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Horns Women's Hockey Alumni Foundation pays it forward

The past informs the present — it offers perspective and experience — and in the case of the Pronghorns Women's Hockey Alumni Foundation, it offers generous support.

The hockey alumni group recently rewrote the parameters associated with its Women's Hockey Alumni Award, redirecting the annual scholarship to benefit any continuing female student-athlete in any University of Lethbridge degree program. Originally established in 2017 by the women's hockey alumni chapter and its community supporters to support women's hockey players, the endowed scholarship will continue to be awarded in perpetuity.

"We just really liked that the legacy of our program name can be there. We worked really hard to establish this scholarship and even though the team went away, the relationships we have with each other aren't going away," says Sam Schneyder (BSc '07), a Horns standout from 2001 to 2007.

"It is an important legacy piece for us, because whether it was us as players and alumni donating to this award or people in the community who supported us, knowing that money is going to impact future female athletes is important," adds Amy Van Buskirk (BA '13), who played for the Horns from 2008 to 2013.

The first recipient of the rededicated award is third-year neuroscience student Kimoya Edwards. A track and field standout from Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, Edwards excels in sprints and hurdles. She said it was especially gratifying to learn former Pronghorn athletes are behind the award.

"It is so great knowing that there are more experienced individuals out there who understand what it's like to be a student-athlete and the stress we experience and are willing to help," says Edwards, who was nominated for the scholarship by her coach. "Receiving such a scholarship is a relief and provides more room to focus on other aspects of the student-athlete life."

Schneyder and Van Buskirk say the award was designed to support athletes who best demonstrate team leadership by being able to balance academic achievement, community involvement and athletic excellence.

“The student-athletes I know, from both our women’s and men’s teams, when I run into them now, so many of them are active and contributing time to their communities and I really believe you learn that as a student-athlete,” says Schneyder, who has coached youth hockey for the last 10-plus years. “You can say it’s just a sport, it’s just a game and it is . . . but it’s not, because what we all got out of our experience is so much more.”

Both women reflect on the many people who supported them through their journeys as student-athletes, remembering the community events they took part in while wearing Pronghorns colours.

“Participating in those events was always a fun way to share our experiences and Pronghorn stories with the community, as well as create bonds and relationships with those who supported us,” says Van Buskirk. “Back then, we weren’t fully aware of the impact we were making, but I always left with an improved sense of community.”

Edwards is busy working three jobs, attending church and assisting with the church youth group and video graphic work that allows church members to watch services from home. She volunteers for Big Brothers and Big Sisters and at the Chinook Regional Hospital as well as for local community events. She’s also active in the ULethbridge community as a member of the Rotaract, Pre-Med and Black Students’ Association clubs.

“I love to give back to the community that has shown me what it means to be Kimoya Edwards,” she says. “As a Pronghorn athlete, it is very important to show our community that we are willing to be an active part of our surroundings and that we are not separated. The community has been there supporting us in our games, events and so much more, so by giving back through volunteering it tells Lethbridge that the Pronghorns are grateful and appreciative for their continued support.”

For Schneyder and the Pronghorns Women’s Hockey Alumni Foundation, it’s important the experiences that shaped their careers as student-athletes and set them up for success upon graduation will continue to be accessible for future generations of female athletes.

“The skills we learned as student-athletes, like the mental toughness to persevere, the time management skills, things like that are incredible. I didn’t know anything different than being a student-athlete but when I look back now, I believe I learned so much more because of that experience,” says Schneyder. “I’m excited that everyone who contributed to starting this scholarship will see that their money is still supporting women athletes pursuing their dreams.”

This news release can be found online at [Pronghorns Women’s Hockey Alumni Foundation](#).

Contact:

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor
University of Lethbridge
403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403 (cell)
caroline.zentner@uleth.ca

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