

University at Buffalo
Alison L. Des Forges Memorial Scholarship
Application Form for Fall 2017 Freshmen

Eligibility

The University at Buffalo offers a \$5,000 scholarship, valued at \$20,000 over four years of undergraduate study, to a qualified graduate of the Buffalo Public Schools. With support from the Alison L. Des Forges Memorial Committee, UB established an endowment fund which supports this annual award. Accepted UB freshmen who demonstrate academic promise and a commitment to study issues related to human rights and social justice may apply. Scholarship awardees generally have high grade point averages of B or better and combined SAT scores of 1200 or higher, but all applicants will be given thorough consideration. Applicants for this campus award agree to allow the selection committee to review their UB admissions application materials and relevant financial aid information. In cases where academic record, extra-curricular activities, letters of recommendation, and application essays are of equal quality, preference will be given to candidates with financial need. Finalists will be interviewed by a selection committee.

How to apply

Students must submit a 500-800 word, personal narrative demonstrating awareness of human rights and social justice, as exemplified by the life and work of Alison Des Forges, an intent to engage in related courses and activities (including participation in the work of the ALD Memorial Committee), and a commitment to pursue a career dedicated to the promotion and defense of human rights and social justice. Applicants are encouraged to indicate how this award would make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others. Student name, UB person number, phone number, email address, and postal address must be included in the application. One letter of recommendation from a teacher, coach, mentor or other unrelated adult attesting to applicant's qualifications for this scholarship may be included but is not required. Applications must be submitted to aldscholarship@buffalo.edu by 6 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2017 to be considered.

Award

This annual award of up to \$5,000 is renewable for up to four years of full-time undergraduate study at the University at Buffalo and is in addition to other financial aid, with total financial support not to exceed the cost of attending the University. Awardees will be mentored by members of the ALD Memorial Committee and encouraged to use scholarship monies to pursue special projects relating to human rights, including language study and research abroad. Full-time status, successful completion of 24 credit hours per year, and a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained at UB to retain this award.

Background

Alison Des Forges (1942-2009) was senior advisor to the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch who died in a 2009 plane crash near Buffalo, N.Y. Educated in New York State public schools and awarded an A.B. in European history from Harvard and a Ph.D. in African history from Yale, Dr. Des Forges taught at several universities in the U.S. and abroad. She devoted much of her remarkable intellect and energy to volunteer teaching in the Bennett Park Montessori Center in Buffalo attended by her two children.

In 1992, Dr. Des Forges led an international inquiry into ethnic conflict in Rwanda and predicted that genocide was likely to occur. When the genocide broke out in 1994, she worked tirelessly to mobilize the United Nations and foreign governments to intervene to stop it. She also tried to save as many victims as possible. After the event, she wrote a comprehensive and authoritative history, titled *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, and served as an expert witness in the trials of eleven of the chief perpetrators at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda held in Arusha, Tanzania.

Dr. Des Forges was named a Mac Arthur Fellow in 1999, and was described by Human Rights Watch as "one of the greatest advocates for human rights in our time." She was honored by colleagues in a book titled, *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*. Her doctoral dissertation, titled *Defeat is the Only Bad News: Rwanda under Musinga, 1896-1931*, was published posthumously in 2011.

In addition to supporting the UB endowed scholarship, the Alison L. Des Forges Memorial Committee organizes an annual spring symposium at UB and a dinner in Buffalo to raise awareness of human rights issues. It has dedicated to her memory a bench in Delaware Park where she often walked when she was at home in Buffalo. For further information on her life and work, please consult www.alisondesforges.org.