

2009 John Foster Scholarship Recipient Named

By the 2009 Scholarship Committee

As with past years, the selection process to award the annual John Foster Scholarship continues to be extremely difficult to say the least. The John Foster Memorial Scholarship interview committee, comprised of Russell County Sheriff John Fletcher (Chair), KLETC Director Ed Pavey, Roeland Park Chief Rex Taylor, Hutchinson Police Chief Dick Heitschmidt, St. John Police Chief Sonny Ralston, retired Sedgwick County Sheriff Gary Steed and Diana Foster (joined committee in 2009), daughter of the late John Foster spent one day reviewing 25 scholarship applications that were submitted for consideration. The committee narrowed the competition to five finalists, scheduling interviews for July 8, 2009.

Following the July 8th interviews at KLETC, the scholarship committee announced that the recipient of the 2009 John Foster Memorial College Scholarship is Amanda J. Strait, a 2009 graduate of Concordia High School. Amanda is the daughter of Brad & Deanna Swihart; Brad is employed by the Concordia Police Department.

Ranked 12th out of 80 high school graduating classmates, Amanda will attend Cloud County Community College, followed by either Kansas State University or San Diego State University to pursue a bachelor's degree in Biology. Amanda's activities during high school included Debate; Forensics; Students Against Destructive Decisions; Science Club; Renaissance, Drama, Fellowship of Christian Athletes; National Honor Society; HS Chamber Choir; HS Singers; Youth Leadership Team; CYO; Cheerleading; Basketball and Softball.

Then Concordia police chief (now Winfield police chief) Danny Park wrote in supporting Amanda's application, "Miss Strait exemplifies leadership, motivation, hard work, ability and excellence as her resume reflects."

A member of the National Honor Society, Amanda was very active in her school and community. Through concurrent enrollments with Cloud County Community College Amanda was able to complete thirty-one college credit hours before graduating from Concordia High in May 2009.

On behalf of the Foster scholarship committee members present at the Concordia city council chambers on July 23rd, committee chairman Sheriff John Fletcher presented Amanda with the 2009 John Foster Memorial Scholarship Award with a check in the amount of \$3,000 and congratulated Amanda on being selected as this year's recipient.

The John Foster Memorial Scholarship was established in 2004 by the Kansas Peace Officers' Association, the Kansas Sheriffs' Association and the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police to commemorate John Foster's more than 40 years career in Kansas law enforcement. Sheriff Foster began his law enforcement experience with the Johnson County Sheriff's Office and later joined the Fairway Police Department. From 1971 to 1991 he was the chief of police in Lenexa, retiring as chief to become the Johnson County Kansas sheriff, a position he held until his death from cancer in 2003.

John Foster remains a legend in the state's law enforcement history, earned through his often outspoken leadership and dedication to professionalism. This is illustrated in his tireless lobbying efforts for legislative improvements affecting law enforcement and in his recognition of the importance of education and training.

Thanks,

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