

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Sylaisha Taylor

Judy Reed chaired The Villages Apple User Group's scholarship program for seven years while her late husband, Dexton, served as club president.

This year, the group was able to award money to three additional students through memorial scholarships in honor of Dexton.

"It was near and dear to him," said Judy, of the Village of Winifred. "People who wanted to do something in his memory donated toward the scholarship."

On Tuesday, The Villages Apple User Group awarded scholarships to

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Submitted photo

The Villages Apple User Group scholarship recipients, from left, Shyanne Durst, Armand Grable, Nia Haugabrook, Ireona Hilbert and Jamarian Gordon present their scholarships alongside Ruby Williams and Judy Reed, TVAUG Scholarship Committee members, at Wildwood Middle High School.

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five Wildwood Middle High School students pursuing careers in technology-related fields.

Established in 2016, the group's scholarship program has donated more than \$20,000 to high school students since its inception. The program aims to alleviate financial barriers that can hinder students from pursuing higher education.

"Every applicant expressed the need for financial help," Judy said. "They are concerned with the high cost of education, the pressure on both students and parents, and attempt to avoid huge debt."

Students Shyanne Durst and Armand Grable each were awarded \$1,500, while Nia Haugabrook, Ireona Hilbert and Jamarian Gordon were awarded \$500 each. All recipients also will receive refurbished computers.

Durst plans to attend the University of Northwestern Ohio, where she will pursue her

passion in high-performance motorsports technology, focusing on dirt track and asphalt racing. She also plans to earn a bachelor's degree in motorsports marketing.

Grable is set to pursue a bachelor of science in finance at Florida State University, driven by his interest in the fintech industry. His career aspiration is to become a chief financial officer and be at the forefront of financial innovation through the application of artificial intelligence.

Haugabrook distinguished herself as the first female student from Wildwood Middle High School to secure a volleyball scholarship, which will help her pursue a career in law enforcement.

Hilbert is set to attend Penn Foster College, where she plans to focus on artificial intelligence.

Gordon, a consistent honor roll student, played basketball, football, and baseball and won first place in a first amendment essay competition.

"It was a standout moment to be there," Judy said of the

award ceremony. "One whole side of the bleachers was filled with students and they were very respectful. I was so impressed. It was refreshing to see the citizens of tomorrow so eager about their education."

Last July, the group renamed its scholarship program the Carole Martin Scholarship Program in honor of a pioneer member and former secretary for her outstanding commitment and contributions to the club.

Martin, who has a 20-year legacy with the club, continues to be an active member despite retiring from her leadership roles.

The Villages Apple User Group also is committed to investing in the education of students by way of donating refurbished iPads, iMacs and MacBooks to local organizations.

For more information about The Villages Apple User Group, visit tvaug.org.

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