



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Cathedral grad named Rhodes Scholar

Jay Ruckelshaus, Cathedral class of 2011, selected for the American Rhodes Scholar Class of 2016

INDIANAPOLIS—November 23, 2015—Dave Worland, principal of Cathedral High School, announces that alumnus Jay Ruckelshaus has been selected as part of the American Rhodes Scholars Class of 2016. Ruckelshaus, currently a student at Duke University, is one of only 32 Rhodes Scholars selected from 869 candidates from across the country.

At Cathedral, Ruckelshaus was a Presidential Scholar, valedictorian of his class, and a member of the school's Brain Game Team. He served as a class officer and was named Outstanding Scholar in 15 classes. Shortly after his graduation in 2011, Ruckelshaus was injured in a diving accident and has been in a wheelchair ever since. Despite his challenges, he has excelled at Duke, been named a Truman Scholar earlier this year, as well as started a foundation, the Ramp Less Traveled, a nonprofit that helps students with spinal cord injuries get to college through financial support and mentorship.



Jay Ruckelshaus, Cathedral graduate, Duke student, and Rhodes Scholar

"I'm absolutely stunned to have been named a Rhodes Scholar," Ruckelshaus said Saturday night to *Duke Today*, Duke University's news publication. "I channel as much credit as possible to all those who've helped me get here, which is more than I could possibly name. Thank you to everyone! I embrace, excitedly and wholeheartedly and gratefully, the mission of the Rhodes Trust to fight the world's fight, to push forward with political theory and advocacy to a more inclusive democratic future."

Kathy Keyes, Ruckelshaus' AP English teacher and co-moderator of the Brain Team says, "Even though he sits four feet tall in his wheelchair, Jay Ruckelshaus stands taller than anyone I know. His determination to excel has taken an unanticipated and certainly unwelcome detour. Jay, though, has persevered. He works valiantly to strengthen his body; he continues to pursue academic excellence through his studies at Duke; he uses his voice to advocate for equity for those with disabilities.



“While Jay’s life has been forever changed by the accident and its effects on him, he refuses to let it define him or limit his pursuit of excellence. Indeed, in many ways Jay’s injury has sharpened his focus and given him a stronger sense of purpose. Instead of limiting him, Jay’s accident has inspired him to work harder and to think more critically. Like the Greeks of antiquity, Jay continues to strive for arête--excellence in all aspects of his life.”

Elliot F. Gerson, American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, made the announcement of the 32 names on November 21, 2015. According to the official news release from the Rhodes Trust in Vienna, Virginia, Rhodes Scholarships provide all expenses for two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England and may allow funding in some instances for four years. Gerson called the Rhodes Scholarships, “the oldest and best known award for international study, and arguably the most famous academic award available to American college graduates

As quoted in the journal, *Duke Today*, Duke University President Richard H. Brodhead, is quoted as saying, “For decades, the Rhodes Scholarship has been the highest honor awarded to undergraduates -- a recognition of extraordinary accomplishment and outstanding promise for the future.” Ruckelshaus is a political science major with a triple minor in philosophy, history and English. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, he is a recipient of the Duke Faculty Scholars Award, and was a Lord Rothermere Fellowship recipient for study in political theory at Oxford’s New College during summer 2013.

“Jay Ruckelshaus is a highly principled thought and action leader who will excel in his insatiable pursuit of scholarship and public service leadership,” said Anthony Brown, professor of the practice in Duke’s Sanford School of Public Policy in *Duke Today*. “While Jay’s intellect and accomplishments are stunning, his greatest strengths are his moral compass and his passionate commitment to a life of public service leadership.”

According to the same publication, at Duke, Ruckelshaus serves as a student member of the Duke University Board of Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee, and as a senator in Duke Student Government. He is also co-founder and co-editor-in-chief of “Eruditio,” an undergraduate humanities academic journal; co-editor-in-chief of “Duke Political Science Standard,” Duke’s undergraduate political science academic journal; and associate editor of the “Duke Political Review.”

In addition to being founder and president/CEO of Ramp Less Traveled, he advises the Shepherd Center advisory board on ways the rehabilitation hospital in Atlanta can improve the experiences of patient and their families. He is also a member of the U.S. International Council on Disability.

This summer Ruckelshaus worked as a Montgomery Research Fellow for the American Bar Foundation in Chicago, where he investigated the legal history of lunch counter sit-in movements during the Civil Rights era. The previous summer, as a research assistant under Herbert Kitschelt, George V. Allen Professor on International Relations at Duke, Ruckelshaus conducted research on ways of conceptualizing political party corruption around the world. He also has worked as an intern with the Indiana State Government, collaborating with senior staff in the Office of Governor Mike Pence to research policy focusing on mental health and the criminal justice system.

Ruckelshaus’s public advocacy work includes organizing a conference on higher education and accessibility that was attended by more than 80 students, administrators, academics and advocates from across the nation. He also is chair and director of operations for the Accessibility Matters Campaign, encouraging students to use only accessible routes around Duke’s campus for one day each April.



Ruckelshaus's articles have been published in a number of publications, and he presented his paper, "Identity, Autonomy, and the Essentiality of Disability: Reconsidering the Medical and Social Models," to the North Carolina Undergraduate Research Conference in November 2014.

Ruckelshaus plans to pursue a master's of philosophy degree in political theory at Oxford.