Bernie Franks Award (BA)

Bernadine Franks (BA 2018)
When Bernadine Franks graduated from the University of Iowa, she fulfilled a 50-year-old promise to her mother. After having a baby at age 15 and marrying the following year, Bernadine promised her mother that someday she’d go to college. On December 15, 2018, as she walked across the stage to accept her diploma from the UI School of Social Work, the 67-year-old was backed by a legion of fans that include her children, grandchildren, co-workers, and others she’s inspired along the way.

Now, future students will benefit from Bernadine’s example. The Bernadine Franks Scholarship has been established to support a scholarship for a non-traditional, underrepresented student in the University of Iowa School of Social Work. This fund was established after Bernie appeared on the TODAY show and the producers of the show announced it’s creation. The UI Center for Advancement continues to solicit contributions to this fund so that future students will benefit.

Undergraduate social work students whom meets all of the following criteria are encouraged to apply:

- Are a non-traditional student
- from an underrepresented group(s); specifically, Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.
- currently enrolled in SW program and enrolled in the semester they are awarded the scholarship (spring)

Additional considerations are ability status, first generation college educated, caretaker responsibilities, financially disadvantaged, as examples.

The criteria for the award are academic success and aptitude for and commitment to the profession as demonstrated in volunteer or work histories. Financial need and commitment to vulnerable/marginalized communities/people will also be considered.

The application includes:
- Financial information entry
- A one-page essay stating how the award/scholarship will benefit you in your social work career.
- The name of a social work faculty member who would agree to be contacted as a reference. (no reference letter required)

Deadline for application is Friday, November 12, 2021. The selection will be made on or about December 15, 2021 with disbursement of the $1500 award to be made to the student’s University account in January 2022.

How to apply

- Accept invitation to join School of Social Work Scholarships ICON site.
- Once in the site, locate the Module titled, Bernie Franks Award.
- Upload your statement with your name at the top and the name of a social work faculty member who has agreed to be a reference.
- Complete the Financial Information for Scholarship Application form in the ICON site.

Questions may be directed to Kate-kemp@uiowa.edu