

Outstanding Performing Arts Students Awarded Scholarships from the Bernie G. Yvon Memorial Fund

Recipients hail from Georgia, Illinois, California and New York

JACKSONVILLE, Florida – August 10, 2017—Four promising performing arts students have received coveted college scholarships from a fund honoring Bernie G. Yvon, a beloved Chicago-area actor who passed away in 2014. The scholarships were made possible through the Bernie G. Yvon Memorial Fund, which was established at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida in 2015 by his parents and supported by contributions of hundreds of friends and colleagues.

Awards of \$500 each have been presented to Owen Claire Smith, Elise Cismesia, Branden Holzer and Marianna Hoitt-Lange for the 2017-2018 school year.

- **OWEN CLAIRE SMITH** is a 2017 graduate of Milton High School, Milton, Georgia. She will attend the University of Michigan Musical Theatre Department.
- **ELISE CISMESIA** is a 2017 graduate of Downers Grove North High School, Downers Grove, Illinois. She will attend Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester.
- **BRANDEN HOLZER** is a graduate of de Toledo High School, West Hills, California. He will be a Senior in the BFA Musical Theatre Program at the University of Miami.
- **MARIANNA HOITT-LANGE** is a graduate of North Shore High School, Glen Head, New York. She will be a Sophomore majoring in Drama at New York University's Lee Strasberg Institute.

“It’s only fitting that this year’s scholarship recipients have such a wide range of talents and abilities, because Bernie excelled at many different aspects of performance as well—singing, dancing and acting,” his father, Professor Bernard Rene Yvon, commented. “As we said when we established the scholarship, Bernie had a happy life, and he made many other people happy. We want to give others the opportunity to do the same.”

The Bernie G. Yvon Memorial Fund makes scholarships annually in Bernie’s memory; to donate to the fund, please go to www.jaxcf.org/donate, type Yvon in the search box and follow the instructions.

About Bernie G. Yvon (1964-2014)

Bernie was raised in Old Town, Maine and after graduation from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, quickly became a fixture in Chicago-area live theater. For three decades, he was the consummate song-and-dance man, performing in such classics as *Cabaret*, *Mary Poppins*, *The Music Man*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. The majority of his career was in Chicago, but he played the role of Harry Houdini in the national tour of *Ragtime*, and also worked on Broadway and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (www.jaxcf.org), Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 53rd year, the Foundation has assets of \$343 million and has made nearly \$410 million since 1964.

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