



RENAISSANCE SCHOLARSHIP

Endowed by

Jan Z. Wiranowski
(Yahn Z. Viranovsky)

Professor of Mathematics & Foreign Languages



DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS
MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ROCHESTER, NY
2008

**Completed applications with essays and recommendations are due in the Mathematics
Department Office (8-510) no later than 4:00 p.m., Monday, March 24, 2008.**

Monroe Community College - Department of Mathematics
J.Z.W. Renaissance Scholarship

Description of the Scholarship

In general, the spirit of Renaissance implies renewal and exploration of the broadest spectrum of human interests and activity, as well as it implies faith in human potential. Thus, it is only natural that the scholarship so named should follow suit. Accordingly, the criteria for this scholarship are broad and flexible to the point that almost “anything goes”, as long as it is convincing, authentic, enhanced by excellence and falls into the category of humanistic endeavors. This scholarship is designed both for the candidates with a traditional academic background, as well as for those with an out-of-ordinary academic trail; or for those who represent the combination thereof. In fact, there have been cases of former inmates who turned out to be excellent students, and valued individuals, precisely because of their past experiences. Again, faith in human potential is essential for this scholarship.

Purpose and Amount:

Professor Jan Z. Wiranowski established this scholarship to express his care for students, his gratitude to MCC and to underscore his faith in human potential. Furthermore, having pursued an out-of-ordinary path in life, on two continents and in several countries, and, having learned only too well how difficult it is to obtain financial support whenever personal credentials do not fall in line with traditional criteria, he would like to see the non-traditional high achievers (immigrants, the self-taught, refugees, underprivileged, and the like) to be given the same consideration as is given to students with traditional academic backgrounds. It is his hope that this scholarship, whenever possible, would assist students with diversified interests. The one-time award for those who qualify will be \$1000. There will be a maximum of two awards per year. Should there be no Renaissance Scholarship candidates in any given year, the funds may be used to award two additional, \$1,000 each, Jan Z. Wiranowski math focused scholarships that are also administered by the Department of Mathematics. A personal letter to the applicants from Professor Wiranowski is on the next page.

ELIGIBILITY

Any student currently enrolled at Monroe Community College meeting the following requirements:

1. Must have successfully completed at least 24 credit hours at Monroe Community College.
2. Must have a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.5 or higher.
3. Must be able to demonstrate a degree of tangible interest in diverse areas, some of which might be, as follows: philosophy, math, languages (especially French), physics, literature, history, astronomy, cosmology, biology, chemistry, art, social sciences, skiing, psychology, ecology, mountaineering, exploratory travel, social justice, poetry, plight of animals, peace movement, universal health insurance, etc.
4. Must be able to show that she/he possesses some of the attributes and/or life experiences as sampled here (or the like): creativity, passion(s), vision, determination; visible progress and a clear movement toward accomplishing his/her goals or satisfying intellectual curiosity; strong and demonstrable commitment to hard work; determination and ability to face adversities; clear commitment to humanistic values (including fairness towards animals); meaningful life experiences, ranging from being subjected to persecution, discrimination, abuse, or the like, to performing acts of courage, or having significantly and positively impacted the life of other human beings; other noble acts, noteworthy deeds or attributes.
5. Must have a plan and a set of criteria for the continued education that are linked to his/her hitherto accomplishments and/or personal history. This does not exclude well justified changes of direction in life. In fact, if such a change is real, practical and useful, it is very welcome; in accordance with the basic fact of life that *change is a must, so we must change*.
6. Must have successfully completed (or is in the process of completing by the end of the current semester) courses that are relevant to his/her professional objectives or to the spirit of the Scholarship, in order to qualify for the award. It is left to the applicant, to convincingly elaborate on this compliance.

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LETTER TO THE APPLICANT FROM PROFESSOR JAN Z. WIRANOWSKI

Dear Applicant,

Please accept my best wishes for the realization of your professional dreams and goals. Rather than inserting an impersonal note about myself as a sponsor of the Scholarship, I have decided to write you a letter, as this Scholarship closely relates to my career and to my life experiences, and thus establishes a philosophical/humanistic link between the recipient and the sponsor. But why a renaissance scholarship in the first place?

As noted above, the word renaissance implies a broad spectrum of intellectual interests closely associated with various positive aspects of human existence. And today, living under the increasing pressures of the modern world, as well as under the often debilitating temptations of consumerism, not to mention the continued threat of acts of hatred and propensity for wars – true, not different from the past, except that today, due to the immediacy of the media, it continually affects our conscience – resulting in bloodshed and suffering, the idea of a renewal or a fresh look at the world we want to live in, seems to resonate more urgently than ever. Besides, myself having lived a life of many lives, so to speak, on various, often conflicting, societal levels, I am particularly interested in supporting the open-minded and positively passionate individuals, and, along with that, in promoting the idea of humanism, i.e. of life without prejudices, discrimination, meanness, hatred, ignorance or hypocrisy – life centered around human dignity and well-being; as well as I am interested in exploring the issues related to both sides of the Big Existential Terminus/Divide that so mercilessly and haphazardly crashes human life and its accumulated existential values. My personal experiences, of which I write below, have been instrumental in the development of my philosophy on life in general and on human existence, in particular.

During my many years of service to MCC, since 1967, I have been continually inspired and encouraged by many prominent members of the College Community whose vision and faith in human potential have significantly impacted my career. On the other hand, whenever faced with myopic impediments to progress, I loved to repeat after Admiral Farragut (Civil War) his fiery advice: “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!” and it worked. It is against this intellectually fertile, non-myopic but thoroughly exhilarating background at MCC that I was able to meet head on the challenges of my significant professional diversification and intellectual enrichment.

Indeed, aside from teaching mathematics, I have also taught several languages and French literature, at MCC and also briefly at the U of R. Furthermore, some of my professional work in mathematics has been published and is used at MCC. In addition, I have also written poetry and have been working for many years on a book comprising the totality of my views on human existence, but currently do not have sufficient amount of time to continue writing. Some day, I hope. However, I do share some of my views and snippets of my life story (I call it “Life Talk”), during the occasional speaking engagements. They usually generate much interest among audiences, and discussions ensue.

My quest for a wide-ranging education continued in a variety of ways in the West – West of the Iron Curtain, that infamous Soviet-conceived Continental Divide of Europe – in spite of the initial hardships. In fact, at the time of my “scaling” the Iron Curtain between Czechoslovakia and Austria, in 1959, my personal fortune amounted to the staggering 18 US dollars (eighteen bucks, and not a penny more). Thus, at the early stages of the struggle, I was forced to live by means of no means, like

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a hobo, except that I hitchhiked by cars, trucks and once even by a taxi (!) – not by trains as the hoboes did. Yet, in the long run, my trail did progress “from rags to teaches”, as it was cautiously meandering through the mine fields of difficulties, dangers and uncertainties, on two continents, in several countries, and for quite a few decades.

I followed a rather tortuous but most rewarding trail throughout Europe and America. I did some volunteer work helping flood victims in the French Alps; picked grapes in Champagne; was a messenger on bike in Paris for four months, while initially living in a room without electricity or water; worked as a foreman in a foundry near Le Mans (France); taught skiing in the French Alps; was a precision grinder in a tool shop in Connecticut; ski instructor in Vermont; graduate student at Middlebury College, VT; high school teacher of French (also in Vermont), student at the Sorbonne in Paris, at MCC, at the University of Rochester, at the SUNY in Brockport and Geneseo. I also studied in Mexico, Spain and Italy. And, of course, in my native Poland where I had earned a degree in engineering, in 1956; followed by my earning of an M.A. degree in the United States, in 1966; and the equivalent of another M.A. in 1982.

All of this, together with my experiences from World War II and thereafter – such as escapes from the Soviets or the Nazis: from deportation to Siberia (1939), or while being herded to a concentration camp (1944), respectively; or during the years of communist domination in Poland – all of these events weighed in heavily on the development of my humanistic philosophy that places emphasis on broadly perceived education, along with the emphasis on justice among people and on fairness towards animals.

In 1984, I was a cofounder of the MCC Winter Mountaineers Club. I organized and led MCC winter expeditions, several times each season, over the period of ten years. Finally, having been repeatedly listed in the Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers, I have always remained in close association with my students.

By sharing with you a brief outline of my still incomplete (I hope) life story, I hope to further encourage you to vigorously pursue your intellectual and professional goals.

With my best wishes for your continued success,

Jan (Yahn) Z. Wiranowski

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Application
- Applicant's essay
- Two letters of recommendation from Monroe Community College faculty representing different disciplines
- Transcripts containing grades for the courses pertaining to the scholarship but not taken at Monroe Community College
- Any official information, in writing (transcripts, letters of recognition, awards, other), regarding applicant's successful involvement in the areas of intellectual or humanistic interest – if available

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APPLICANT'S NAME _____

Student Number _____ Telephone (_____) _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email Address _____

Please fill out the table below as appropriate:

Completed Courses Pertinent to this Application				
Institution	Course Title	Course Number	Credits	Grade
Current Courses Pertinent to this Application				
Institution	Course Title	Course Number	Credits	Average

Area of specialization / program of study: _____

Recommendations requested from:

1. _____ 2. _____

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Applicant's Name _____

Applicant's Essay

Tell us why you think you are a worthy candidate for this award. Include in your typed essay:
an explanation of your career and philosophical goals in life (experiences that have given you your outlook on life); additional information that you feel documents your qualification.

Signature _____

Date _____

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Applicant's Name _____ Recommendation from MCC Faculty _____

To the candidate: This form is to be completed by a Monroe Community College faculty member. Two references from different educational disciplines, ideally, encompassing the spectrum and/or spirit of the Renaissance Scholarship. Please enter your name on the line above and give this form to an instructor who knows you well.

Dear Faculty Member:

The student named above is applying for a **Jan Z. Wiranowski Renaissance Scholarship**. In order to help the Scholarship Committee obtain an accurate picture of the applicant's qualifications, we ask that you answer these questions as fully and candidly as possible.

Faculty Member's name and position _____

Department _____ Telephone Extension _____

Your comments on this student are based on:

- Length of time you have known the applicant: _____
- Your relationship to the applicant: _____
- The course(s)/semester(s) you taught this student:

Other _____

In comparison to the approximately _____ students I have evaluated in the past two years, I would place this nominee in (check one):

	the top 10 %		the top 25 %		the top 50 %		below average
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Narrative Comments: Please comment on the qualifications of the candidate and why you feel this candidate is deserving of the award. Try to comment on the following: aptitude for further study, enthusiasm, initiative, maturity, and the ability to relate to others. Feel free to use additional space if needed. (Please type.)

Signature _____ Date _____

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