leisure for Foodbuy; and Stephen Blackburne, Senior Vice President of Operations for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts.

As an invited guest, STHM Associate Dean Dr. Elizabeth Barber attended a Nov. 11 event hosted by Tibbitts in New York City, at which she was presented a $2,500 contribution funded by Kellman and in honor of Blackburne, the 2014 recipient of the Fred Tibbitts and Associates Hospitality Award for Excellence as an Operator. Blackburne vowed to Barber to match Kellman’s $2,500 donation, resulting in the $5,000 scholarship for STHM.

Blackburne joins the many generous sponsors from Hyatt Hotels & Resorts. The company is a longtime STHM partner and, in addition to funding scholarships, recruits and trains students for placement within the company upon graduation.

Barber said the need-based scholarship will be awarded to a junior or senior who is experiencing financial hardship. Barber commended the partnership STHM has maintained with Hyatt Hotels and its affiliates, highlighting the generosity exhibited by Kellman, Tibbitts and Blackburne as leaders in the leisure industry.

“These three men are very genuine, and their enthusiasm to help students is very unique,” Barber