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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Selected Educational Trust Awards \$9,500 in Scholarships This Spring

LINCOLNSHIRE, IL — July 22, 2025 — The Board of Trustees of the Selected Educational Trust has awarded four scholarships totaling \$9,500 this spring. Recipients of the Second-Career Scholarships include two students awarded scholarships sponsored by Gunderson Funeral Home, as well as one recipient of the Michael R. St. Pierre Memorial Scholarship.

The recipients are:

- **Melody McCann**, attending Northwest Mississippi Community College, Southaven, MS — *Spring 2025 Second-Career Scholarship sponsored by Gunderson Funeral Home*
- **Shaylie Pickrell**, attending Mount Hood Community College, Gresham, OR — *Spring 2025 Second-Career Scholarship sponsored by Gunderson Funeral Home*
- **Christie White**, attending Delgado Community College, New Orleans, LA — *Michael R. St. Pierre Memorial Scholarship*

“The Trust established the Second-Career Scholarship Program in 2010 in recognition of the unique circumstances of individuals choosing to enter funeral service as a second career or later in life,” said Stefanie Favia, Executive Director of the Selected Educational Trust. “And now, 15 years later, I am honored to continue what has become a cherished tradition of supporting this remarkable group of professionals.”

Each recipient brings a powerful personal story and deep commitment to the profession. “My goal is to become a licensed funeral director and embalmer so I can give back to my community by guiding others through grief, with dignity and respect,” said McCann. “Being able to have support from scholarships and from mentors, knowing that you’re on the right path — that’s what this scholarship has meant to me,” said Pickrell. “I’m currently interning as a funeral director and embalmer with the goal of owning my own mortuary service one day. This support brings me closer to that dream,” said White.

In addition, the Trust awarded the **Mark and Nancy Justen Memorial Scholarship** to **Amber Swedberg**, attending Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Wheeling, IL. Established in 2025 through a generous donation from Robert Justen of Justen Funeral Home & Crematory, McHenry, IL, this scholarship provides a \$5,000 award to a student enrolled in a mortuary science program in the Midwest.

“This scholarship is really such a blessing,” said Swedberg. “As a single mom of five who doesn’t really get any help, finances are always so hard. Now I can go into residency week with confidence. I can just actually focus on what I’m doing and not have that worry in the back of my mind.”

Second-Career Scholarships are awarded by the Selected Educational Trust to individuals pursuing funeral service later in life who are currently enrolled in mortuary science programs. Since being launched in 2010, the program has awarded more than \$100,000 in tuition support to deserving students across the country.

Applications for the Fall 2025 scholarship cycle, sponsored by **Chptr**, are now open and due by **October 31**. For more information, visit selectedtrust.org/second-career-scholarship or contact info@selectedtrust.org.



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About the Selected Educational Trust

The mission of the [Selected Educational Trust](https://www.selectedtrust.org) (www.selectedtrust.org) is to provide the best educational opportunities for the advancement and support of all who work within the independent funeral service profession. To fulfill this mission, the Trust provides programs which offer scholarships to mortuary science students and funeral service professionals and networking and employment opportunities through its *Workforce Development Centers*.