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## Morongo Awards \$30,000 in College Scholarships to Native American Students

*Three students from Humboldt State University and UC Santa Cruz receive \$10,000 each as part of Morongo's 12th Annual Rodney T. Mathews Jr. Scholarship Program.*

**MORONGO INDIAN RESERVATION** – Three Native American students from across California have each received a \$10,000 scholarship from the Morongo Band of Mission Indians as part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Rodney T. Mathews Jr. Scholarship program.

"The Rodney T. Mathews Jr. Scholarship at Morongo was launched specifically to help reverse the trends that have left Native Americans as the most underrepresented group in colleges and universities," Morongo Tribal Chairman Robert Martin said. "Students like this year's recipients will be the tribal leaders of the future, and we are pleased to be helping them acquire the education and skills they need to guide and improve tribal communities for the next generation."

In the 12 years since the Mathews Scholarship was launched, Morongo has provided \$410,000 to 43 Native American students. The scholarship program is unique in that it is open to enrolled members of any of the more than 100 federally recognized tribes in California. The 2016 recipients are:

- **Ty'ithreeha Allen, of the Yurok Tribe** attends Humboldt State University where she is a sophomore studying Child Development and American Indian Education. Raised in McKinleyville, CA., she hopes to launch a tribal preschool and youth programs that integrate traditional tribal practices, beliefs, and values, and to create educational programs utilizing Native language and culture.

"I couldn't tell you how excited and happy I was when I received the award," said Allen, who is not the first in her family to receive a Mathews Scholarship. "I remember my auntie getting the scholarship when I was a young girl and I looked up to her. I saved as much as I could for college but this obviously will allow me to pursue my educational goals."

- **Gabriella 'Stella' Jarnaghan of the Hoopa Valley Tribe** is a sophomore at Humboldt State University where she is studying Business Administration. A Hoopa Valley High School graduate, she aspires to launch a successful business and to return to her reservation to help her tribal community become more self-sufficient.

"I'm beyond grateful to Morongo," Jarnaghan said. "The scholarship has taken a lot of stress off me for the upcoming year as it basically covered my tuition for both semesters. It has really motivated me to do my best."

- **Raymond LeBeau of the Pit River Tribe (also associated with Maidu and Cabazon Cahuilla tribes)** is a junior attending UC Santa Cruz where he is learning Environmental Studies and Philosophy. LeBeau, who graduated high school in Davis, CA., plans to continue his education and obtain a doctorate degree so he can assist tribal communities with environmental and land use programs.

"The work that I want to do in the future will not just pertain to my tribe but to all indigenous people," LeBeau said. "I know this scholarship is competitive and receiving support from Morongo makes me feel good and empowered. It shows me that I'm progressing and following the right path."

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American Indians and Alaskan Natives comprise less than 1% of the nation's college students, the lowest college enrollment rate of any ethnic group, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Similarly, only 15% of American Indians hold bachelor's degrees, fewer than any ethnic group in the U.S., according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The scholarship program honors the late Rodney T. Mathews Jr., a Morongo tribal member and Hastings Law School graduate who passed away in 2004 after serving as a judge pro tem for more than a decade.

Scholarship applicants are considered based on their academic success and community service. Candidates must be full-time students at an accredited college or university; complete 60 hours with a designated California Indian agency; and be actively involved in the Native American community.