

# Annual Report

## About the Foundation

*Founded in 1988, the Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation encourages and inspires action for peace and justice by:*

- *Honoring individuals who have made significant and sustained contributions to peace and justice*
- *Awarding scholarships to students who have demonstrated a deep commitment to peace and justice*
- *Publicizing the activities of honorees and scholarship recipients so that others are encouraged and inspired to action*

The Hawkinson Foundation embraces the many ways one can work towards peace and justice in our world. Past scholarship recipients have worked on issues ranging from international healthcare and LGBT equality to racial justice and domestic violence prevention. Hawkinson Scholars are young people making a profound mark on the world. This year's Scholars are no less impressive.

In these pages, you will meet the 2015 Hawkinson Scholars—high school, college, and graduate students who are accomplishing amazing things. They are students increasing college retention rates among young black men, creating documentaries to shine a light on the bullying epidemic in Minnesota, and bringing healthcare to women and children in Senegal. They are young people using creative writing to share powerful stories of injustice in Nagasaki and beyond, and reducing poverty in Native American communities. They are high schoolers advocating for girls' rights and speaking out against sex trafficking and racism.

In addition to scholarships, the Hawkinson Foundation honors a seasoned peace and justice advocate each year with our Honorary Award. On page 10, you will meet Rev. Anita C. Hill, our 2015 Honorary Award recipient and a lifelong advocate for LGBTQ rights and racial justice. In the words of her nominator, David Weiss, Anita's "readiness to be visible and vocal in this struggle [for LGBTQ equality], both in faith communities and in civic settings, has been transformative for countless persons."

As you read through these pages, I hope you, too, will find inspiration and hope. Peggy Carlson says it beautifully in this annual report's donor spotlight, "It's so easy for the bad news to cloud out the good things people are doing. Hearing the scholars speak gives me hope for the future." Thank you for supporting the Hawkinson Foundation and the next generation of peace and justice leaders.

In peace,



Kimberly Sanberg  
Executive Director



**Supporting the next generation of peace and justice leaders.**

[www.hawkinsonfoundation.org](http://www.hawkinsonfoundation.org)

# MEET THE 2015 HAWKINSON SCHOLARS

## Awale Osman



2015  
Jacobson  
Scholar

*“Awale is quite simply one of the most fearless, passionate, and effective advocates of his age that I have ever known... He has founded, created, and led more genuinely effective programs in his short life than most professionals do in their entire careers.”*

### Robert C. Groven

Director, Honors Program and  
Minnesota Urban Debate League and  
Associate Professor at Augsburg College

*The Jacobson Scholarship is awarded to the top Hawkinson Scholar each year.*

Awale Osman, 22, was born in a Kenyan refugee camp after his family fled Somalia’s civil war of 1992. Two years later, his mother left him and his 12 siblings behind to work in the U.S. He didn’t see her for ten years. In Kenya, Awale found it painful to watch neighborhood children attend school because his family could not afford it.

Since immigrating to the United States in 2004 and reuniting with his mother, Awale has used his experience around education access to inform his volunteer work. He has been involved with the Minnesota Urban Debate League (MNUDL), Augsburg College’s Policy Debate Team, community college activism, and TRiO, which helps low-income and first-generation Americans enter college. He has also been an English tutor and a leader in the GLBTQIA community.

*“Back in the refugee camp or in Nairobi, I could not have envisioned who I would become. I didn’t realize I’d have the power to create inclusive communities of support for people who are also marginalized and alone. In hindsight, my turbulent childhood kindled my intellectual growth while raising my level of social consciousness.”*

Awale is dedicated to creating peace and justice by focusing on traditionally underserved student populations. He led the Black Male Leadership Movement, an initiative to increase college retention and persistence rates among young black males, at North Hennepin Community College. Under Awale’s leadership, the Movement boasted a 100% success rate for all of the 50 participants.

He graduated with honors in 2013 from North Hennepin Community College and graduated in 2015 from Augsburg College with a B.A. in Communication Studies and a minor in Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies. He will start graduate school at Minnesota State University, Mankato this fall. Awale’s goal is to earn a Doctorate of Philosophy in Intercultural Communication Studies and to improve college degree attainment by working within the collegiate system.

*Supporting the next generation of peace and justice leaders.*

## Alec Fischer



Alec Fischer, 21, uses film to create social change. During his senior year at Edina High School, he produced a documentary called “Minnesota Nice?” The film was heralded as a successful way to raise awareness of bullying and suicide rampant in Minnesota schools. Alec has traveled throughout the Midwest presenting his documentary to 45 schools, universities, film festivals, community events and bullying prevention rallies. The video has amassed more than 17,000 YouTube views.

Alec is also a staunch advocate for legislative changes. He successfully lobbied at the State Capitol for the Safe And Supportive Schools Act. Alec co-founded Can’t Convert Love MN, an organization dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers of conversion therapy for LGBT people. He co-wrote a bill to ban conversion therapy from being practiced on minors in the state, and after working with GLAAD and Change.org, he created a petition that has more than 115,000 signatures thus far supporting these efforts.

*“Throughout his college career, Alec has continued to work to amplify the voices of those at the margins, and not just through his passion for filmmaking... He is an engaged advocate and leader for the LGBTQ community on campus.”*

### Christian Simamora

Program Director, Dalai Lama Fellows

*“Though we may come from different backgrounds, hold differing perspectives, or work for independent causes, the Hawkinson Foundation is bringing us together in one space to celebrate the incredible peace and justice work being done around the Midwest. Together, I believe we can change the world.”*

Alec was also awarded a 2014-2015 Dalai Lama Fellowship, a global initiative aiming to train “the next generation of ethical and compassionate social innovators.” During his fellowship, Alec worked on a project called “The U-Speak Movement,” the goal of which was to make available “online and mobile platforms to empower students to speak out about relevant, yet silenced, issues on college campuses.”

Alec will graduate in 2016 from the University of Minnesota with a B.A. in Art and a focus on advocacy and social justice. He plans to complete a master’s degree in film & television production and eventually become a director/documentarian to continue advocating for social change through film.

## Love Odetola



*“Love has demonstrated outstanding courage and passion for justice among women and children in sub-Saharan Africa.”*

**Dr. Zobeida E. Bonilla**

Assistant Professor of Maternal & Child Health at the University of Minnesota

After witnessing health and social injustices as a child in both her native Nigeria and her home in Senegal, Love Odetola, 22, became passionate about providing basic access to healthcare. In high school, she joined the Youth with a Mission socio-medical center in Dakar, Senegal. There, she helped nurses give vaccines to impoverished children. Love later joined her high school medical team, working alongside health professionals to bring care to rural areas.

Love received a competitive \$10,000 Davis Project for Peace grant to embark on a maternal/child health and women empowerment project in rural Senegal. As part of the project, Love partnered with the Senegalese government to provide potable water within a village to eliminate the need for mothers and girls in the village to trek four kilometers daily to fetch clean water. Love also conducted an interactive public health workshop to educate the village about various health topics and facilitated a microfinance workshop to introduce women to a reputable microfinance bank.

*“As a young girl in Senegal I accompanied my parents on various mission trips into the rural areas. There I noticed remarkable health disparities between the rural area and Dakar, the capital: children looked haggard and mothers appeared remarkably skinnier. I promised myself that I would earn a quality education and acquire the adequate skill set to return to Senegal to make a difference.”*

Love wanted to empower women to make better health decisions and improve their financial status. She founded the Women for Women Empowerment (WWE) association, which not only served as a financial guarantor to nine women, but also helped the society understand that women don't have to depend on their husbands to create a sustainable life for their families. As a result, St. Olaf College recognized Love with the Ken Bonde Award for her integrative scholastic work to promote justice and peace.

*“My strong belief in access to basic health—perhaps by securing clean water or by knowing about dependable sources of health information or even having access to financial resources to ensure good health outcomes—deeply motivates me to continue this highly rewarding work.”*

Love received her B.A. from St. Olaf College and is working toward a Master of Public Health with a concentration in Maternal and Child Health from the University of Minnesota. Her coursework will prepare her for a career advocating for vulnerable populations, with a focus on maternal and child health. Love's goal is to improve the health outcomes of women and children around the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

*Supporting the next generation of peace and justice leaders.*

## Emily Strasser



*“Emily is a remarkable writer, a profoundly committed researcher with an uncanny ability to penetrate—gently, but with acuity—distant lands and cultures, and to consider harrowing political histories.”*

### Patricia Hampl

Regents Professor, Department of English, University of Minnesota

*“Haunted by a photograph of my grandfather, the nuclear scientist, standing unmoved in front of a billowing orange mushroom cloud, I began to trace the intersection of family and national secrets, guilt, responsibility, and love, drawing from history, science, philosophy, poetry, memory, and imagination to shed light on questions that deepened by circles and accretion.”*

Throughout her life, Emily Strasser, 27, has not only used writing as a creative outlet, but also as a way of bringing meaningful stories to the forefront. Now, in her final year of her M.F.A. at the University of Minnesota and with the support of the her Hawkinson Foundation scholarship, she is embarking on her most personal writing assignment yet.

In honor of the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings, Emily traveled to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, to conduct interviews with survivors. Her family history includes a nuclear scientist grandfather who worked toward the development of atomic weapons. This research will help transform her graduate thesis into her first book, “Nuclear Family,” in which she explores the “intersection of family and national secrets, and the burden of secrecy on the home, the nation and the world.”

“Combining research, memoir, journalistic and creative elements, I attempt to access and express deep and contradictory human truths that other fields flatten or ignore. I asked when I began, and am still asking—what does peace look like in a world in which good people are complicit with injustice?”

Emily is no stranger to using writing to elicit action. With support from the University of Minnesota Scribe for Human Rights Fellowship, she traveled to Dharamsala, India, in 2014 and logged close to 30 hours of interviews with refugees escaping Chinese rule in Tibet.

“The refugees had come to India at great personal risk; they came for education, to meet the Dalai Lama, or to flee repercussions for political actions. Some had been imprisoned and tortured for attempts to speak out against their oppression. The men and women who generously shared their stories with me were passionate and courageous, hopeful that airing their truths would aid the Tibetan cause.”

Emily used this experience to spark conversation about the current state of Tibet. She created an exhibition at the Soap Factory art gallery in Minneapolis and her essay entitled “The Chair,” which profiles a monk who was imprisoned and tortured after secretly filming a documentary in Tibet, was published by Guernica: A Journal of Arts & Politics.

Emily is originally from Atlanta, Georgia, and graduated from Vassar College in 2010 with a B.A. in English and a minor in Anthropology. She will graduate in 2016 with an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Minnesota.

# Donor Spotlight

*Marty and Peggy Carlson are long-time Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation donors. Marty has served on the Foundation's Board of Directors. They live in Mora, MN.*

## Why are peace and justice important to you?

**Marty** In my formative years, our nation was responsible for so much war and violence. I would see the images of the Vietnam War on TV and they really hurt. It hurt to think of what my tax dollars and my government were doing.

**Peggy** I believe peace and justice are two of the most important elements that go into making the world a better place.

## What do you most value in life?

**P** A sense of connectedness to those we love, and the earth—the wider world as well. The opportunity to try to live a life that makes the world a better place. We're lucky in this country to have the freedom we do; there are a lot of people who don't have that. I try to be thankful and use that freedom responsibly.

**M** I value generosity, respect, and kindness.

## How did you get involved with the Hawkinson Foundation?

**M** When I was a student at the University of Minnesota in 1960, I met Vince Hawkinson. He was the pastor at Grace University Lutheran Church during the turbulent 1960s and early '70s. His sermons railed against the Vietnam War and, on several occasions, he de-escalated violence on campus. After Vince retired in the 1980s, a group worked to get the Hawkinson Foundation started in his honor.

**P** Vince was a key figure for Marty during the Vietnam War years. He found Vince to be someone who was really trying to make a difference. It was a natural fit for Marty to want to be a part of something that honored Vince and his efforts for peace and justice.

## What do you wish other people knew about the Foundation?

**P** I wish more people knew about the awards events so they could hear the stories of the scholars. It's so easy for the bad news to cloud out the good things people are doing. Hearing the scholars speak gives me hope for the future.

**M** It's so inspiring to hear stories of young people who feel so strongly about peace and justice issues that they devote time to making the world a better place. I think that is so impressive.

**P** The scholars' stories move people to action. It makes you feel like you can get out there and make a little difference. If we all make a little difference, it adds up to real change.



# HELP THE HAWKINSON FOUNDATION GROW



### How does your philanthropy reflect your values?

**P** I think philanthropy gives you an avenue for living out your values—to help the things we care about continue.

**M** I agree. I recently put a note next to my desk “Your beliefs don’t make you a better person. It’s your behavior that matters.” What you do with the income you can spare is part of your behavior.

### What are your hopes for the Foundation’s future?

**M** With the cost of education rising, I hope the Foundation grows so that it can award more significant scholarships. I hope the board and fundraising continue to get stronger to support that growth.

## Get Involved: Take Action for Peace & Justice

*Did you know there are lots of ways you can take your involvement with the Foundation to the next level? Support the next generation of peace and justice leaders by:*

- *Becoming a sustaining donor by making a monthly donation.*
- *Making a planned gift and joining the Legacy Circle.*
- *Nominating someone you know for the 2016 Honorary Award.*
- *Joining the Hawkinson Foundation Board of Directors.*
- *Signing up for our email list to stay in the loop.*
- *Spreading the word about Hawkinson scholarships.*

## Ready to learn more?

Email [info@hawkinsonfoundation.org](mailto:info@hawkinsonfoundation.org)

or visit our website at

[www.hawkinsonfoundation.org](http://www.hawkinsonfoundation.org).



*Support the next generation of peace and justice leaders. Donate to the Hawkinson Foundation today at [www.hawkinsonfoundation.org/give](http://www.hawkinsonfoundation.org/give).*



## Vaughn J. Vargas



A member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, 29-year-old Vaughn J. Vargas is using his personal experiences, deep passion for his culture and interest in community involvement to help reduce poverty in Native American communities. To accomplish that, he proposes a mix of innovative solutions that include economic development, legislative policy changes, government-to-government mediation and tribal government reform.

Vaughn is already a strong leader, encouraging Native Americans to become more engaged within their communities to help eliminate the prejudices that lead to resentment of Natives and non-Natives. He is the Cultural Advisory Coordinator for the Rapid City Police Department and an Oceti Sakowin Community Ambassador, helping enhance relationships between Native American and non-native community members.

“Growing up in South Dakota, I thought all Native Americans were poor. After an internship with the National Science Foundation, I learned that Native American tribes across the nation are at various stages of development. It is just South Dakota tribes that are continuously classified as the poorest counties in the nation. I want to change that.”

Vaughn is leading by example through his involvement with the Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (ASAP), where he has served on the board of directors. Vaughn is committed to combatting substance abuse through hands-on interactions in the community and he organized a city-wide event that used dancing to promote a healthy way of self-expression.

Drawing from his own experiences, Vaughn has become passionate for empowering youth who are struggling with suicide. When he was 20 years old, he lost his infant son in a tragic accident and contemplated suicide. With the help of friends and the church, he turned his life around and now speaks regularly on suicide awareness.

Vaughn will graduate in 2016 from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management. He plans to pursue a master’s degree in urban and regional planning at the University of Minnesota. Vaughn’s goals include becoming a Truman Scholar and Udall Foundation Native American Congressional Intern, and using these honors as the platform for future candidacy.

*“The Hawkinson Scholarship doesn’t just recognize leaders of peace and justice, but it also empowers an individual to remain true themselves and further their values and actions. Rev. Vincent Hawkinson’s courageous actions set the standard to ‘stand up and speak against oppression and injustices in all forms.’ My belief is every community needs a Rev. Vincent Hawkinson. Through this scholarship, I am empowered to fearlessly address oppression and inequality in my very own community.”*

*Supporting the next generation of peace and justice leaders.*



# HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS

*In 2015, The Hawkinson Foundation awarded two scholarships to outstanding high school students.*

## Mallory Dudra



*"I have no doubt Mallory Dudra will make significant contributions to our world. She will prove herself to be an asset wherever she goes."*

**Dr. Kirsten C. Pardun-Johannsen**

District Performing Arts Specialist,  
Orono Public Schools

Mallory Dudra, 19, has devoted significant time and energy to helping underrepresented populations in her home community of Medina and beyond, volunteering in India, Ecuador, and Jamaica. A 2015 graduate of Orono High School, Mallory participated in National Honor Society, was a Minnesota State Speech Finalist and captain of her speech team, Spanish club president and leader in the Wind Ensemble.

*"Girls' equality in developing countries is extremely important to me because if these areas don't utilize the mindpower of half of their population, there is no way they will successfully integrate themselves into the global economy."*

As a part of her Girl Scouts Gold Award, she tackled the problem of a lack of volunteerism among her classmates head on. In 2014, she traveled to Pune, India, an area of conflict, to help create equality for women by teaching young girls subjects that they couldn't learn in traditional schools because of their gender. "I met a group of sisters who, instead of attending school with their brothers, were forced to stay and sit on the dirt floor of their clapboard home because the long trek to their school was too treacherous."

Mallory will use her Hawkinson Foundation scholarship to help fund her undergraduate education at George Washington University in Washington, DC where she plans to double-major in Arabic and International Affairs with a concentration in the Middle East. Her ultimate goal is a career in international politics where she can change not only the policies, but also the social norms in countries where women's rights are being abused.

## Zerbine Rypa



*"Zerbine is a driven, positive student who lifts those up around her and doesn't let obstacles stand in her way... She is focused on her future and achieving her dream of becoming a professor."*

**Patrick Snyder**

Senior Coach, College Possible,  
Harding Senior High School

Zerbine Rypa, 19, is a 2015 graduate of Harding High School in St. Paul who spent her early life in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). She and her family escaped the war in the DRC and came to St. Paul, where she joined the St. Paul Youth Commission during her sophomore year of high school. Through the Youth Commission she has worked to raise awareness about sex trafficking and work toward eliminating racism.

Her devotion to educating the world around her continued during her senior year of high school when she helped organize Project We Are Heard, a student-led movement aimed at eliminating racism.

*"Everyone may have the wand to change the world, but life is not a fairytale, so we cannot keep playing pretend and ignore the issues that hurt our society. Therefore, I decided to dedicate my life to standing up for peace and justice through education and be the magical wand that empowers individuals to move society into new realms of thought."*

Zerbine will attend the University of Minnesota this fall. She plans to major in English Literature with a minor in African/Black Studies or Social Justice. She hopes to empower entire communities to move society forward through education.

# 2015 HONORARY AWARD WINNER

*Each year, the Hawkinson Foundation Honorary Award is given to an individual or group that has made a long and significant contribution to causes of peace and social justice.*

## Reverend Anita C. Hill



Rev. Anita C. Hill grew up in a Catholic family in the Deep South in the 1950s. Since coming out in her twenties and fully realizing how rampant discrimination was for many people, Anita has demonstrated a groundbreaking personal commitment to both racial justice and equality for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) people.

Her work for LGBTQ equality began in 1976 as part of the organization Lutherans Concerned/North America (now ReconcilingWorks). Starting in 1978, Hill helped the Lutheran Human Relations Association (LHRA)—an organization founded in the early 1950s around race relations—begin

understanding LGBTQ issues.

*“Anita has traveled exhaustively, spoken tirelessly, written thoughtfully, been grilled repeatedly, and been present persistently as a guiding and inspiring force in this long march toward the day(s) when churches have begun to welcome and affirm LGBT persons and when cities, states, and whole nations have begun to claim equality on behalf of LGBT persons.”*

**David Weiss**

Honorary Award nominator

Hill completed an M.A. in religious studies from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in the 1980s and was active in the St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church. The congregation was known to be forward-thinking and willing to take risks for equality and justice. In 2001, the congregation balked at the greater ELCA by conducting two votes: one to change its own constitution and another to bring Anita on as an openly gay minister. Through a unanimous vote, Anita was called and ordained, making her the first openly lesbian, partnered ELCA minister in Minnesota.

“This wasn’t just about me. It was the hope and dream of so many people and I just got to stand up front. They risked their life as a congregation because they could have been removed from the congregational roster of the ELCA. It was absolutely amazing that people who had known me as a staff member for 17 years voted unanimously to call me as their pastor.”

Anita left the parish in 2012 to help ReconcilingWorks use faith-based organizing tactics to have conversations about same-sex marriage. Faith communities were instrumental in helping Minnesota become the first state to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

*“I found my voice and a place to be welcomed for who I was in the Lutheran Church. I want to make that possible for everyone.”*

Anita also works toward racial and economic equity with ISAIHA, a faith-based organizing group in Minnesota. She believes Black Lives Matter in the United States and all around the globe. Currently, she serves on the steering committee of Mwendo Congo, an organization working for health, education, and peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Anita and her spouse, Janelle Bussert, live in St. Paul. They have a daughter, Patricia, and a seven-year-old grandson, Thabiso.

*Supporting the next generation of peace and justice leaders.*

# 2014 Donors

*It is only with generous donations from individuals and organizations that the Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation can support the next generation of peace and justice leaders. Thank you to our donors for your generosity.*

## Individuals

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## Legacy Circle

*The following donors have made planned gifts to the Hawkinson Foundation:*

Stan Jacobson  
Charles & AvaDale Johnson  
George & Molly Raymond  
Arthur & Martha Sternberg

*\*deceased*

The above gifts are from calendar year 2014. We strive to keep this list as accurate as possible. Please contact us at [info@hawkinsonfoundation.org](mailto:info@hawkinsonfoundation.org) or 612-331-8125 to report any errors or omissions, and to let us know if you've remembered the Foundation in your will.



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[www.hawkinsonfoundation.org](http://www.hawkinsonfoundation.org)

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Give now at [www.hawkinsonfoundation.org/give](http://www.hawkinsonfoundation.org/give).*

## RSVP for the 2015 Annual Awards Event

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

**Please mark your calendar for the Hawkinson Foundation's Annual Awards Event on Sunday, September 27.** Join us to meet the 2015 Hawkinson Scholars and Honorary Award recipient Rev. Anita C. Hill, hear their inspiring stories, and mingle with fellow Foundation supporters.

### Program

**2:45 p.m.** Gathering and check-in

**3:00 p.m.** Program with presentations from Hawkinson Scholars and Honorary Award winner

**4:30 p.m.** Reception with hors d'oeuvres and drinks

### Location

**St. Michael's Lutheran Church**  
1660 W. County Road B  
Roseville, MN 55113



**RSVP by September 13** to Alison Bents at [abents@hawkinsonfoundation.org](mailto:abents@hawkinsonfoundation.org) or 612-331-8125.

Please leave a message with your name, the names of your guests, and the total number of people in your party. We'll see you there!