



#### DAVID AND LINDA BALLARD

Dr. David Ballard and his wife Linda both grew up in homes where giving back came naturally. People helped out when they could, it was a sense of responsibility. As they raised their family and achieved career success, the Ballards began to notice a trend of promising, accomplished students having to leave school over financial constraints. As their families had always done, they wanted to help out.

In 2018 they established the E. David and Linda C. Ballard Family Foundation Scholarship, focused on helping minority juniors and seniors at Atlanta-area colleges overcome financial barriers in order to graduate. In the first year, a total of \$40,000 in scholarships were awarded to 14 students, helping to ease some financial stress so that students can focus on their course work. The Ballards' adult children and their spouses are part of the application review process, which includes an in-person interview where at least one Ballard family member is present. "We want the students to see us and meet us," Dr. Ballard said. "We aren't just some anonymous funding source, we are here to let them know we care, and that we want them to succeed. We hope our efforts inspire them to pay it forward in the future." (*see more page 2*)

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**We had no idea so many students were leaving school because they had exhausted all other financial avenues. The people who can be so instrumental in framing our futures were falling out of the system.”** – Linda Ballard



## An education for EVERYONE through flexible financial help

### THE CASE for CHANGE


*"We do not only gain an education while here, our character is built. We make a choice to change the world and our journey equips us with those skills."*


*- Makayla Stokes  
(above right)*

Imagine that you are a college student in your senior year. You are the first in your family to attend college and you work two jobs on top of your school work to make ends meet. Then, the unthinkable happens. Maybe it's a thrown axel on your car or an unexpected illness. You have a \$300 gap in tuition and try

as you might, you cannot make up the difference. You end up taking a break from school and can't finish your education, potentially wasting years of tireless work as you pursued your dream of a better life. Your dream was lost because of \$300.

Sound farfetched? It's not. It is estimated that between 15,000 and 25,000 Georgia students leave school every year because of financial challenges and \$300 is the average amount needed to help them stay in school. It's a crisis for the students and also for local business, with 65% of all jobs by 2020 projected to require a post-secondary credential and only 47% of Georgia's workforce ready today. Flexible financial aid helps students, but in the long run, it helps our economy.

 **40%**  
Increase in higher education  
tuition in Georgia

  
**\$300**  
Average amount owed by  
students who drop out of school

  
**15,000**  
Georgia students leaving  
college due to unpaid balances

## Supporting bright futures

**S**tacey Riddick is going to be a doctor. Originally from Nashville, she's a senior at Spelman College with ambitions of becoming a public health practitioner. She's incredibly busy, balancing school-work with active volunteerism, working and a passion for photography. In her second-to-last semester, she had a gap in tuition as she was applying for her next step.

"Many people don't know this, but if you have a gap, there is a hold on your account and you cannot send your transcripts. I was applying for a research fellowship at Harvard University and without this scholarship, I could not have done that," Riddick said. Riddick was a recipient of a need-based, last-minute scholarship from the E. David and Linda C. Ballard Family Foundation Scholarship, which made all the difference. She'll be

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*Someone sees a light in me. They said 'she will do great things with an undergraduate degree.' It inspired me to give back when I can.*

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*– Stacey Riddick  
(left, page 2)*



heading to Harvard in the fall, and from there, into a bright future.

Makayla Stokes, an aspiring lawyer also in her senior year at Spelman, treasured the interview process for the Ballard Scholarship. "It wasn't like a job interview, it was a conversation. The fact that the Ballards connected to me as a student first made an impact on me. It spoke volumes about who they are," said Stokes. "We shared our stories – they learned about me, I learned about them."