Meet the Foundation Scholarship Winner

The winner of the 2003 Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry’s $10,000 scholarship is Ivan Wilson, son of Leon Wilson of Wilson Construction Systems, Inc. in Hewitt, Texas. He is working toward a master’s degree in architecture at Texas Tech University and he expects to graduate in May 2005.

The Foundation provides $10,000 to an applicant who is furthering his or her education in the fields of construction management, engineering or architecture. It is available for qualifying AWCI member company employees and their direct dependents. The first portion of the scholarship will be given to Wilson in time for the fall 2003 semester.

Meet Ivan

From 1994 through this year, Wilson, a native of Waco, Texas, has been working for his father’s construction company for 40 hours a week when school is not in session. He works as a laborer doing such jobs as framing rooms and hanging wallboard. He accomplished this work while maintaining his current 3.27 grade point average and being placed on the Dean’s List for Academic Excellence at Texas Tech.

Prior to college, Wilson participated in many of his high school’s extracurricular activities. He played both football and baseball, and was selected as Most Valuable Defensive Lineman by his teammates. After high school, Wilson volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, where he helped paint houses for the elderly.

In his spare time, Wilson says he does “pretty much anything that involves the outdoors.” His first love is snow skiing, which he tries to do at least once a year. In the summer, he enjoys hiking, camping, fishing and hunting.

He’s a Winner

As part of the application process, applicants must provide information such as proof of employment, employment history, school transcripts and references. In addition, applicants have to answer the following essay question: “You have an unlimited budget to build or renovate, design or engineer any building—new or existing—anywhere in the world. What would you build? Where do you build it? What material do you use to build it? How is the building to be used? Why are you building or renovating it?” (You can see his winning essay in the sidebar.)

Jane Northern is the director of membership marketing and programs for the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries—International and also the staff liaison for the Foundation’s executive committee, which is the committee that selects the scholarship winner. Northern said, “We received applications from some excellent candidates, and I was holding my breath when it got down to the top three, because I thought it was really going to be hard to choose. But Ivan’s essay won over the members of the committee. He has a bright future ahead of him.”

How can your student get $10,000? If you or any of your full-time dependents meet the following requirements, and you work for an AWCI-member company, you are eligible to apply for the scholarship program:

- The applicant must be pursing a post-high school education in the field of construction management, engineering or architecture. Graduate school, technical school and associate degree program students, as well as students of traditional four-year colleges are all eligible to apply.
- The applicant must have achieved a cumulative 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) academic average for the last two full-time semesters of study.
- The applicant must be a full-time...
Ivan’s Winning Essay

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman —Thomas Paine

An insecure and uncomfortable feeling is weighing heavy on the shoulders of Americans today. The cowardly terrorist attacks on America not only pierced the hearts and souls of us, but it also slapped us back down to reality stating that we are not invincible but in actuality are very much vulnerable. Americans are finally realizing that there is a bigger world and it does not revolve around the USA. This world is full of evil and evildoers waiting for an opportunity to inflict pain and sorrow on us. The 9/11 attacks on America opened the eyes of many blinded Americans, and it scares them.

This is why I believe the time is ideal for a museum to be built and dedicated to American history. For location I would choose New York, to be more specific, on the edge of New York City. I chose this location due to the fact that industry and invention was the mold that formed America. New York has always been the mecca of industry and technology ever since this country was established. I don’t believe placing the museum in the middle of the city would allow people to appreciate the simpler and basic roots of our ancestry. I believe the rush and chaos of the city would just be too much confusion and frustration for the visitors. I would face the exits toward the city off in the distance to reveal to them how far America has evolved from the primitive pictures and machines they were just exposed to in the museum. America is considered all throughout the world as being the big melting pot, and New York is the essence of this belief.

Materials chosen would be nothing but the best. The exterior stairs and courtyard made of Texas Pink Granite, the outer walls of the museum constructed of Pennsylvania limestone. The interior floors and walls would be a nice polished California marble with Oregon Oak trim. On the exterior, domestic trees, shrubs and flowers would be placed to emphasize the enormous 10-foot tall solid oak doors. As you enter the colossal entrance you are exposed to a high ceiling that gradually fades into a dome that allows natural light to enter through the top. After you enter, there is a series of rooms to the left and right, each leading into the other. Each room would be dedicated to a specific state and its contributions to America. The space in the middle of the building under the dome would be dedicated to America and its contributions to the world.

The nation and its citizens are divided over the issue of war. I believe building a new American history museum would be a great step toward the repairing of our spirits and confidence. Americans and the world need to see that we will not only survive this, but will thrive. If we had a place to go and see all of the obstacles that Americans have overcome in the past, I believe it would give people a boost of confidence in America and its citizens.

— Ivan Wilson
Foundation Scholarship Winner & Future Architect
February 14, 2003
student or must be intending to become a full-time student.

**Deadline Is Next Month**

Unlike past years, when the deadline was early in the year, the deadline for the 2004 scholarship is now Aug. 1, 2003, so that the winner can be selected during the Foundation’s meeting in September, during AWCI’s Industry Executives’ Conference & Committee Week. This will allow the winner to have advance notice and be able to attend AWCI’s Annual Convention & Trade Show, which is where the winner’s name will be formally announced. The convention will be in Las Vegas, Nev., April 12-17.

Other procedural changes for 2004 include a telephone interview of the candidates with members of the selection committee.

Call Northern at (703) 538-1615 to have an application mailed to you or if you have any questions.