

The Earl N. Smith III Endowed Memorial Scholarship

To honor our late brother Earl's legacy of leadership and mentoring, racial and social justice advocacy, as well as his characteristic humility, integrity, and perseverance on the pathway to success, the Paul Cuffee School created a \$25,000 endowment campaign to award the third annual Earl N. Smith III Memorial Scholarship of \$1,000 in June 2025 to a Paul Cuffee graduating senior. The School has raised more than \$30,000 in gifts and pledges to date and is actively seeking gifts and multiple-year commitments to fully fund an endowed scholarship fund in Earl's memory.

Eligibility Criteria

For consideration, scholarship applicants must exemplify one or more of the following eligibility criteria as agreed upon by a designated representative of the Smith family and members of the Earl N. Smith III Memorial Scholarship Selection Committee:

- Demonstrated persistence, resilience, and success with overcoming significant challenges.
- Repeated examples of leadership, mentoring, and advocacy for others including but not limited to: membership on the Principal's Cabinet, membership in the Mentoring at Cuffee program, All School Meeting organizer, Athletic Team Captain, Most Valuable Player, After School Club group leader, participation in local community groups or equivalent experiences.
- Community service mindset and investment of time and effort. (Applicants should include evidence of their developing a program or being of service in a way that has had an impact on the surrounding community, being involved in programs that include their involvement in mentoring, teaching, or contributing their time and talent to a community agency, religious entity, school program, or non-profit organization.)
- College ready GPA, and/or exemplary academic standing.
- Acceptance to a 2 or 4 year college or university, with preference given to a senior who will be attending URI's Talent Development program or an Historically Black College or University.
- Other exemplary character traits and/or social activism accomplishments such as: evidence of the Upper School's core values or 6 B's: *Be Scholarly, Be Respectful, Be Supportive, Be Reflective, Be Responsible and Be Brave*. Students may also describe evidence of being a recipient of Turtle Points, and/or their efforts or something similar to behind-the-scenes advocacy for friends and peers.
- Financial need.

Application Process

Students, faculty and staff at the Upper School will be asked to nominate a senior based upon the agreed upon criteria that the Smith family has vetted. To encourage nominee investment in their own success, students who wish to be considered as a candidate for the Earl N. Smith III Memorial Scholarship will be asked to submit an application with their resume, a faculty recommendation and a short essay that describes his or her fulfillment of one or more of the award criteria no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 28, 2025.

A link to the 2025 application is here: [ENSIII Scholarship Application](#)

Application Evaluation

To support an anti biased/objective candidate evaluation process, the proposed Earl N. Smith III Memorial Scholarship Award Review Committee will consist of a Smith family representative, a current or former member of the Paul Cuffee School Board of Trustees, a Lower or Middle School faculty or staff member, an alumnae and a non-voting member of the Paul Cuffee School-wide Leadership Team. To include peer input on finalist candidate evaluations, anecdotal feedback may be requested from Upper School student representatives - preferably one freshman, sophomore and junior.

Data points for the agreed upon selection criteria will be used when evaluating each scholarship application.

Award Decision

Applications will be reviewed and voted upon by end of April by members of the Selection Committee. The finalist will be announced at an Upper School assembly on May 28, 2025 and noted in the Class of 2025 Graduation Program.