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March 8, 1995

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Bob Gulino of Chicago

Illinois Wesleyan Sophomore Reflects on Horatio Alger Scholarship

Local
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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Nineteenth-century novelist Horatio Alger--whose tales of rags-to-riches success through intelligence, spunk, and honesty--inspired a generation of youngsters.

Today, Bob Gulino--a sophomore majoring in business at Illinois Wesleyan University--is benefiting from a scholarship and other programs offered by a national association named for Alger and headed by a 1969 IWU graduate.

Gulino, a native of Chicago, was named a Horatio Alger Scholar in 1993 by the Alexandria, Va.-based Horatio Alger Association of Young Americans, Inc. Since 1984, the association has awarded more than \$4 million in college scholarships to about 400 promising students. Its goal is to reach the \$10 million scholarship benchmark by the year 2000. Terrence J. Giroux, an IWU political science graduate, serves as executive director of the 47-year-old association.

Giroux told *Parade* magazine in February, 1994, "We want to show young people that, if they work hard, they can accomplish anything they want."

While a student at Gordon Tech, a Catholic all-boys high school in Chicago, Gulino was encouraged to fill out a Horatio Alger Scholarship application by the school's student activities director. The Horatio Alger Association had sent a speaker to Gordon Tech, who talked about various careers.

"I was unsure about filling out the form," Gulino recalled. "The main criteria for receiving the scholarship is the fact that you have had to overcome some obstacle. I was only 17 and I was shy about wanting other people to know about my personal life."

Gulino was a solid student at Gordon Tech, quarterback of the football team, and Student Council president. To help cover tuition costs, he earned

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\$1,200 working at a Handy Andy hardware store and won a \$500 scholarship. His grandparents also pitched in, helping to meet Gulino's \$3,000 tuition bill his senior year.

However, Gulino was raised in a single parent family and his mother had had bouts with alcoholism and drugs.

"In eighth grade," Gulino explained, "she almost passed away and it was very tough on me. But my two older twin sisters and my grandparents were there for me. We're a tight family. My mother is back on her feet and things are back in order.

"Things weren't that bad," Gulino said. "My mom always worked and provided us with the things we needed. At 6 o'clock dinner was on the table."

Gulino decided to fill out the Horatio Alger application because it was a good opportunity for him. He also thought that if he won, he could be a role model and show other youngsters that they can be successful even though they have problems.

His experiences as a youth made Gulino aware of the tough times he could face as an adult, and he committed himself to overcoming obstacles through education.

As a Horatio Alger Scholar, Gulino received a \$5,000 scholarship spread over his four years as an undergraduate.

"I was really excited," Gulino said, referring to his reaction to winning the scholarship. "The scholarship really helped this year--this year finances were tight."

Gulino traveled to Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1993--along with 63 other students--to be honored as a Horatio Alger Scholar. The four-day-long celebration gave him the opportunity to meet other Horatio Alger Scholars.

"I saw others who had different experiences--but the same experience," Gulino explained. "They all had some hurt inside that they were coming to grips with--abuse, being left to themselves, alcohol, drugs. We talked about all this. We saw others with problems and you realized you weren't the only

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person with problems and that it wasn't your fault. When you talk to peers and see that you're not the only one facing difficult times, it makes it easier to overcome."

While in Washington, Gulino visited the Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and many of the city's other monuments. He met members of Congress and stood on the floor of the House of Representatives. Gulino also met many celebrities, including: sportscaster Bob Costas, actor Danny Glover, cookie tycoon Wally Amos (Famous Amos), and television talk show host Oprah Winfrey.

However, poet Maya Angelou was the personality who left the deepest impression. He sat next to Angelou at a luncheon.

"She has a way about her," Gulino explained, "where her simple conversation gives you chills. It's her voice and the way she presents herself. She's a renowned poet and a prominent black leader with a lot of fine ideas. She was really interested in me and when I talked to her she looked me right in the eye."

Gulino also recalled that Angelou became the first poet since Robert Frost in 1961 to address a presidential inauguration, when she read a poem at President Clinton's inauguration.

"I'm extremely appreciative of the help I'm getting from the Horatio Alger Association," Gulino said. "Sometimes successful people don't look back and help others up the ladder. But this is a group of highly successful people who are reaching back to help pull others up the ladder. I can't tell you how much I appreciate their help. It's nice to know that there are people out there who care about you."

One of those who care about students like Gulino is James R. Moffett, chief executive of Freeport McMoRan, an international mining development firm, and chairman of the Horatio Alger Association.

"Mr. Moffett gives me and other scholars \$500 in spending money each year," Gulino said. "I wrote him a letter thanking him and he wrote back, responding to specifics in my letter. It's nice to have a personal letter. I used the money to help pay for my textbooks."

Educator Kenneth Beebe of the American Schools and Colleges

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Association founded the Horatio Alger Association in 1947. The Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, the renowned minister known for his best-seller *The Power of Positive Thinking*, served as the group's president for a quarter-century.

Over the years, the association has honored more than 500 courageous leaders in business, government, science, sports, and other fields, whose lives reflect the message of Alger's novels. Among Horatio Alger Award winners are home run slugger Hank Aaron, comedienne and actress Carol Burnett, surgeon and professor Dorothy L. Brown, United Nations' peace negotiator Ralph J. Bunche, Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.), heart transplant pioneer Dr. Michael E. DeBakey, former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, retired Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine), Weight Watchers' founder Jean Nidetch, Ford Motor Co. chief Harold Poling, President Ronald Reagan, *New York Times'* journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winner James Reston, television personality Oprah Winfrey, and test pilot Brig. Gen. Charles E. Yeager.

"We're not emulating the man--Horatio Alger--but the spirit of what he wrote about in 130 books, which have sold 300 million copies," Giroux explained. "That spirit is about men and women who haven't had it easy--people who have worked hard to overcome challenges. The association's members exemplify what Alger wrote about. They are heroes and role models for youth."

As an example, Giroux points to H. Wayne Huizenga, chairman and chief executive officer of Blockbuster, the \$2 billion-a-year video rental and entertainment corporation, noting that at one point he drove a dump truck.

The philosophy of the association's 24-member board of directors is, Giroux said, "If someone opened the door for us, we need to do that earlier for others."

The association also reaches more than 80,000 high school students each year through the Horatio Alger Youth Seminars, which are local, daylong programs focusing on three themes: career development, public service, and community service. Scholarship recipients often receive internships provided by association members. For example, Moffett has

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provided internships at Freeport McMoRan since 1990.

"Considering all of the youngsters who need help," Giroux said, "we reach a small percentage. But, our board has set a goal of a \$50 million endowment by the year 2000.

"Television coverage has helped," Giroux added, referring to NBC's hour-long network telecast of the Horatio Alger Award program the last two years. "More than four million people saw each of those shows."

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,800 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. In recent years, the university's endowment has grown to more than \$92 million; a \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$24 million science building will open in 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 164 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *U.S. News* ranks IWU the second most efficient national liberal arts college--a key gauge of the campus' quality academic program and relatively reasonable cost. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. IWU's 1994 freshman class scored an average 27.9 on the ACT exam, compared to the national average of 20.7.

<p>Editor's Note: For additional information, contact: Bob Gulino, 309/556-2456.</p>
