

STEVE ACKLEY FUND NEWS

Newsletter from Friends of Steve Ackley Memorial Scholarship Fund

May 2017

Melissa Kokx-Ryan and Ashley Zaleski-King to Receive the Steve Ackley Memorial Scholarship Awards

Melissa Kokx-Ryan and Ashley Zaleski-King, Ph.D. candidates and graduates of the Gallaudet Au.D. Program, received the Steve Ackley Memorial Scholarship Award at the Graduate School Awards and Hooding Ceremony on May 11, 2017.

Drs. Kokx-Ryan and Zaleski-King were admitted into the Ph.D. Program by Dr. Ackley. He would be proud to see how they grew into productive researchers, scholars, and instructors.



Drs. Kokx-Ryan and Zaleski-King are both research audiologists and graduate research fellows at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). They are supported by an appointment to the Student Research Participation Program at the U.S. Army Public Health Center (USAPHC) administered by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education through an interagency agreement between the U.S. Department of Energy and the USAPHC.

Dr. Kokx-Ryan completed her fourth year clinical externship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and earned her Au.D. in 2014. Her research interests include the study of auditory processing deficits, hearing aid applications, and hidden hearing loss. She is currently involved in several ongoing research protocols as WRNMMC, some of which include investigating the prevalence of communication problems in Service Members

with blast-exposure, exploring the natural history of traumatic brain injury within a military cohort focusing on the auditory and sensorimotor impacts, and her dissertation investigating low-gain hearing aids as treatment for patients with normal hearing thresholds who exhibit auditory processing deficits.

Dr. Zaleski-King earned her Au.D. in 2014 after completing a clinical externship year at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona. As a graduate research fellow at WRNMMC, she has supported ongoing research protocols related to the audio-vestibular natural history of traumatic brain injury and the use of visual information for spatial orientation. She and the WRNMMC vestibular team recently obtained grant funding to support a study merging vestibular and physical therapy departments at WRNMMC. Dr. Zaleski-King's research interests otolith function, assessments related to vestibular perception and behavioral factors influencing dizziness. Her dissertation will examine oculomotor and perceptual measures of visual motion sensitivity in individuals chronic dizziness symptoms.

The Steve Ackley Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 2014 by the Faculty of HSLs Department. With outpouring support and donations from numerous family, friends, former students and colleagues, the Fund raised over \$25,000 in just one year to be fully endowed in Fall 2015, and it continues to grow.



Dr. Steve Ackley was a beloved friend, colleague, and mentor to many. Within HSLs and Gallaudet, Dr. Ackley served in numerous roles, including Audiology Program Director, Department Chair, Faculty Senate representative, and student organization advisor. His teaching and mentoring was student-centered, focused on life-long learning and humanitarian ideals. With a natural ability to connect with those around him, he often acted as a motivator for other's research and professional development.

He is fondly remembered for his warmth, humor, devotion to his family and to his students, and commitment to audiology and deaf education.

Tax-deductible donation can be made at:
giving.gallaudet.edu/Ackley.

I have many wonderful memories of Steve, but one of my favorites was when we traveled to visit the Ojibwe Tribe in Minnesota with my fellow classmate Luke Lancaster. Dr. Ackley was warmly welcomed by the tribe members and we were invited to take part in several ceremonies to establish the relationship between Gallaudet University and the Tribe for future research collaborations. Dr. Ackley was my champion and I owe my placement in the Ph.D. program at Gallaudet University to him, which is a debt I will never be able to repay. He was the perfect combination of mentor, teacher, confidant, cheerleader, and friend wrapped into one amazing human being. This award means so much to me, and I hope to honor Steve's legacy in all that I do.

*Melissa Kokx-Ryan,
2017 Award Recipient*

One memory I will never forget is when Dr. Ackley cautioned our class to be humble. He explained that while on internships "there is always something to learn from every individual...even if you think you know it, listen instead." When I think about these words now it is very clear that he was speaking from experience. This brand of humility was his way of interacting with the world and it is what I continue to admire about him. I think he knew much more than he ever shared and about many things. I think, to him, connecting to people was more significant than ever letting you know how much he knew. He knocked down boundaries. He orchestrated a delicate balance between imparting knowledge and invoking confidence in his students. This humility cultivated a particularly warm culture that is rare and inspiring.

*Ashley Zaleski King,
2017 Award Recipient*

Steve Ackley Memorial Scholarship Fund

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STARS THAT STARTED IT ALL

These contributions were made prior to April 2016. They helped establish the endowment fund!

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The Stars of the Steve Ackley Legacy Conference

These contributions were made to make the Ackley Legacy Conference in 2014 a success. Individuals here gifted their talent as presenters, or provided travel and lodging support to the presenters. These contributions helped to deposit more funds into the scholarship fund.

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Tax-deductible donation to the scholarship fund is appreciated at: giving.gallaudet.edu/Ackley.