

Five Area High School Students Win Merit Scholarships

Five students from high schools in the Observer Newspaper Group circulation area are among the 2,250 Merit Scholarship winners nationwide according to an announcement by John Stalnaker, president of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

The 1966 awards, worth more than \$5 million, bring the total value of scholarships given through the program to about \$48 million in 11 years.

The five area winners are: Mary Ann Fink, of Plymouth High, who resides with her parents at 7428 Cynthia Drive.

Kathleen Schacht, of Farmington High, who resides at 23230 Powers Road. Catherine Bagnache, of Ladywood High, who resides at 32428 Florence, Garden City.

William Birkett, of Livonia Bentley High, who lives at 31107 Grenada, Livonia.

Merit scholarships provide from \$400 to \$8,000 each, depending on the student's need. They cover the four undergraduate years of college and provide a type of "educational insurance" since the amount can be adjusted if the student's financial circumstances change while he or she is in college. Over 1,600 of the 1966 awards were provided by sponsoring corporations, foundations, colleges, unions, professional associations, trusts, other organizations or individuals. Some 310 sponsors supported merit scholarships this year, up from the 283 of last year.

Some \$25 awards are National Merit Scholarships underwritten by NMSC funds from Ford Foundation grants. Five hundred of these merit scholars were chosen state by state, the number for each state being proportional to its population of graduating high school seniors.

The remaining 125 were selected from finalists who overcame unusual handicaps, have exceptional financial needs, show creative ability or entered college as early-admissions students before completing high school graduation requirements.

All merit scholars were chosen from among 14,000 finalists. The finalists are those who scored in about the upper half of one per cent of seniors in their state on the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, confirmed this performance in a second test and received the endorsement of their schools.

Winners of sponsored Merit Scholarships were chosen according to the sponsor's criteria. Many sponsored awards are for children of the sponsoring firm's employees. Others are for finalists who want to attend a particular college, have indicated a career preference or had some qualification which the sponsor wishes to encourage.

Clark has won a J. Walter Thompson Company fund merit scholarship. He intends to major in Analytic Chemistry at the University of Michigan and plans a career as a research chemist.

Birkett, a member of the Bentley High cross country and track teams for three years and of the wrestling team during the past season, won a Michigan State University merit scholarship. He intends to major in Engineering and plans a career as an engineer.

Mary Ann Fink was a Michigan State University merit scholarship and will take a course in preventive medicine at Michigan State.

Catherine Bagnache also won a Michigan State University Merit scholarship. She is undecided about her course of study but will enroll at Michigan State.

Kathleen Schacht won a Baldwin-College Merit Scholarship and plans to take a course in Psychology there. All Merit Scholarship stipends are individually determined. Within normal limits of \$100 and \$1,500 per year, the stipend is meant to provide the difference between the student's estimated college costs and his family's ability to meet them. Some sponsors have established higher minimum or maximum stipends, but need is determined for all winners in the same way. Individual stipends are not made public, since they are based on confidential financial information.

Grants made directly to the colleges chosen by Merit Scholars accompany most of the Merit Scholarships. Most such grants are for \$100 or \$250 per year per student.

The 11th Merit Program began about a year ago, when students in 17,600 secondary schools took the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. More than 14,000 Semifinalists, the highest scorers in each state, were announced last September. Almost all of them con-

firmly their performance on the second test and submitted the other data required to become Finalists. Each Finalist

was awarded a Certificate of Merit. All students honored through the Merit Program, including

some 38,000 commended students in addition to the Semifinalists, were identified to colleges, universities, and other

sources of financial aid by Finalists will enter college next for NMSC. Research indicates that fall.

Funds included in its funding grants make it possible

Sponsors devote all their funds to

administrative and professional services, avoiding the cost of sponsoring the scholarship competition.

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