



Pratt & Whitney Scholar

Alexander McGrath

Severna Park, MD

College: Yale University

2021-2022: Senior

Major: Political Science



As I enter my final year of college, I have had cause to reflect on my experiences and what my education has meant to me. During the throng of opening ceremonies and speakers my first week on campus a speaker who I've long since forgotten said the goal of a liberal arts education is to "cultivate a mind that's fit to live in." I remember not understanding that line at the time, thinking my current mind was plenty and that I was just going to college to learn about a particular domain. Yet as I enter my senior year, I know exactly what the speaker meant: my education has given me not only knowledge in my area of study but deep personal enrichment; I am a different person than the one who appeared on campus in Fall of 2017. I can't pinpoint exactly where that transformation occurred, but I know the freedom this scholarship gave me was a major contributing factor. Not having to work to fund my education has given me the incredible gift of time. I've used that time to take more classes, to read further and more carefully than I otherwise would have, and, yes, to spend time talking with and learning from friends. The time this scholarship has given me gave me moments that I have cherished and directly contributed to my personal development. For facilitating that transformative experience, I am, and will forever remain, deeply grateful to the generosity of the Wings Over America Scholarship Foundation, my specific donors at Pratt and Whitney, and every donor who contributed to my education.