

## **WINNER ANNOUNCED FOR FIRST ANNUAL J. TERRY TINDALL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

*Aerian Swenson from Haxtun, Colorado earns \$2,000 college scholarship*

**FORT MORGAN, COLORADO** — Aerian Swenson, an 18-year old high school student from Haxtun, Colorado who will attend the University of Arizona this fall as a pre-med student, was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship through the J. Terry Tindall Memorial Scholarship Fund. Swenson plans to become a cardiothoracic surgeon or neurosurgeon after she completes medical school.

According to the Tindall Family, this was the first scholarship awarded since the Fund was launched in 2022. “Our father, who passed away in 2020, was a visionary in athletics, education and mentorship who privately tutored students of all ages and abilities. He developed unique educational tools, resources and programs,” they said in a joint statement. “But he particularly excelled at helping those who struggled — whether it be because of a learning disability, a difficult home-life situation or any other issue which presented an obstacle to a student being able to gain an education.” They concluded, “Dad would be so pleased with our selection of Aerian, a young woman who exhibits his strengths of a strong work ethic, integrity and resilience. She is focused and driven and has a heart for giving back to others and making a difference in her world.”

Swenson, who was raised by her grandparents — Sara and Ray Swenson — from a young age after both her parents were arrested, graduated high school May 14 with a 3.5 GPA, all while simultaneously working at her high school part time vacuuming, dusting and cleaning during free periods and after school to earn money to help out with the family’s finances. She also gained her phlebotomy certification during her senior year, and will work in that capacity this summer to earn money for college. Her grandmother, a CNA at a nursing home until her retirement, inspired Aerian to pursue a career in a medical field. “We didn’t have money for a babysitter, so I used to tag along with her when she went to work and I learned a lot. Afterwards, I would pick flowers in the nearby field and give them to the residents,” she recalled. She also competed briefly for her high school’s volleyball and track teams, cheered all four years, and is involved with her Methodist Youth Group.

Swenson credits her grandparents (her grandfather recently passed away), her older brother Christian, her Guidance Counselor Sharon Seeger and her boyfriend Ricardo and his mother Gina, for being supportive and steadying influences in her life. “I’ve definitely had some challenges in my life and the cards may seem stacked against me, but these people always believed I could be the best version of myself if I worked hard and made good choices,” she said. “My grandparents were always strictly against what my parents did to land themselves in jail,” she continued. “My parents weren’t bad people, but they made some really bad choices and I decided pretty early on that I did not want to be like them.” Aerian said that Sharon Seeger has been her, “. . . beacon of light — my own personal Mr. Feeny (referencing the character in the television sitcom *Boy Meets World*).”

Seeger helped her with the rigorous process of applying to colleges and scholarships and not only offered to help move her to Arizona in the fall, but has given her gas money and additionally helped her navigate her phlebotomy certification as well.

Despite earning a Recognition Scholarship in addition to the J.Terry Tindall Scholarship, Aerian says that only half of her education expenses are currently covered. “I am definitely going to be working once I start college this fall to help make up that deficit,” she said. “And since I am moving to Arizona and will be living there full time, I hope to gain in-state tuition status by the time I start my sophomore year in the fall of 2024.” She says that her gratitude to the Tindall Family for their financial assistance via the scholarship leaves her feeling so honored and special. “I am told there were 235 students who applied for this scholarship. I feel so blessed that they chose me, and knowing all that Mr. Tindall accomplished and stood for makes me wish he were still alive so he could witness the journey I am about to take. I never knew him, but I hope he would be proud of me.”

The J. Terry Tindall Scholarship Fund was originally envisioned by one of Tindall’s former students, Leya Martinez, who graduated from East High School in Pueblo and is now a student at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs on a track and field scholarship. The Tindall Family took the reins once Leya left for college, and worked with the Bold Foundation ([bold.org](https://bold.org)) to launch the scholarship fund on a platform where students could apply for a yearly college scholarship. Bold CEO Dror Liebenthal said, “Scholarships are so impactful for students. Beyond the financial support, the confidence that comes from having a scholarship panel believe in you and your work, can change your world. We’re honored to work with the Tindall Family to award Aerian Swenson and continue Terry Tindall’s legacy through the J. Terry Tindall Memorial Scholarship Fund.”

For more information about the J. Terry Tindall Scholarship, including applicant criteria and timeline for 2024/2025 candidates, or to donate towards the Scholarship Fund, please visit: <https://bold.org/scholarships/JTerry-Tindall-Memorial-Scholarship/>  
Please also follow the J. Terry Tindall Memorial Scholarship Fund on Facebook and Instagram for pertinent application information and a full listing of Finalists.

*The J. Terry Tindall Memorial Scholarship was created to honor the legacy of an exceptionally unique man who was a trailblazer in athletics, education, and mentorship, and who privately tutored students of all ages and abilities. He particularly excelled at helping those who struggled with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral challenges, students with disabilities, and children with challenging home-life situations. Seniors in high school in Colorado who maintain a minimum 3.0-grade point average, simultaneously participate in community service/extracurricular school activities and/or who work part time while preparing to pursue further higher education (whether via a 4-year university, community college, or trade school) are eligible to apply for this scholarship. Please visit [bold.org](https://bold.org) to apply.*

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