

**TUCKER SCHOLARSHIP**

## Rachel Gaura of Chapin, S.C., Receives Gardner-Webb's Full-Tuition Tucker Scholarship

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- ▲ Tucker Scholar winner Rachel Gaura poses with her friends and family after learning she won the Tucker Scholarship. From left, are Maggie Wilson (friend), Paul Anderson (grandfather), Rebecca Gaura (sister), Mary Beth Nugent (aunt), April Gaura (mom), Caleb Gaura (brother), Chris Gaura (dad), Debbie Anderson (grandmother), and Emma Nugent (cousin).

## Senior at Spring Hill High School Honored for her Service, Leadership and Academics

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—A senior from Spring Hill High School in Chapin, S.C., is the 2022 winner of Gardner-Webb University's most prestigious scholarship. In a surprise presentation at her home, members of the Gardner-Webb University Admissions Office along with Mac the Mascot brought the celebration to Rachel Gaura and her family. She is the winner of the Tucker (<https://gardner-webb.edu/admissions-aid/scholarships-and-grants/tucker-scholarship/>). Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength Scholarship, which is presented annually to a candidate who exemplifies the principles and values representative of the GWU community.

Rachel was overjoyed with the news. "I am so excited to be the next Tucker Scholar, and I am beyond thankful for the generosity of the Tucker family," Rachel shared. "I look forward to embracing the service and leadership opportunities this scholarship will provide."



Rachel was one of 188 high school seniors who applied for the scholarship and among the 33 finalists invited to campus for interviews. These finalists represented seven states—as close as Shelby, N.C., and as far away as Fishers, Ind.—and their average GPA was 4.21.

“We had a really, really strong pool of finalists this year, and I hope that each of these outstanding students ultimately chooses Gardner-Webb to be their college home,” explained GWU President Dr. William Downs. “As was the case with our winners in previous years, our selection committee knew from the moment we began our conversation with Rachel Gaura that she was special...indeed, exceptional. Rachel’s academic record is stellar, but more importantly she shows every sign of being the kind of high-character person that we were seeking. She’s authentic, she’s eager to serve, and her positivity is contagious. What a great match for GWU!”

The Tucker Scholarship was established in 2019 by Carolyn and Robert Tucker, longtime University benefactors. Their intent was to provide an award based on Mark 12:29-31, where Jesus gives the two most important commandments: “Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.”

The winner receives an eight-semester full-tuition, room and board scholarship. The Tuckers are the founders and owners of Shoe Show Inc. in Concord, N.C. In 2010, they gave the University \$5.5 million to help build the Tucker Student Center. In the past, Mrs. Tucker explained that Mark 12:29-31 is her life prayer for her family. To remind her children and their spouses, her grandchildren and future Tucker generations of her request, Mrs. Tucker gave them plaques inscribed with the scripture. Replicas of the plaque also hang at entrances to every building on the GWU campus, and recipients of the scholarship receive their own copy of the plaque.



- ▲ Members of the GWU Admissions Staff who presented the award to Rachel Gaura, along with Mac the Mascot were, from left, Enrollment Marketing Specialist Caroline Hamby, Associate Director of Admissions Molly Allison and Vice President for Enrollment Management Dean Clark.
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In her scholarship essay, Rachel explained how Mark 12:29-31 applied to her life. “The four pillars expressed in Mark 12:30 have developed a significant role in my striving to follow the lead of my elders, while also embracing the unique talents the Father has given me. As I encounter a new season of life at Gardner Webb University, I intend to expound upon my understanding of this verse as a cornerstone in regards to my relationship with the Lord.”

To be eligible for the scholarship, recipients must first be nominated by a minister, teacher, guidance counselor or community leader who is unrelated to the student. Rachel was recommended by a science teacher at Spring Hill High School, Lauren Brown. She described Rachel as a leader, creative, intelligent, and culturally aware. “An honor student at Spring Hill High School (SHHS), Rachel has not only maintained outstanding grades, but she has also remained an academic leader throughout her high school career and has done so while taking the most rigorous course load available, serving as a volunteer on many committees and honing many extracurricular skills,” Brown affirmed. “She has led projects such as the book drive ‘Rockin’ for Books,’ served through mission work for the Connie

Maxwell Children's Home, and installed a 'Little Library' through her leadership classes. She is a member of the American Sign Language Club and the current president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes."

With the scholarship application, students also include references. In his letter supporting Rachel, Josh Bridges, a math teacher and SHHS Entrepreneurial Academy Dean, noted that Rachel is a member of 10 clubs. "Rachel wants to succeed in everything she does and is the epitome of what an educator would want in a student," Bridges described. "She is someone who is willing to take on leadership roles around the school and community, so it seems natural for her to apply for a scholarship with these standards and expectations."

Rachel's other reference was her AP United States History teacher Jennifer Garnett who wrote, "She is a selfless young woman who many times puts others and their needs before hers to ensure their success. Her maturity and strong sense of responsibility guides her to great achievements as well."

**Find out more about scholarship opportunities at Gardner-Webb.**

*Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*

