I am proud of the work we do to educate, prepare, and attract a new generation of insurance leaders into our industry.

- Deborah Pickford
I would like to dedicate our 2018 Yearbook to the memory of InVEST supporter and champion Loren Shoemaker who recently passed away. He was a mentor to many insurance professionals throughout his life, as well as a highly regarded businessman and an authentic leader of people. Loren retired in 2017 from Hartford Steam Boiler with a successful 46-year long career in the insurance industry and served as a member of the InVEST board for nearly a decade. His contributions to the industry and to the InVEST program are countless and his influence will always remain with us. Those who knew Loren know that our lives were changed for the better when we met him – and he will be missed.

Every single young person who receives an InVEST scholarship is truly grateful for the award, as well as thankful for our generous donors who support their education and future career in the insurance industry. Since the announcement of our 2018 scholarship awardees, we have received many thoughtful and heartwarming notes from our scholarship recipients. It is always encouraging to hear about the positive impact InVEST has on the lives of our program participants. Michael Hollman, an InVEST student and scholarship winner from River Oaks High School in Louisiana writes:

“With your generous contributions, many bright young minds will become the next generation of insurance professionals and continue to pursue a goal of excellence throughout the industry. As an incoming freshman this fall at the University of Louisiana, I will be double majoring in ‘Risk Management and Insurance’ and ‘Math’ with a concentration in ‘Actuarial Science.’ And after I graduate, I plan to become an actuary and slowly work my way up at an insurance company to a leadership position. The InVEST program has changed my career path for the better.”

When I read letters like this from our scholarship winners, I am proud of the work we do to educate, prepare, and attract a new generation of insurance leaders into our industry. And our InVEST teachers and volunteers are truly making a positive difference in the lives of their students. To everyone involved with the InVEST program – supporters, board members, independent insurance agents, state associations, insurance carriers, InVEST staff and IIABA – I cannot thank you enough for supporting InVEST.

With our third yearbook, I believe you will enjoy reading the profiles of these talented young scholarship recipients – smart, dedicated young men and women who will bring much needed talent and leadership to our industry. You can also read about our 2018 InVEST Teacher of the Year, Linda Bruno who is a stellar long-time InVEST instructor at Dryden High School in upstate New York, as well as about John Scheck, our energetic and innovative 2018 Volunteer of the Year at Hays High School in Kansas. Linda and John were recently honored at the Big ‘I’ Fall Leadership Conference where they shared great ideas on how to engage students.

Thank you again for your support and, most importantly, our InVEST students thank you!

Deborah M. Pickford

Deborah Pickford, Executive Director, InVEST
As I neared retirement, many of my colleagues asked me what were the most important lessons I had learned over the past 46 years – so, for what it’s worth, here are a few of my guiding principles:

1. **Promote from within your team**—even if it’s a move to another part of the organization. This reflects your ability to identify and develop the next generation of leaders.

2. **Delegate and challenge your staff**, but always swing back on occasion to make sure directions are clear and they are focused on what is important to the organization not their latest brainstorm.

3. **Surround yourself with excellence**, when hiring. Look for individuals with a “fire in their belly” to grow and be a team player.

4. **Touch at least one client every day**—even if it is to just thank them for their business.

5. **Family First!**
By 2020, **400,000 jobs** will be open in the Insurance Industry.

These jobs aren’t limited to sales— the industry needs a wide variety of talent. Technology, analytics, cybersecurity, operations, service, marketing, design, community relations— name the passion and insurance has a career.

**InVEST is determined to help fill those open positions.**

**MODERN INSURANCE CURRICULUM**
It’s easy to implement InVEST in any classroom. The free online curriculum includes lesson plans, textbooks, classroom activities and simulation interactive resources.

**CAREER CONNECTION**
Students meet insurance professionals willing to provide a hands-on, real-life perspective. InVEST makes it easy for volunteers with presentations, videos, career day support and internships guides developed to attract more professionals to the independent agency system.

**SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT INSURANCE**
Students from high schools across the country participate in InVEST programs, insurance career seminars and insurance industry “boot camps” in 2018.
Student Thank You Notes

Sandra Escobar-Gonzalez
“Thank you for awarding me an InVEST scholarship. It will help me pursue my dream to go to college. InVEST is a great program where you learn all about insurance and meet people in the industry. I’m glad I completed the InVEST program. The insurance companies I visited need young people like me to fill the next generation of jobs.”

Erin Quinlivan
“I am thankful to Project InVEST because it opened my eyes to so many job opportunities that I did not even realize existed.”

Ivy Van Dyke
“I have been inspired to follow a new path through my experience with Project InVEST.”

Jake Storey
“Thanks to InVEST, I now have a good understanding of insurance and I’m actually interested in the field of actuarial science.”

Maria Chamberlain
“The InVEST Program has been a rewarding experience. I met some terrific teachers and industry professionals – and it’s given me some great ideas regarding the next phase of my education. The scholarship will be a big help to me as I start my first year in college.”

Nathan Payne
“Project InVEST should be a required class for every student before graduation. Thanks for opening my eyes to the importance of insurance in the real world, as well as new career possibilities. I especially enjoyed all the field trips, insurance simulations, and group projects.”

Danielle Randazza
“As a first-generation college student, I am so proud that I was picked to receive an InVEST scholarship and very thankful to everyone who was a part of the application process. It’s exciting to start my journey into college.”

Austin Gonser
“I’m honored to receive one of the InVEST scholarships. Thanks to your generous support I’m getting closer to reaching my goal of graduating college. My InVEST class was a great starting point to learn about insurance.”

Katherine Leyonmark
“My InVEST scholarship will truly be of great assistance in my educational endeavors.”
The Randy Roth Applied Memorial Scholarship was established in 2017. The scholarship awards the highest dollar amount and this year’s award is $5,000. Roth served as Applied Systems director of talent acquisition and passed away this spring. "This scholarship is a tribute in memory of Randy and his passion and enthusiasm for bringing talent to the industry," said Reid French, Applied Systems chief executive officer. "I can think of no finer way to memorialize Randy and his contributions to our company and the industry than by expanding our partnership with InVEST to support this annual scholarship."

**Winner:** Nishka Ahuja, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, FL

The Bob Baxter Honorary Scholarship was established in 2017 and awards a $3,000 scholarship to a high-performing InVEST student. Baxter is the retiring CEO of Dryden Mutual Insurance Company and was a dedicated member of the InVEST board of directors, as well as a tireless volunteer for the InVEST program teaching insurance classes for decades in upstate New York. Today 25% of the employees at Dryden Mutual are InVEST graduates thanks to Baxter’s pioneering efforts in New York. The InVEST board has agreed to award the top scholarships for three years to honor his commitment to the InVEST program.

**Winner:** Katherine Leyonmark, Hamburg High School, Hamburg, NY

The Second Round Scholarship is awarded to previous InVEST scholarship recipients who are currently in college and have completed at least three semesters of college. Their intended degree must relate to a career path within the insurance industry. These students are eligible for a $500 scholarship.

The Classroom-to-Career Scholarship is awarded to students who may not go to college but intend to jump right into an insurance career and need assistance with licensing, entry-level courses, CISR or ACSR designations.

This year’s scholarship winners represent 16 schools and hail from California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio and New York.
Nishka Ahuja  
*Randy Roth Applied Memorial Scholarship*

The InVEST program introduced me to the world of insurance and I discovered how vital the work of an actuary is to the industry. Next year, I plan to study business with concentrations in data science and statistics. I’m intrigued with the idea of pursuing a career in actuarial sciences and I see a lot of potential working in insurance. I also learned a lot serving as the Chief Financial Officer for my school’s DECA chapter, where I helped to maintain a $70K annual budget. Because of my participation with DECA and my membership in the National Honor Society, I will be attending an upcoming International Career Development Conference. I’m also completing an internship with State Farm and I learned all about running a local agency. InVEST showed me how valuable all my business and accounting experience will be when I’m ready to pursue a full-time career in insurance.”

Katherine Leyonmark  
*Bob Baxter Honorary Scholarship*

The InVEST program inspired me to explore careers in the insurance industry. Several speakers explained that as an aging workforce retires, more job opportunities are becoming available for my generation. It’s also interesting to know that although the industry has been male-centric in the past, many opportunities will be open for women in the future. While serving as president of the Academy of Finance at my school, I was introduced to InVEST – learning everything from basic financial knowledge to how to dress professionally and market myself. My volunteer work with a non-profit organization and my participation in student government also served as great learning experiences for me. And my InVEST scholarship is making the college entrance process so much easier.”
Ameilia Kanner

“Because of InVEST, I’ve learned a lot about the world of insurance. I’m now considering becoming an adjuster for an insurance company. I would be able to assess risks with my research and design skills. The possibilities are endless as to where this career could take me. As a member of the Academy of Finance at my school, I was able to join the InVEST program and get some real insight into the business world by learning how to dress professionally, network, and improve my communication and interpersonal skills.”

Ivy Van Dyke

“I have a chronic hip disorder that requires a series of reconstructive surgeries, as well as weeks of bed-rest and rehabilitation. But I’m resilient and these challenges enabled me to adapt and overcome almost anything. When I first started the InVEST program, I was recovering from my sixth surgery. I learned about insurance and some interesting career options. I also gained valuable skills by helping my vice principal start a tutoring program at our school where senior math students coach freshmen who are struggling in their math classes. Eventually I want to get involved in healthcare reform and become an advocate for insurance providers. And InVEST inspired me to start this journey.”

James Shields

“Project InVEST showed me that insurance is something everybody needs. I’m also glad to hear that a lot of career opportunities are developing as an older generation of professionals retires. One guest speaker talked about all the advantages the industry has to offer young people. Besides being the president of the Finance Academy at my school, I’ve been working at a local retail store since I was 15 years old and recently became a supervisor. It’s taught me a lot about business. And thanks to InVEST, I plan to continue my studies in insurance.”
Brayden Cox

“InVEST really sparked my interest in insurance and I’m currently exploring the industry. I even found an internship at a local insurance agency where I’m learning how to quote insurance policies and process claims. I like observing the employees who work in customer service, accounting, marketing, and personal and commercial lines, and I’m grateful for getting this opportunity while I’m still in high school. I also had a chance to “job shadow” at a mutual insurance company, where I learned about underwriting. That’s what I’d like to do after I graduate from Ohio State with a degree in business and insurance.”

Danielle Randazza

“Thanks to InVEST, I understand the dynamics of insurance, and I’ve had a chance to explore all the different professions in the industry. My math and data analysis studies led me to the Academy of Finance, where I was introduced to InVEST and got certified in QuickBooks and Excel software. I’m also a proud member of Mu Alpha Theta, the math honor society. All these experiences showed me the importance of integrity and hard work. I plan to attend Burnett Honors College at the University of Central Florida to study business and insurance. And thanks to InVEST, I’m considering a career as an actuary.”

Diamond Daley

“The InVEST program has been one of the highlights of high school. The volunteers who taught our class were enthusiastic and I really enjoyed learning about insurance. We had guest speakers share their career experiences and show us how insurance is applied to everyday life. InVEST made learning about risk management and underwriting interesting and I discovered a lot of career options. An underwriter visited our class to discuss his job and another volunteer gave us a resume writing workshop and mock interviews. Because of InVEST, I want to major in risk management in college. Every student should take this program before they graduate.”
MEET OUR 2018 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

$2,000 Scholarship Winners:
- Elijah Abraham
  Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School
  Parkland, FL
- Drew Bartelo
  Hamburg High School
  Hamburg, NY
- Brayden Cox
  Van Wert High School
  Van Wert, OH
- Danielle Randazza
  Lake Brantley High School
  Altamonte Springs, FL

$1,750 Scholarship Winners:
- Maria Chamberlain
  Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School
  Parkland, FL
- Lauren Crooks
  East Hartford High School
  East Hartford, CT
- Madeleine Fry
  William R. Boone High School
  Orlando, FL
- Amelia Kanner
  Hamburg High School
  Hamburg, NY
- Jillian Murzynski
  Hamburg High School
  Hamburg, NY
- Ariana Ortega
  Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School
  Parkland, FL
- Corey Seymour
  Dryden High School
  Dryden, NY

James Shields
Hamburg High School
Hamburg, NY

Ivy Van Dyke
William R. Boone High School
Orlando, FL

Kaylyn Wenzel
Hamburg High School
Hamburg, NY

$1,500 Scholarship Winners:
- Alex Clouser
  William R. Boone High School
  Orlando, FL
- Diamond Davey
  Frederick Douglass High School
  Atlanta, GA
- Tori George
  Lake Shore High School
  Saint Claire Shores, MI
- Josh Gibson
  William R. Boone High School
  Orlando, FL
- Allison Kerce
  Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School
  Parkland, FL
- Jacob McCarey
  William R. Boone High School
  Orlando, FL
- Erin Quinlivan
  Hamburg High School
  Hamburg, NY

$1,250 Scholarship Winners:
- David Crowe
  William R. Boone High School
  Orlando, FL
- Ryan Franzese
  Dryden High School
  Dryden, NY
- Kailee Herbst
  Hamburg High School
  Hamburg, NY
- Elizabeth Hines
  Lake Brantley High School
  Alamonte Springs, FL
- Michael Holman
  River Oaks High School
  Monroe, LA

$1,000 Scholarship Winners:
- Amanda Okulanis
  Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School
  Parkland, FL
- Nathan Payne
  Manatee High School
  Bradenton, FL
- Julia Rentas
  Lake Brantley High School
  Alamonte Springs, FL
- Trevor Wilson
  Okemos High School (Wilson Talent Center)
  Okemos, MI

$500 Second Round Scholarship:
- Austin Gonser
  Northwood University
  Midland, MI
- Deepa Naraine
  University of Connecticut
  Storrs, CT
- Phillip Hawes
  Olivet College
  Olivet, MI
- Stephen Butler
  University of Florida
  Gainesville, FL

$500 Classroom-to-Career Scholarship:
- Dhurgham Aljanabi
  Grossmont College
  El Cajon, CA
- Melissa Dewitt
  Grossmont College
  El Cajon, CA
We know how to get students excited about insurance.

Linda has been a strong advocate for the insurance industry—teaching the InVEST class for over 25 years at Dryden High School in upstate New York.

Together with Bob Baxter, the CEO of Dryden Mutual Insurance, Linda designed her school’s program in the early 1990s, enhancing it as the years progressed with the addition of guest speakers, field trips, job shadowing, mock job interviews, career days and internship opportunities.

Dryden’s InVEST program has even been featured on television, in local newspapers and on the Big I New York’s website.

Linda also chairs an advisory council that includes three other local InVEST teachers, 20 professionals from 11 insurance offices, and three college representatives. The group meets every summer to review the curriculum and make recommendations for the upcoming school year.

She is especially proud when InVEST graduates return to her class as active workers in the insurance industry to give presentations to her current students. Whenever a speaker visits, classmates are urged to participate by welcoming guests, designing welcome signs, photographing the events and introducing the speakers.

She enjoys collaborating with business professionals and the college community to engage students in learning about insurance, risk management, office operations and career opportunities.

Linda holds a master’s degree in Business Education.

Most of my students seem to really enjoy the InVEST program and many of them move on to internships and even full-time jobs in insurance.*

LINDA BRUNO
Share your passion for insurance with the next generation.

John Scheck is a Claims Representative at Insurance Planning, Inc. in Hays, Kansas. Like many insurance professionals, he stumbled into the insurance business by accident; specifically, through the encouragement of his then personal agent, who identified John’s attention to detail and his desire to help others.

After purchasing a local captive agency in 2000, John became a student of the industry and obtained his AIS, AINS and AIC designations through the American Institute for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters. In 2003, he sold his agency and transitioned into his current role as a Claims Representative for a large Trusted Choice independent agency. Continuing his education, John earned the CISR and CIC designations from the National Alliance for Insurance Education & Research.

An active volunteer, John has served in many capacities and on several boards of local non-profit, civic and educational entities. He currently champions the InVEST Insurance Program in a local public school and is starting to introduce the program to several other Central Kansas schools.

“John has done a tremendous job in bringing other industry experts into the classroom, individuals that students would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet and learn from.”

JOHN’S COLLEAGUE
MEET OUR 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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JOHN R. COSTELLO
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