



Jonah Jackson

2014 Scholarship Recipient



Jonah Jackson, Cohort of 2014

“Use your platform to [not only] advocate but also [make sure] you pass the mic to other people...to give them a seat at the table.”

2014 Economic Club Scholar Jonah Jackson was raised along Georgia Avenue, in a community filled with love, unity and diversity. Living at home with both of his Jamaican-immigrant grandparents, Jonah had the opportunity to witness how their bravery created opportunity for him to blossom. Jonah recalls how his grandparents, who only had their high school diplomas, always helped him to keep perspective and go after every educational opportunity he was offered.

“Living with my grandparents was a formative experience. It opened opportunity for me, and they always reminded me that education was the main avenue for me to improve myself and our family. My grandmother always told me, ‘Keep your head in your lesson and don’t focus on anything else because education will always open doors for you.’”

Jonah’s drive to learn was further nurtured by the history of D.C. that was present in the museums and cultural pillars in the city. Jonah describes his affection for the museums afforded to D.C. and notes that they are made accessible because of their free admission. Upon reflection, he acknowledges them as spaces in which he was even able to find bits and pieces of himself.

Living in D.C. provided Jonah with a transformative experience that cultivated his desire to be a leader in and out of the classroom, and Jonah remained true to this desire as a student at Theodore Roosevelt High School. In his time there, Jonah dedicated himself to the wellbeing of the world around him and started a green initiative to encourage recycling. Jonah was responsible for a school fundraiser, supported by UNICEF, that went toward creating water wells in Africa. Jonah knew that regardless of what he participated in at Roosevelt, he wanted to leave as a more diverse and enriched version of himself. Dedicated to himself and others, Jonah’s college advisors and mentors encouraged him to apply for the Economic Club scholarship because they felt he would be a good candidate with a great chance of winning. The affordability of college was ever present in Jonah’s mind, so he jumped at the chance and put his best foot forward. Shortly thereafter, Jonah learned that he had been acknowledged as a 2014 Economic Club Scholarship recipient, and he couldn’t have been more ecstatic at the news.

“I felt proud because I felt like I earned it, like it was a culmination of all my hard work. I told my grandmother the news, and she told me, “This was a signal from God that He didn’t bring me this far for nothing.””



Jonah receiving the Mercyhurst Carpe Diem award at his 2018 graduation

After graduating from Theodore Roosevelt High School in 2014, Jonah matriculated into Mercyhurst University, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with honors as Magna Cum Laude in May 2018. Even though Mercyhurst is a small, Catholic school, Jonah made his presence there large. He bridged cultural gaps and strengthened the multicultural community as the Chair of the Multicultural Activities Council, and he changed the political and social landscape of Mercyhurst as Student Government President. Jonah dedicated himself to not only growing in his journey as a student and advocate, but also touching the hearts and minds of his peers, administrators and anyone who found themselves in his orbit. As a result, Jonah was honored with the Mercyhurst Carpe Diem award, which is given to a graduating senior who has had the biggest impact on the campus and its inner-workings.

Beyond his devotion to Mercyhurst, Jonah took full advantage of the Economic Club’s Urban Alliance Summer Internship Program, and worked with the Group, a prominent consulting firm, in 2016 and Bravo! in 2017. Jonah describes both internships as priceless opportunities to meet new people, foster relationships, and explore the world of government and politics. Moreover, Jonah credits his internship experiences as the places in which he has found valuable mentors, including Martin Copeland and Edward Levin, who have helped him to take risks and stand firm in his excellence.

Jonah is currently in his first year as a law student in Villanova University’s School of Law, and he hopes to use his forthcoming degree to practice in a firm or in-house to hone and deepen his skills as a lawyer. In the long-term, Jonah hopes to step outside of law and use it as the bridge to become active in economic development by encouraging communities to be economically vibrant, and by directly creating opportunities for a broad base and network of people.

Jonah Jackson is already a giant in the Mercyhurst network and Economic Club Scholar family, but that doesn’t stop him from reaching back and lending a helpful hand and a few wise words:

“Every young professional should read Colin Powell’s autobiography, My American Journey, to discover, for themselves, the ways in which they’d like to do the maximum good for others. If you want to stand out in any position, dress for the job you want! When you encounter failure and setbacks, remember that failure is a part of life. Realize there is room for improvement. Failing is a moment for growth and an opportunity to take on a growth mindset.”

*To learn more about the Economic Club’s Education Initiatives, contact education@economicclub.org
Scholar Profile Researcher & Writer: Najya Williams (2015 Scholar)*