

Full ride, full choice unique with Maddox scholarship

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When Janie Pape and her daughter visited the University of Notre Dame in 1996, college officials there said they had never heard of a scholarship like the Maddox Distinguished Scholar anywhere in the country.

The scholarship's unique status — a full ride to the college of one's choice in the continental

United States — means Lea County students need to take advantage of the rare opportunity, Pape said.

"The kids here need to realize what they have within the Maddox Foundation," she said.

Each year, the J. F. Maddox Foundation of Hobbs selects one Distinguished Scholar and four Maddox Scholars among Lea County high school students entering their senior year. To apply, the students must have been Lea County residents for a minimum of two years and cannot be related to any employee of the Maddox Foundation.

The Distinguished Scholar has a full ride — tuition, fees, room and board, textbooks — while the Maddox Scholars receive \$4,000 a year for four years.

Bob Reid, executive director of the Maddox Foundation, said the scholarship awards have increased by almost 6 1/2 times since the foundation first granted them in 1996.

The Maddox Scholars used to receive \$2,500 over four years as opposed to \$16,000 over four years and the Distinguished Scholar award has seen a dramatic jump due to increases in college expenses.

"We have spent over \$2 million on scholarship awards over the history of the scholarship program," Reid said.

The Distinguished Scholar does not always choose an elite school such as Stanford or Harvard, he said, noting a stu-

dent may choose Texas Tech, where they would qualify for in-state tuition.

All Maddox scholarship applications are due by midnight June 30, and the foundation usually receives about 50-60 applications, Reid said.

A five-member selection committee comprised of four Lea County residents and one living outside Lea County will meet about two weeks after the applications are submitted. The committee selects up to 15 students to interview and then narrows the list to five finalists.

"One week after that, they'll interview those five to see who's going to end up being the Distinguished Scholar," Reid said.

In late July or early August the Distinguished Scholar is announced.

Grades are not the sole criteria for receiving the scholarship. The student's extracurricular activities, community service, leadership skills and interview are also considered.

Every student who is interviewed receives a notebook computer.

Like Pape, Reid said the Maddox Distinguished Scholar award is exceptional.

"Usually the full ride scholarships are tied to one specific school," he said. "You have to go to that school to get the full ride scholarship, or if you don't go to that school you forfeit that scholarship. In this case, you have a full ride scholarship that will allow you to go to any school of your choice within the continental USA. That's what's very different and very unique."

Some elite universities have come to understand how competitive the scholarship is and therefore try to recruit Maddox scholarship recipients, he said.

"All five are considered to be the best and the brightest from Lea County, so they are very attractive to universities that know anything about this scholarship program," Reid said.



Reid