

## **UNCC names its first Levine Scholars**

10 N.C. high school seniors and 5 out-of-staters get scholarships

By David Perlmutt

dperlmutt@charlotteobserver.com

Posted: Thursday, Apr. 29, 2010

Two years ago, Leon Levine was waiting for a checkup by his doctor, Charlotte physician Michael Richardson, and noticed a certificate on the wall saying that Richardson had been a Morehead Scholar at UNC Chapel Hill.

Levine asked Richardson what the scholarship had meant to him.

"He said, 'It was the most important thing I ever did in my life,'" Levine recalled. "I thought, 'Boy, it'd sure be nice to have some Levine Scholars out at UNC Charlotte.'"

Wednesday, UNCC officials announced the first slate of 15 Levine Scholars - 10 high school seniors from North Carolina and five out-of-staters who'll get a free ride to study at the university for the next four years.

Levine and his wife, Sandra, are paying for it, donating \$9.3 million over 10 years for the merit scholarships aimed at developing public service leaders.

The school and the Levines hope to have 60 scholars on campus within four years and that ultimately the scholarship would achieve the same prestige as the Morehead-Cain at UNC, Park Scholars at N.C. State and Duke Scholars at Duke.

"It makes me feel good that we're going to raise the educational stature at UNC Charlotte by bringing in these talented students," Leon Levine said in a recent interview. "In the past, these types of scholarships have done a lot for other schools. We're sure it's going to do a lot for Charlotte."

Sandra Levine said the scholarship program's an investment in UNCC - and the Charlotte region.

"We hope the scholars will remain in this area and make a contribution to our city," she said.

### **Students 'fiercely' recruited**

The 15 students were chosen from 43 finalists who were narrowed down from more than 1,400 applicants.

The scholarship's value is about \$90,000 for in-state students and \$140,000 for those out of state. It'll cover tuition and fees, housing and meals, books, a laptop computer and four summer experiences.

"The response from top students from around the country was more than we could have envisioned," said UNCC Chancellor Phil Dubois. "Their credentials are at the very highest echelon, which made the selection very difficult."

The students were "fiercely" recruited by other schools, said Al Maisto, interim director of the Levine Scholars Program.

"The fact that they chose to come here is significant and speaks to what UNC Charlotte has to offer to students of this caliber," Maisto said.

### **Embracing the cause**

Levine Scholar Evan Danchenka of Harrisburg grew up a few miles from campus and is aware of the Levines' philanthropy.

The past year, he has volunteered for the effort to build the Carolina Thread Trail that will link 15 counties in one walking trail. He'll continue with the trail work at UNCC.

"A trail is scheduled to go right through the university," he said. "I'll be a part of that."

From her home in Bethesda, Md., Celia Karp also knows about the Levines' work.

The public service requirement drew her to apply for one of their scholarships.

"The Levines want us to really embrace Charlotte and discover what the city has to offer and figure out ways to make Charlotte a better place," said Karp, who's served food to the homeless, raised money for breast cancer research and worked with children with terminal illnesses.

"I loved that part of the scholarship and look forward to it in Charlotte."

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2010/04/29/1404314/uncc-names-its-first-levine-scholars.html>