

Scholarship Recipient Explores Family History

Hannah Gelband, CAS '20, Estelle Seldowitz Endowed Scholarship Recipient

By Hunter B. Martin | October 25, 2018



With help from her scholarship, Hannah Gelband is researching her unique family history. Credit: Hunter B. Martin

American University is determined to keep an AU education within reach and provide an exceptional experience for every student. AU is committed to educational access and closing the affordability gap. Generous alumni and friends of AU have established scholarships to further AU's ability to provide the available resources to students so that they can fully realize their ambitions.

Hannah Gelband, CAS '20 is pursuing her AU degree in history, with minors in psychology and Jewish studies, with support from the donor-funded Estelle Seldowitz Endowed Scholarship. Gelband comes to AU from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and is currently a junior.

Impact of Scholarship

Gelband is grateful to be the Estelle Seldowitz Endowed Scholarship recipient because it allows her to pursue a degree that combines her interest in world history and her dedication to researching her own family history. The Estelle Seldowitz Endowed Scholarship Fund was established in 2011 by the Estate of Estelle Seldowitz to provide scholarship support to students pursuing coursework in Jewish Studies. Gelband shared, "I am a second-generation Holocaust survivor. I do a lot of research at the Holocaust Museum to try and find those links that we still don't know much about for my grandfather who is eighty-two. He doesn't remember much of what happened or who he left behind. I've taken it as my job to find out what more I can before he dies; the [Estelle Seldowitz Endowed Scholarship] helps me out in that regard."

Community and Philanthropy

Gelband found community at AU through her taekwondo team and her sorority, Sigma Delta Tau.

“I’m on the taekwondo team,” said Gelband. “Coming here and finding a big support group of like-minded athletes, finding a team here, was a really big impact on my life.”

She is also passionate about volunteering her time, which began with a community service as part of her bat mitzvah project. “I decided to volunteer my time at a school for children who had cerebral palsy,” said Gelband.

Through her sorority, Gelband has also helped fundraise for Prevent Child Abuse America, Women for Women International, and Jewish Women International. “I like how it feels to help people,” said Gelband.

Gelband’s Goals

In the future, Gelband is interested in volunteering at the Holocaust Museum; given her history as the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, Gelband feels it is important to spread awareness about genocide and combat Holocaust denial.

Following her degree at AU, Gelband wants to pursue a master’s degree and possibly a doctorate. She is thankful for her scholarship because it enables her to research her family history in a field she is passionate about.

“I want to personally thank you for your generous award. It means so much to me,” said Gelband. “With this scholarship I can delve more deeply into the subjects [of history and the Holocaust] and encourages me to keep going in the Jewish Studies department.”

Support Students like Hannah Gelband

Philanthropic support from donors is how passionate students like Gelband are able to focus on their studies to address issues of global importance. Donors play a critical role in making sure degrees from AU are accessible, attainable, and affordable. You can support students like Hannah Gelband by making a gift at: giving.american.edu (giving.american.edu).