



**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



# Table of Contents

<b>Program Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Program Resolutions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Award History .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Legacy Run Fundraising History .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>American Legion Riders Rally to Overcome the Global Coronavirus Pandemic .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Talking Points.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Department and Award Breakdown.....</b>	<b>12</b>

Siblings Kenneth and Mariah Wilder on the campus at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va, on Friday, Sept. 28, 2018. Photo by Schelly Stone



# Program Overview

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the United States has lost nearly 7,000 citizen soldiers in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel and various other Global War on Terror operations. Additionally, over 52,800 servicemembers have been wounded during those operations. As a result of such valiant service and sacrifice, those servicemembers' families are left to pick up the emotional, spiritual and financial pieces of their lives.

Through its Legacy Scholarship, created in 2002, The American Legion has been helping to provide higher education for children of servicemen and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving on active duty on or after 9/11. However, the financial impact of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship steadily diminished due to a much greater availability of federal educational benefits available to children of fallen servicemembers, most notably government funding of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, along with greater availability of state and local educational benefits, thereby fulfilling the vast majority of their education costs.

While continuing to recognize the sacrifice of children of the fallen as first priority, Resolution No. 1 at the 2016 Spring Meetings of The American Legion National Executive Committee further recognized the significant dedication and sacrifice of servicemembers injured while serving on active duty on or after 9/11. Resolution No. 1 enhanced The American Legion Legacy Scholarship:

- Expanding the scholarship's eligibility requirements to include children of post-9/11 veterans who have been assigned a combined Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability rating of 50 percent or greater;
- Adapting the previously merit-based scholarship program to that of a needs-based scholarship, whereby a financial gap remaining after all federal and state grants and scholarships available to an eligible applicant having first been applied may be bridged up to \$20,000 annually and;
- Increasing the total amount of financial aid available to award.

The principal amount of the fund remains intact from year-to-year. Effective in 2017, the strategy for establishing a maximum amount of allotted funds that may be awarded per annum is that half (50 percent) of the annual trust fund income earned plus half (50 percent) of monies fundraised for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund during a calendar year. This total is made available the following year to award as individual needs-based scholarships, with any allotted funds not awarded at the end of the year then returned to the trust fund for continued growth. The other half (50 percent) of monies fundraised during a calendar year for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship are automatically be invested into the trust fund for continued growth.

Per Resolution 4 at the 2022 Spring Meetings of The American Legion National Executive Committee, the awarded scholarship amount will be 100% of the prior year's charitable donations to the Legacy Trust, divided equitably among eligible applicants. The scholarship amount awarded will also include 50% of the prior year's net investment income of the Legacy Trust. The scholarship will not exceed \$5,000 per academic year for children of disabled veterans and \$20,000 for the fallen.

Scholarships are for undergraduate or graduate levels of study at an accredited institution of higher education within the United States. This includes college, university or trade school. Those eligible to apply for the scholarship are the biological children, step-children, legally adopted children, child of a spouse by a prior marriage, or dependent child of active duty U.S. military, National Guard and military reservists who were federalized and died on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or are children of a post-9/11 veteran having been assigned a combined disability rating of 50 percent or greater by the VA.

The National Finance Commission oversees and manages the Legacy Scholarship Fund. The guidelines for selection of scholarship recipients and the amount of money awarded to each recipient resides with the national Americanism Commission, which in turn delegates the administrative duties to the National Committee on Youth Education.

To learn who has received an American Legion Legacy Scholarship, you may contact your department headquarters. The scholarship application is online at [legion.org/scholarships/legacy](https://legion.org/scholarships/legacy), along with further information about the scholarship and testimonials of recipients.

For additional information about the Legacy Scholarship, email [scholarships@legion.org](mailto:scholarships@legion.org) or call (317) 630-1212. For questions regarding fundraising, donations or donation acknowledgement, please email [donorservices@legion.org](mailto:donorservices@legion.org)



2023 American Legion Legacy Scholarship recipient Colton Clay of Colorado Springs, Colo.

Photo by Jennifer Blohm

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA  
MAY 4-5, 2022**

**Resolution No. 4: The American Legion Legacy Scholarship**

**Origin: Americanism Commission**

**Submitted by: Finance Commission**

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20 of the National Executive Committee, May 2002, titled The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship Trust, established a trust to generate interest and other income to fund a scholarship program for children of those members of America's armed forces who died while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 (hereafter referred to as "Post-9/11"); and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 1 of the National Executive Committee, May 2016, titled The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Enhancement expanded eligibility for the Legacy Scholarship to the children of Post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of at least (50%); and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 1 of the National Executive Committee, May 2016, titled The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Enhancement appointed the Americanism Commission to determine, establish in writing, and review annually thereafter, all other conditions, rules, guidelines, and procedures for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship program to attain maximum equity and efficiency for the eligibility, application, selection, award and disbursement processes; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 27 of the National Executive Committee, May 2021, titled Appointment of Successor Trustees of The American Legion September 11, 2001 Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund authorized the national commander, the Finance Commission chairman, the NEC Finance Commission Liaison Committee chairman, the American Legion Charities, Inc. treasurer, the national treasurer, and the national adjutant (only as member with voice and no vote) be appointed trustees of The American Legion Scholarship Trust Fund (Legacy Trust); and

WHEREAS, There has been no formal cessation of hostilities in the global war on terrorism that otherwise could predict an appropriate sunset target date for the tenure of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund (Legacy Scholarship); and WHEREAS, The Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress reported that 3.9 million veterans have served in the Post-9/11 era; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Defense reported on April 4, 2022, that the number of Post-9/11 veterans killed in action to date is 5,449 and the number of Post-9/11 veterans wounded in action to date is 53,268; and

WHEREAS, Since the inception of the Legacy Scholarship, the average annual charitable donations has been insufficient to apply equitably to the population of eligible children of veterans that apply; and

WHEREAS, The Legacy Scholarship is not a merit-based scholarship where competitive criteria among children is a consideration in funds allocation or distribution, thus failure to select otherwise eligible children in competitive form based on perceived need or funds depletion would be considered inappropriate; and

WHEREAS, The Legacy Scholarship is a needs-based scholarship awarded using criteria established by the Americanism Commission and executed by Committee on Youth Education after careful and deliberate review of the applicants' economic necessity; and

WHEREAS, The labor market demand for skilled trades continues to compete with traditional undergraduate and graduate degrees, leading more young Americans toward trade schools as an alternative to traditional higher education; and Page 2 of 2

WHEREAS, The addition of qualifying criteria for the children to be affiliated with The American

Legion family by extension of their family member's active membership is prudent to ensuring maximum possible allocation of funds to eligible applicants; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has been reviewed by the Americanism Commission, and with concurrence of the Finance Commission, is recommended to the National Executive Committee for favorable action; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 4-5, 2022, That the existing trust fund from which monies are issued will maintain the legal title The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund, which is also referred to as The American Legion Legacy Scholarship and that the title The American Legion Legacy Scholarship will be used for marketing, promotion and fundraising efforts to promote brand awareness and help alleviate confusion with other funds/scholarships programs associated with the September 11, 2001, attack on America; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion Legacy Scholarship be recognized as a needs-based scholarship, not a as a merit-based competitive scholarship, thus all eligible applicants that demonstrate a financial need shall be entitled to a scholarship dollar amount not to exceed \$5,000 per qualifying academic year, and for the number of awarded academic years outlined in The Americanism Commission guidelines, for children of Post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of at least fifty-percent (50%), equitably divided among approved applicants; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the children of military servicemembers who have died while serving on active duty on or since September 11, 2001, retain primacy and priority in selection for the scholarship with an award up to \$20,000 per qualifying academic year, and for the number of awarded academic years outlined in The Americanism Commission guidelines, based on financial need; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the awarded scholarship amount will be 100% of the prior year's charitable donations to the Legacy Trust divided equitably among eligible applicants; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the awarded scholarship amount will also include 50% of the prior year's net investment income of the Legacy Trust; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the scholarship be awarded for undergraduate study, graduate study, and trade schools at an accredited institution of higher education commensurate with those eligible for GI Bill benefits within the United States; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That as a result of the large qualifying population with a VA disability rating of 50% or more disabled Post-9/11 veterans, the additional qualifier of eligibility for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship will be that a parent or legal guardian must be a member in good standing of The American Legion or was a member at the time they passed and had a VA disability rating of 50% or more; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the Americanism Commission will determine, establish in writing, and review annually thereafter, all other conditions, rules, guidelines, and procedures for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship program so as to attain maximum equity and efficiency for the eligibility, application, selection, award and disbursement processes; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the Americanism Commission will be responsible for the awarding and administration of scholarships and will report same through the Finance Commission to the National Executive Committee at its annual May meetings; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the national judge advocate and national treasurer shall cooperate in the drafting of the appropriate amendment to The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship trust, as originally established in Resolution No. 20 of the National Executive Committee, May 2002, titled The American Legion September 11 Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That Resolution No. 1 of the National Executive Committee, May 2016, titled American Legion Legacy Scholarship Enhancement, is hereby superseded, and rescinded.**



# Award History

Year	Amount Awarded
2004	\$2,000 – 1
2005	\$6,000 – 3 (\$2,000 each)
2006	\$30,000 – 6 (\$5,000 each)
2007	\$36,000 – 8 (\$4,500 each)
2008	\$35,970 – 11 (\$3,270 each)
2009	\$36,000 – 16 (\$2,250 each)
2010	\$46,000 – 13 (10-\$4,000/3-\$2,000)
2011	\$49,975 – 23 (21-\$2,275/2-\$1,100)
2012	\$49,950 – 18 (\$2,775 each)
2013	\$49,980 – 28 (\$1,785 each)
2014	\$49,250 – 23 (21-\$2,250/2-\$1,000)
2015	\$51,584 – 32 (\$1,612 each)
2016	\$49,972 – 31 (\$1,612 each)
2017	\$671,892 – 55 (between \$586 and \$20,000 each)
2018	\$744,436 – 41 (between \$1,770 and \$20,000 each)
2019	\$1,122,624 – 57 (between \$2,298 and \$20,000 each)
2020	\$667,931 – 35 (between \$5,634 and \$20,000 each)
2021	\$357,229 – 32 (between \$7,278 and \$20,000 each)
2022	\$705,937 – 71 (between \$1,136 and \$16,787 each)
2023	\$1,484,112 – 321 (between \$272 and \$20,000 each)*
<b>Total awarded</b>	<b>\$6,246,842*</b>
<b>Total scholarships awarded</b>	<b>825*</b>

\* Subject to final audit

# Legacy Run Fundraising History\*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount Raised</b>	<b>Convention Host</b>
2006	\$179,000	Salt Lake City
2007	\$326,000	Reno, Nev.
2008	\$457,000	Phoenix
2009	\$523,299	Louisville, Ky.
2010	\$634,000	Milwaukee
2011	\$668,738	Minneapolis
2012	\$724,524	Indianapolis
2013	\$764,034	Houston
2014	\$861,791	Charlotte, N.C.
2015	\$1,156,019	Baltimore
2016	\$1,301,210	Cincinnati
2017	\$1,270,830	Reno, Nev.
2018	\$1,300,805	Minneapolis
2019	\$1,028,643	Indianapolis
2020	\$416,419	Virtual**
2021	\$1,189,518	Phoenix
2022	\$1,381,302	Milwaukee
2023	\$1,550,000	Charlotte

\*A Legacy Run year begins Oct. 1, and concludes Sept. 30, of the following year.

\*\* Virtual Legacy Run year began Oct. 1, 2019, and concluded Dec. 31, 2020.

## **Legacy Fund Calendar Year Donations**

2021	\$1,053,257
2022	subject to audit at the time of final print

## **Legacy Fund Balance as of 12-31-2021**

\$16,419,288

The Americanism Commission wishes to extend its sincerest appreciation to the entire American Legion Family and all generous contributors to The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. Special acknowledgment is extended to the American Legion Riders for their resounding and continued fundraising success through the annual American Legion Legacy Run.



Photo by Hilary Ott

## American Legion Riders Rally to Overcome the Global Coronavirus Pandemic

With an unprecedented global coronavirus pandemic forcing social distancing and stay-at-home orders throughout most of 2020, essentially all American Legion national events were canceled. This included what was going to be the 15th annual American Legion legacy Run – the primary fundraiser for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Calling the cancellation a “tough decision,” National American Legion rider Advisory Committee Chairman Mark Clark announced it via video. “As a Rider I know you’re disappointed, as am I. But I also know as a Rider that you’ll pick up the challenge right where you’re at and focus on making sure we don’t abandon the children of the fallen, and the children of those who have come home carrying both physical and invisible scars of war.

Clark stressed the importance of the Legacy Fund and encouraged Legion Riders to continue their efforts to support the fund because although the Legacy Run was cancelled, the need to support children of America’s veterans remained. American Legion Riders across the country adapted and overcame by finding other ways to conduct the ride. Virtual Legacy Runs and in-state rides sprung up throughout the nation, raising money to assist the students. It was out of that unyielding dedication and ingenuity that the 2020 American Legion Pony Express Ride and American Legion Virtual Legacy Run were also born.

# Pony Express Run

With cancellation of the 2020 American Legion Legacy Run, Legion Riders from across the country united to improvise a Pony Express relay run which collected funds raised virtually and in smaller, department-run events, and then delivered them to National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. The Pony Express Ride involved American Legion departments from California to Indiana for a 2,300-mile journey, with the caravan of patriotic American Legion Riders crossing the nation’s highways by motorcycle and three-wheeler, raising scholarship funds.

The Pony Express Ride began at Hollywood Post 43 where a California contingent departed before the sun rose on Oct. 7. As the ride moved east, American Legion Riders from various departments joined in.

The first stop was at Post 86 in Overgaard, Ariz., where Riders from the Department of Arizona joined the group. The morning of Oct. 8, that new group started one of the longest legs of the journey and made their way to Roswell, N.M.

On Oct. 9, the Riders continued their journey to Lubbock, Texas, where participants from the Department of Texas joined in. On Oct. 10, it was a short hop to Oklahoma City to meet Riders from the Department of Oklahoma.

The ride reached St. Roberts, Mo., on Oct. 11, where they prepared for the final leg of the journey. On Oct. 12, the group had a half-day ride to Plainfield, Ind., just outside of Indianapolis, home of The American Legion National Headquarters.

Traditionally, a collection of Legacy Run checks is presented onstage at the national convention of The American Legion, which in 2020 was forced to cancel due to the pandemic. Presentation of checks to National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford instead occurred the morning of Oct. 13, 2020, in front of the National Headquarters building when the Pony Express Ride pulled in with a great deal of pride and purpose.

“We ride to show our determination to meet the mission and to honor our pledge to the children and their parents,” American Legion Riders Advisory Committee Vice Chairman Steve Ridenour explained of the event.

# Virtual Legacy Run

The Virtual Legacy Run was a tiered fundraising program adopted to provide an alternative way for individual American Legion Family members to contribute to the fund. Donations started at \$15, signifying the 15th year of the Legacy Run, and entitled a donor to various souvenirs commemorating the altered Legacy Run.

- Tier 1 - \$15: Donors received a thank-you card signed by the national commander and American Legion Riders chairman.
- Tier 2 - \$25: Donors received a 15th annual challenge coin.
- Tier 3 - \$50: Donors received a 15th annual Ride T-shirt.
- Tier 4 - \$75: Donors receives “For the Cause, Not the Applause”, a new 44-page, photo-filled history of The American Legion’s Legacy Run’s first 15 years; the ride’s main patch and a “Quarantined 2020 Riding in Spirit” rocker.
- Tier 5 - \$250: Donors received all the above items.

When 2020 came to a close, dedicated American Legion Riders and loyal donors across the nation had rallied to achieve a total of \$416,419 to contribute to the academic education of military children of the fallen and disabled.

## Talking points to encourage continued support of The American Legion Legacy Scholarship

No amount of money will ever repay our indebtedness to those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to those who have endured disabling conditions while serving to protect our continued freedom. Still, we honor their service and legacy by helping support the education of their children. The American Legion Legacy Scholarship seeks to bridge the financial aid gap for children of the fallen and those assigned a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater.

The following are a few talking points to encourage continued support of this scholarship:

- It's a financially sound investment as donations have steadily increased, and the fund's principle is protected to ensure a continued, upward market value.
- As the value of the investment increases through contributions, enhanced opportunities for the amount of awards, the amount of money awarded, and the number of recipients rises.
- Eligible applicants are deserving of assistance as assessed by their financial need and their parent's service and sacrifice for our country. Many recipients say that without the Legacy Scholarship they would not be able to afford college or be forced to work part-time jobs while attending classes.

# Department and Award Breakdown

Year	Awards	Department
2004	1	Florida
2005	3	Illinois (2), Washington
2006	5	California, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Texas
2007	4	California, Kansas, Tennessee, West Virginia
2008	7	Connecticut, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Washington
2009	5	Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio
2010	5	Alabama, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Oregon
2011	15	California (2), Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan (2), Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington (2), West Virginia
2012	9	California (3), Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wisconsin, France
2013	18	California, Florida, Georgia (3), Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky (2), Massachusetts, Michigan, New York (3), Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin
2014	7	California, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, New York (2), Wisconsin
2015	17	Alaska, Arkansas, California, Illinois (2), Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio (2), Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia (2)
2016	17	California, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas (3), Maryland, Michigan, New York, North Carolina (3), South Carolina, Tennessee (2), Texas, Washington
2017	55	Alaska, Arizona, California (2), Colorado (4), Florida (4), Georgia (2), Illinois, Indiana (2), Kansas, Kentucky (2), Massachusetts, Maryland (2), Montana, North Carolina (5), Nebraska (2), New York (3), Ohio (3), Pennsylvania (2), South Carolina (2), Tennessee, Texas (9), Virginia (3), Washington

2018	41	Alabama, California (4), Florida (3), Georgia (4), Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois (2), Louisiana (2), Massachusetts (2), Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania (3), South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas (4), Virginia (3), Washington, Wisconsin (2), West Virginia
2019	57	Arizona, Arkansas (2), California (6), Connecticut (2), Florida (3), Georgia (4), Hawaii, Illinois (3), Kansas (2), Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York (4), North Carolina (3), Ohio, Oklahoma (2), Oregon, Pennsylvania (3), South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas (6), Virginia, Wisconsin (2)
2020	35	California, Georgia (3), Hawaii, Illinois (3), Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland (3), Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York (3), North Carolina (5), Oregon, Texas (3), Virginia, Washington (2), Wisconsin
2021	32	Arizona (1), Connecticut (1), Florida (1), Georgia (3), Hawaii (1), Iowa (2), Kansas (1), Maryland (1), Massachusetts (1), Minnesota (1), Nebraska (1), New York (1), Nevada (1), North Carolina (2), Ohio (2), Oklahoma (1), Pennsylvania (3), South Dakota (1), Texas (3), Washington (3), and Washington DC (1)
2022	71	Alabama (2), Arkansas (2), Arizona (1), California (2), Colorado (1), Connecticut (1), Delaware (1), Florida (5), Georgia (4), Hawaii (2), Indiana (1), Kentucky (2), Massachusetts (2), Maryland (3), Maine (3), Michigan (2), Mississippi (1), North Carolina (3), New Jersey (2), New York (4), Ohio (2), Oklahoma (2), Oregon (2), Pennsylvania (3), South Carolina (3), South Dakota (2), Tennessee (4), Texas (3), Virginia (2), Washington (2), Wisconsin (1), Wyoming (1)
2023	321	Alabama (10), Arizona (5), California (19), Colorado (9), Connecticut (4), Florida (22), Georgia (10), Hawaii (4), Iowa (4), Idaho (2), Illinois (7), Indiana (4), Kansas (3), Kentucky (3), Louisiana (2), Massachusetts (1), Maryland (15), Maine (1), Michigan (11), Minnesota (6), Missouri (6), Mississippi (4), Montana (5), North Carolina (14), North Dakota (1), Nebraska (1), New Jersey (7), Nevada (2), New York (7), Ohio (16), Oklahoma (9), Oregon (4), Pennsylvania (10), South Carolina (9), South Dakota (1), Tennessee (11), Texas (44), Utah (3), Virginia (12), Washington (8), Wisconsin (1), West Virginia (2), Wyoming (2)



P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
1-800-433-3318

**[legion.org/scholarships](https://legion.org/scholarships)**



Connect with The American Legion