

For Immediate Release

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Simmons University Awards First Two Ifill Scholarships

BOSTON (November 14, 2018) – Simmons University announced today the recipients of the first Ifill Scholarships, Priscilla Wiltshire-Bland’21 and Alexandra Bohanan’19. The Scholarships are named in honor of pioneering African-American journalist and distinguished Simmons alumna, Gwen Ifill.

Ifill Scholarships are awarded to students in The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities who displayed academic excellence and vast potential inside the classroom and beyond. As Ifill College Dean Brian Norman explains, “The Ifill scholarship aims to make a difference for promising Ifill College students who demonstrate academic excellence and great potential for future work in the world. We hope these Ifill Scholarships will support our students as they prepare to connect their passion to lifelong purpose at Simmons and beyond.”

Bohanan is a senior arts administration major originally from Norman, OK. She is currently serving as the [Dean’s Fellow](#) in the Department of Communications and was selected to lead CommWorks, an annual spring event showcasing student work in journalism, public relations, and media.

“As an African-American student from Oklahoma, adjusting to the fast-paced city lifestyle has been a real challenge,” said Bohanan. “I have found comfort in the legacy of Gwen Ifill and the lessons that the strong women in my life share with me. I look to Gwen as an icon of what is possible. Thanks to this scholarship I am closer to being able to create the quality work that will propel me into the professional world.”

Wiltshire-Bland, a senior communications major, came to Simmons from the Caribbean. As a [Dix Scholar](#), she is committed to helping other non-traditional age students by serving as a peer mentor. The Dorothea Lynde Dix Scholars program is designed for applicants 24 years or older or for students pursuing a second bachelors degree.

“I am interested in student affairs and helping adult learners/non-traditional students navigate college life,” said Wiltshire-Bland. “As a non-traditional adult student, I understand the challenges that adult students face. I imagine myself telling stories, doing research, or presenting documentaries to tell stories of those whose stories may not have been heard.”

The Ifill Scholarships have been funded, in part, by a group of donors led by some of Ifill’s high school classmates from Classical High School in Springfield, MA. Their gifts, combined with the support of Simmons alumnae/i and friends, form the foundation of the Scholarships, which will be awarded annually to students. Today’s announcement coincides with the second anniversary of Gwen Ifill’s untimely passing in 2016.

About Simmons University

Simmons University (www.simmons.edu) is a nationally recognized private university located in the heart of Boston. Founded as a women’s college in 1899, Simmons is dedicated to innovative teaching and engaged learning. Simmons University offers the only undergraduate program for women in Boston and numerous graduate programs open to all. Follow Simmons on Twitter at @SimmonsUniv and [@SimmonsNews](#), and on Linked In at www.linkedin.com/simmons-university.