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PHOTO CAPTIONS: Lexi Irwin, Illia Seleznev and Akhil Shiju are presented with MyWay Scholarships by First Commerce Credit Union Executive Vice President Mary Estes.

2020 MyWay Scholarship recipient Rosalea Marshall.

First Commerce Credit Union Doubles Number of MyWay Scholarships, Awarding \$1,000 Each to Four Local Students

Scholarship recipients attending Florida State University and Montreat College in the Fall

TALLAHASSEE – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, First Commerce Credit Union doubled the number of available MyWay Scholarships in 2020, awarding four \$1,000 scholarships to local students.

“We recognize that families in the communities we serve may be facing added financial challenges due to the economic uncertainties caused by the pandemic,” said First Commerce CEO Cecilia Homison. “As a credit union committed to empowering people to enhance their financial well-being, we believe doubling the number of scholarships this year is a wise investment in helping more area students pursue a brighter future.”

This year's MyWay Scholarship recipients are: Lexi Irwin, Rosalea Marshall, Illia Seleznev and Akhil Shiju. Three of the recipients will attend Florida State University, with Irwin pursuing a degree in Business, Seleznev in Finance, and Shiju in Biology. Marshall is currently attending Montreat College in North Carolina with plans to graduate in May 2022 in Outdoor Ministry.

Applications and essays/videos were reviewed by an independent panel of judges from area institutions of higher learning including Chipola College, Florida A & M University, Florida State University and Tallahassee Community College. Winners were selected based on criteria including grades, test scores, community service, school activities, and work experience. In addition, each applicant submitted an essay or short video elaborating on their experiences with and approach to money including lessons learned.

In her essay, Irwin credits her job and financial obligations as the teaching tools for learning how to budget. She emphasized three important lessons from her experiences: “pay your dues, save, and give back.”

Marshall, who is a Resident Assistant at Montreat College, has found consistency in her budget with a steady income. In her essay, she writes about being able to “plan on how much I will have for eating out, paying expenses, and fun items.” She believes it is wise to have an emergency fund to prepare for the unexpected.

Seleznev describes paying off credit card debt monthly to “get on the right financial track.” After her first job, she began implementing SmartMoney techniques she learned from First

Commerce such as, “pulling money from each paycheck to save for the year ahead” and allocated her expenses into spending categories such as groceries and gas. She concludes that “proper treatment of her personal finances will help build a successful future.”

Shiju's video submission provided insights on the monetization of happiness. He states that a powerful mindset can “help you receive a greater satisfaction for your work.” By shifting your mindset from “what should I do?” to determining “this is what I can do right now,” Shiju believes you can save both time and money because you must first make the decision and then apply the actions.

Since 2016, First Commerce has awarded more than \$12,000 in scholarships to members of their MyWay Checking program who demonstrate excellence in school and beyond. The scholarships can be used toward school expenses including tuition, fees, and books. All members of First Commerce's MyWay Checking program are eligible for the scholarship opportunity.

MyWay is First Commerce's National Award-Winning program for 18-29 year olds, and includes a free checking account with free digital tools to help members stay on top of their finances, a nationally recognized EvenUp automatic savings account that rounds up debit card purchases to the next dollar amount and deposits the difference, as well as a focus on financial education including an annual credit report review with a First Commerce Financial Services Officer.

First Commerce is proud to continue empowering area students to pursue bright financial futures. Applications for the next MyWay Scholarship cycle will be accepted starting in February 2021. For more information, please visit FirstCommerceCU.org/MyWayScholarship.

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ABOUT FIRST COMMERCE CREDIT UNION: Established nearly 80 years ago, First Commerce Credit Union is a full-service financial institution headquartered in Tallahassee, Fla., with more than \$800 million in assets serving more than 65,000 consumer and business members in North Florida and South Georgia. First Commerce has 15 financial centers – seven in Tallahassee, three in Valdosta, Ga, and one each in Nashville, Ga., Adel, Ga., Ray City, Ga., and Thomasville, Ga., and Marianna, Fla. First Commerce offers a full array of consumer and business products and services, including checking and savings accounts for every stage of life, credit cards, mortgages, home equity loans and lines of credit, auto loans, money market accounts, CDs and IRAs, as well as a variety of business account, loans, and services. In addition, First Commerce offers a wide range of financial planning and investment services through our subsidiary, Six Pillars Financial Advisors, and commercial and personal insurance through First Commerce Insurance Agency. First Commerce is federally insured by the NCUA and is an equal housing opportunity lender. For more information, visit www.FirstCommerceCU.org or call 850.488.0035 or 1.800.533.5772.



