

College Bound Caddies

Written by Story by Nichole Brophy / Photograph courtesy of Western Golf Association

The Evans Scholarship Foundation takes caddies from hitting the links to hitting the books.



When Charles “chick” Evans, JR., the 1916 U.S. Open champion, began the Evans Scholarship Foundation by financially aiding the foundation’s first two scholars in 1930, he couldn’t have guessed he’d assist more than 10,000 deserving caddies in furthering their educations.

“Chick grew up as a caddy, and he only went to college for a year before he had to drop out because he couldn’t afford it,” says Jeff Harrison, vice president of education for the Evans Scholars Foundation. “His goal was to help his fellow caddies be able to afford college and to be able to realize their dreams with a higher education.”

Kellen Marlow, currently a graduate student at Willamette University’s college of law, knows this firsthand. Marlow began caddying at Scottsdale’s esteemed Estancia Club during his sophomore year of high school and was recommended to the Evans Scholars program by the head golf pro there.

After the application and interview process, Marlow was awarded a full-tuition scholarship to the University of Colorado.

“I knew I was going to go to college somewhere, but getting a full ride to an out-of-state school like the University of Colorado was a pretty big deal,” says Marlow, who, upon graduating, hopes to practice estate law.

Marlow’s housing expenses were also subsidized, as he resided with fellow Evans Scholars in the Evans Scholarship House, one of 14 around the country.

“It fostered a nice sense of community in the house because we didn’t have a real solid place on campus,” Marlow says. “Freshmen don’t necessarily go to dorms their first year, so you meet a whole lot of people outside the house, but [living with other Evans Scholars] fostered a sense of tradition within the house. That part of the experience I really enjoyed.”

Scholars are selected on the basis of four criteria: a strong caddie record, excellent academics, financial need and leadership skills. Currently, the Evans Scholarship program has 835 scholars on campuses around the United States, with 231 additional caddies beginning this fall.

Sponsored by the Western Golf Association, the Evans Scholarship program has a graduation rate of 90 percent and an average GPA of 3.25.

“It’s a life-changing event receiving an Evans Scholarship,” Harrison says. “We get some tremendous positive feedback.”

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Feedback and gratitude from caddies like Marlow, whose college experience was all it should be, sans the financial pressure.

"It was a really big help and I really appreciated everything that they did," Marlow says.

To Learn More:

Evans Scholars Foundation, 847.724.4600, www.evansscholarsfoundation.com.