

Katheryn Kornegay: WTS-LA 2019 \$10,000 Ava Doner Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship Recipient



Katheryn Kornegay (2019 WTS-LA \$10,000 Ava Doner Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship recipient), 2019

The 2019 WTS-LA \$10,000 Ava Doner Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship recipient Katheryn Kornegay grew up, “in a community often focused on what is affordable instead of what is sustainable.” And that profoundly shaped her professional ambitions. “I strive to help make alternative-powered cars and other transportation so that people don’t have to decide between a clean environment or saving money.

“My interest in alternative-energy-powered vehicles first emerged in middle school when I conducted an experiment on the battery life of a model kit solar car. I want to pursue a career that develops more cost-effective, alternative-powered transportation, by focusing on ways to improve the efficiency of the alternative energy used to power the vehicles...My research throughout college has been focused on trying to increase the efficiency of solar cells, so that they can be used more regularly in society, specifically in vehicles.”

A physics undergraduate at Pomona College, Katheryn will graduate in May 2020. Looking ultimately to gain a PhD in engineering or applied physics—specifically focusing on sustainable energy—she wants to ensure that minority communities have equal access to sustainable living. And if her career so far in both academia and the workplace are any indication, she’ll achieve that ambition with honors. Her talent, smarts, and unyielding drive have not gone unnoticed.

According Pomona College physics professor Janice Hudgings, “Kat is an enthusiastic, talented, engaged student...passionate about pursuing a career in transportation engineering, ideally working on alternative-fuel vehicles...She has been unwaveringly passionate about this since I first met her.” But Professor Hudgings doesn’t stop there. She explains that while working in the lab together, Kornegay observed an anomaly in an experiment. After a brainstorming session, “Kat then proposed a series of experiments to explore her hypothesis; that work is ongoing.” Crediting her unusual drive and maturity, Hudgings also notes that, “Kat’s success is a real testament to her intellectual talent, resilience, and determination.”

And those are words routinely used to describe Ava Doner as well.