

Raymond F. Gates, JR.

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

OVER THE PAST 33 YEARS, CHILDREN OF REALTORS®
HAVE BEEN AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS TOTALING OVER \$580,500!

Recently we caught up with three former Gates Scholarship recipients, **Cathrina Strait**, **James Conniff**, and **Jennifer Mahoney**. We are proud to highlight their individual achievements and the impact the Raymond F. Gates, Jr. Scholarship has had in their respective education pursuits.

Cathrina Strait graduated from Brookfield High School in 1999 and went on to graduate from Georgetown University in 2003. She is the daughter of Constance and William Strait. Constance is a REALTOR® with ERA Goodfellow Homes of Danbury and a member of Northern Fairfield County Association of REALTORS®. After graduating from Georgetown University, Cathrina relocated to Dallas, Texas. She is a finance manager for Deloitte Financial Advisory Services. Cathrina is also working towards her MBA at the University of Texas, Dallas.



James Conniff was the recipient of several Gates Scholarships throughout his educational career. James is the son of Karen and Richard Conniff. His mother is a REALTOR® member with the Midd-Shore Association and an agent with Coldwell Banker, Old Lyme. James graduated from Old Lyme High School in 2001 and went on to receive his BA in History from Yale University in 2006. While at Yale he was active in various student groups, especially singing ensembles, and was a member of the Whiffenpoofs of 2005. In 2007, James was accepted by Columbia University's College of Physicians & Surgeons and is presently a second-year medical student.

Jennifer Mahoney was a 1998 graduate of Bethel High School and a Gates Scholarship recipient. "The Gates Scholarship was a tremendous help in allowing me to attend Wellesley College. While there, I had the freedom to explore various disciplines and discover my passion for biology and medicine. I majored in Biology Sciences and after graduation attended veterinary school at North Carolina State University. I recently completed a rotating internship in general medicine and surgery at the Animal Medical Center in New York City, and am now a second-year medical oncology resident at NCSU. The Gates Scholarship helped give me the opportunity to pursue my goal of becoming a veterinary oncologist, and I am forever grateful for the support." Jennifer is the daughter of Marianne and Donald Mahoney. Marianne is a REALTOR® with William Raveis and a member of the Northern Fairfield County Association of REALTORS®.



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WITH

RANJIT AIYAGARI, M.D.

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Recently we caught up with Dr. Ranjit Aiyagari. Ranjit received his first Gates Scholarship in 1992 and went on to receive several additional Gates scholarships throughout his educational career. Ranjit is the son of Nalini & Mohan-Rao Aiyagari. His mother Nalini was a REALTOR® member from the Ridgefield Board. In 1998, she and her family relocated to California. She is now a Broker Associate, International President's Elite, with Coldwell Banker/Saratoga.

Ranjit shared this reflection on his education, where it has brought him to today and the impact of the Gates Scholarship awards:

"Growing up, I was motivated to succeed academically from an early age by parents who were high achievers in their own right and by an older brother who I had watched achieve great success. I had the fortune of receiving my first Gates scholarship when I graduated high school from Ridgefield High in 1992. My intention at that time was to attend Harvard University and study science. I had some thoughts of attending medical school afterwards but was not 100% sure.

Harvard is a fascinating, eye-opening institution. I remember vividly my first few days there, feeling as if I was finally in an environment of colleagues with similar ideals and abilities. As classes began, I remember also experiencing the harsh reality of no longer being the smartest kid in the class. But this turned out to be a very good thing: it motivated me to learn, improve, and continue to pursue my goals. By the end of my first year there, I had firmly decided to attend medical school. Because I came in with many advanced placement credits from high school, I was able to complete my degree in three years.

I applied for and was accepted at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, where I was a student from 1995 to 1999. Becoming a doctor was one of the best decisions I made. To me, medicine represents a unique combination of science, humanity, and lifelong learning. At one time, many students were drawn to medicine by the mystique surrounding doctors and the tremendous paychecks they earned. Those days have ended, and I think this is actually a good thing, because more of the medical students I see today are in medical school for the right reason: to serve. This is the most valuable aspect of the profession. Indeed, good doctors feel an unending sense of obligation toward their patients, and will serve them tirelessly regardless of their circumstance such as ability to pay or self-injurious behavior.

My medical training after medical school consisted of six more years, including a three-year pediatric residency at the University of California, San Francisco, and a three-year pediatric cardiology fellowship at the University of Michigan. I was lucky to be hired on as academic faculty at the University of Michigan, and now work in both clinical and research aspects of pediatric cardiology. I help train the next generation of pediatric cardiologists in pediatric cardiac catheterization and pediatric cardiac critical care, and this is the main legacy I hope to leave.

The prestige and honor provided by the Gates scholarship helped me in innumerable ways. In addition, the money provided by this scholarship is a huge help for students in this day of exorbitant tuition costs. I am certainly appreciative of the doors this scholarship opened for me."

-Ranjit Aiyagari, M.D.

