Tshiabdua Yang, Donald and Wilma Sites Scholarship Recipient

Tshiabdua Yang says she is just another 22 year old UW-Madison senior awaiting an unknown future. She is the recent recipient of the University League Donald and Wilma Sites scholarship.

In her 22 years, she says she has accomplished most of her major goals which include going to college and traveling abroad. UW-Madison helped Tshiabdua accomplish both of these but it would be rude to leave out the importance of her family--three parents and 11 siblings. I can’t imagine growing up in a home with 11 children. There would be a lot of fighting for the bathroom!!

Tshiabdua plans to teach English in South Korea for the next few years and wants to eventually end up in Law school or graduate school. Without the help of selfless individuals like the University League, none of this would even be a prospect. Tshiabdua has deep appreciation for University League.

Tshiabdua (or “T” for short) is originally from the city of La Crosse, Wisconsin. She graduated from Logan High School in La Crosse, but went to two other high schools before that: West High School in Madison, WI and Onalaska High School in Onalaska, WI. T went to Velma Hamilton Middle School and West High School for a bit. In those three years, she knew in her heart, she knew UW-Madison was where she needed to be for college. Foreign languages of all kinds were available as well as the largest international student population in Wisconsin. In addition, UW-Madison was affordable, international, and local. Even after studying abroad in amazing places like Tokyo, Japan she decided she could never give up being a Badger. It was in her blood to be here at UW-Madison!

T is studying Anthropology with a certificate in Japanese communication. T says that the professors are generally great but, her advisor has been the best part. Her advisor is not only originally from Wisconsin, but she too studied Japanese and Anthropology. It was extremely helpful to have an advisor who knows a lot about travel abroad. They met frequently before T’s year abroad. T had two opportunities to go abroad; the summer of 2013 was spent in Thailand while the following academic year was spent in Tokyo, Japan.

The best and most life-changing courses for T were Peggy Choy’s “Asian-Afro Movement” and Larry Nesper’s “Indians of North America.” T’s journey at UW Madison has been unique because of the extremely rare and nearly impossible gifts she will be forever grateful for. These include the FLAS fellowship from the East Asian Studies Department for my time in Japan, her wonderful advisor Megan who encouraged “T” to do back-to-back study abroad programs, and the irreplaceable Japanese language professors and TA’s. T is also grateful for the everlasting kindness of donors who have blessed her with these unforgettable experiences since her own parent’s were financially unable to provide these experiences.

T has a lot of role models but at the top of the list is T’s older sister Anne. She didn’t finish college and doesn’t have the best job right now but she is her first and foremost role model because she has been the biggest contributor to my success thus far. Her sister took T into her home after her divorce when T was only 15 years old. It was really hard for both of them. She taught T that the most important thing in life is family and love. Without those two things, there is little purpose in life. Anne continues to be her inspiration and motivation as T works to pay her back.
T aspires to work for the federal government one day. As mentioned, T is interested in going on to law school or graduate school; however, a career in the federal government would be great, too. She imagines partaking in important and impactful events, conferences, and meetings with foreign diplomats and the sorts. Her dream job would ideally be a Foreign Service officer, but her dream would to be a life-changing lawyer. She also talked about committing the rest of her life to academics. It is obvious, she has many choices!

In her spare time, T enjoys Korean pop music, going to Eisa practice (Okinawan taiko), watching animal documentaries, and spending time making memories with good friends.

T is the first in her family to study at UW-Madison. Her older brother and sister have had some college experiences but could not finish because of their responsibilities to their children. She is the first in her family to complete a degree in higher education.

T’s favorite place to study on campus has changed with the years. Freshmen year, it was college library. Sophomore year on was all in her bedroom. T values privacy above all else since she can easily get distracted and likes to be comfortable.

This scholarship has been a lifeline during her undergraduate career. Looking forward to law school and graduate school, T cannot imagine how these will be accomplished without financial assistance. Without these gifts, I would have never been able to accomplish my degree. Thank you to the donors.

T says to the donors, “Your work, sincerity, and generosity are remarkable. You have changed lives. You have given those who have no way out, a way out and a chance to grow wings so one may learn how to take flight after the valuable lessons inside and outside of the classroom. By just having a student’s presence be in college, their surroundings change from the inside out. That is a gift few can and actually do give to others, but you have chosen to do so. I thank your warm hearts. I thank your sweet wishes. I, too, aspire to be like you one day. Thank you”.

We are glad to be of assistance to Tshiabdua Yang and wish her well in her future career pursuits. We know that she will make a difference.