



Fall 10-4-2018

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Recommended Citation

McCarthy, Rachel, "Maloney '18 Named As Rotary Scholar" (2018). *News and Events*. 3809.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/3809>

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Maloney '18 Named As Rotary Scholar

Oct. 4, 2018

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Shannon Maloney '18 (Chicago) has been awarded a \$33,000 scholarship through [Rotary International](#) to help fund her studies at the University of Oxford, where she will pursue a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in psychiatry.

"I feel truly honored and grateful to be a recipient of the Rotary Scholarship," Maloney said. "Without this funding opportunity, it would have been financially impossible for me to attend the university of my dreams. I am forever indebted to the Rotary Foundation for their generous contribution."

Building upon her work as a psychology major, Maloney plans to research mindfulness and meditation practices as a potential treatment for a variety of illnesses, ranging from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) to dementia.

An internship at the Health and Cognition Lab during her study abroad experience as a junior at the University of Oxford formally introduced Maloney to mindfulness exercises as a method of alleviating symptoms of certain ailments. However, even as a child, Maloney learned to appreciate the value of mindfulness from her mother's example.

"My mother taught us to appreciate the present moment and to be mindful of our environment – when hiking, camping, cooking, going on walks, the list goes on and on," said Maloney, who recalls hiking along Cedar Rapids trail with her family during their time in Dallas. "My mother also inspired me and my brother to do yoga, a mindful and physical exercise that I still try to implement in my day-to-day life. Overall, these exercises have benefited me personally, which has driven me to explore their applications as a form of treatment."

Maloney led research in the Stroke and Rehabilitation Lab at IWU, an experience which exposed her to the methodology of intervention-based research similar to her Ph.D. project. Under the mentorship of Assistant Professor of Psychology Abigail Kerr, Maloney spent the summer of her sophomore year as an [Eckley Summer Scholars and Artists Endowment Fellow](#) to develop a new stroke rehabilitation method using mice. She continued this research in her senior thesis project by studying the efficacy of her method in improving upper-body motor movement post-stroke.

As Maloney prepares to advance in her academic career, she reflected on the support she received from Illinois Wesleyan and its faculty, who opened up avenues for career-shaping experiences.

"I am extremely grateful for Dr. Kerr's mentorship and for the knowledge she has shared with me," Maloney said. "I am also forever indebted to IWU. As an IWU student, there were many scholarship opportunities that then led to many exceptional learning experiences and research involvements. IWU encouraged me to pursue my dreams and gave me the tools necessary to move forward."

Rotary International is a global network of 35,000 clubs which advocate for a number of causes, such as providing sanitation and hygiene to developing communities, supporting access to education and growing local economies. Through the Rotary Foundation or through local clubs, Rotary International provides scholarships for students in higher education to support studies in areas relating to the organization's six core causes.

Maloney was nominated for the scholarship by the Rotary District 6490 Scholarship Committee, and funding of the scholarship is provided by Rotary District 6490, Rotary One and the Foundation of Rotary International. She will be hosted by District 1090—Henley Bridge Club.



Shannon Maloney '18

By Rachel McCarthy '21