



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Three Future Educators Receive Valerie A. Rowe Scholarships, Personify the Traits of What Makes a Great Teacher

New York, NY - What does it take to be a great teacher? Three students in the Fordham Graduate School of Education who applied for merit-based aid from the Valerie A. Rowe Endowed Scholarship Fund show they have what it takes. In October, GSE Interim Dean Akane Zusho, Ph.D., introduced this year's Valerie A. Rowe Scholars, "three of our best and brightest" in the Curriculum and Teaching program, during a Zoom hosted reception with special guests Valerie A. Rowe and Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham University.

Two of the recipients, Claire Kielsa and Liliana Mendez, were introduced by Marilyn Bisberg, M.S., clinical instructor, advisor and professor for Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education programs; recipient Esther Lee was introduced by Molly Ness, Ph.D., associate professor for Curriculum and Teaching. The professors described the wonderful qualities and activities of the scholars, and their educational backgrounds and interests.

Professor Bisberg said that Claire Kielsa, through her work as a figure skating coach, understands the importance of motion and movement and keeping children engaged. She also noted that Claire has a powerful understanding of how children learn and much to bring to children and education.

Professor Ness introduced Esther Lee, remarking how her involvement in dance has given her confidence, discipline and compassion. She also stated that Esther's finest trait is her sense of gratitude. Esther herself remarked that she recognizes she received an excellent education and is compelled to pass that gift on to the next generation of thinkers.

The third scholar, Liliana Mendez, was then recognized by Professor Bisberg. As a bilingual four-year-old in preschool, Liliana took on the role of translator for some of the other students and continued to help classmates as she got older. Bisberg also shared that Liliana has so much to bring to children and the field of education, and that her care and concern for others and their need to understand has carved her path in both language instruction and teaching overall.

Reverend McShane, S.J., congratulated the students, emphasizing that although this one day means a lot to them, it is a day that will help launch the rest of their lives. He thanked their parents for sharing their daughters with Fordham, a grace beyond measure because they exude wonder, curiosity, and are devoted, all elements that are at the heart of teaching. Father McShane spoke to Claire, Esther and Liliana about opening the world and giving the world to their future students. He stated they should never forget for a minute the transformative power of what they do and will do every day: give people the world; make life meaningful; and fill all their students with a sense of importance, love of curiosity, and willingness to embrace the world and rejoice in being a human being.

Valerie A. Rowe reiterated the scholars' traits as presented by their professors that will make them outstanding educators. Claire, Esther and Liliana are truly gifted with innate qualities that will make them outstanding leaders in teaching: creativity, passion and interest. She stated she is "thrilled to know they are each one of her scholars."

The Valerie A. Rowe Scholarship provides merit-based aid to a full-time student in the Early Childhood or Childhood Education programs who have demonstrated academic excellence and commitment to *cura personalis*.

Dr. Rowe earned her doctorate at Fordham University and was a clinical associate professor at GSE in the Division of Curriculum and Teaching from 1999 to 2009. She has continued to support GSE and education in New York City.

Rowe enjoyed a four-decade career as an educator that began near Rochester, New York, in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District, and ended at GSE, where she received her doctoral degree in 1996 and was a faculty member until 2010. In 2010, she and her husband made a \$530,000 gift to the University to establish an endowed scholarship at GSE. It is one of the largest gifts ever received by the school in its 95-year history.

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