

# THE *Current*

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## **UC Santa Barbara Awards Lucas Ransom Scholarships in Honor of 2010 Shark Victim**

To honor a former student who wanted to change lives, but whose own life was tragically cut short, UC Santa Barbara has awarded its inaugural Lucas Ransom Memorial Scholarships. Two students will each receive \$4,000 in tuition assistance from a fund established by the Ransom family as a tribute to their son, who was a junior at UCSB when he was killed in a shark attack in October 2010.

The winners are James G. Stanfill, a chemistry major from Oxnard, and John Adlin Scott, a chemistry major from Redding. Both students are entering their senior years at UCSB, expecting to graduate in 2013. They received the awards on Friday -- the day before Ransom would have graduated -- in a ceremony attended by Ransom's family and several friends.

"This is so meaningful and poignant, because Lucas would have been graduating, but, also, this is a celebration," mother Candace Ransom said. "The dream that Lucas had to help others is in the hearts and minds of these students, and they will have the opportunity to continue on where Lucas didn't get to. I feel so proud and honored to see this scholarship finally come through. I just know that each of these students has so much to offer, and they are such inspirational people. They have a lot of gifts and talents, and we hope they will go out and make a big difference in other people's lives."

Scott, 27, first worked in construction and retail sales after graduating from high school. But with encouragement from his parents -- and motivation to leave behind the positions he found to be "intellectually unfulfilling" -- he enrolled at Shasta College, where he said he first discovered his talent for math and science. He earned his associate's degree, and landed on the Dean's List, in the spring of 2010. Scott subsequently transferred to UCSB, where his undergraduate research has included work on a project to improve MRI technology. Supporting himself while pursuing a bachelor of science degree, Scott has his sights set on graduate school, and aspires to be a teacher. A self-described believer in "honesty, dedication, and sacrifice," he is also a volunteer at a local physical therapy center. He says he enjoys "being in a position to help those around me."

Much like Ransom, Stanfill was a competitive water polo player and lifeguard before enrolling at UCSB. With undergraduate research including a project to develop anti-inflammatory compounds for potential pharmaceutical applications, he hopes to attend graduate school and pursue pharmaceutical research. Stanfill's ultimate goal is to blend his love of chemistry with the teaching skills he gleaned as a junior lifeguard instructor, and as a docent for a local nonprofit, to become a professor. His role as co-president of the UCSB Chemistry Club has included outreach at local middle schools to "get kids fired up about science." Characterizing himself as deriving true enjoyment from helping others, Stanfill says he "cannot get enough of teaching people new and useful ideas that they will carry with them as they aspire toward their goals."

Lucas Ransom was a competitive swimmer, water polo player, and lifeguard from Romoland, in Riverside County, where he graduated from Perris High School. He was 19, majoring in chemical engineering at UCSB, when he was fatally injured by a shark while body-boarding at Surf Beach, in northern Santa Barbara County.

The idea for the scholarship fund, Candace Ransom said Friday, was "an inspiration that came a few days after Lucas passed, and just tugged at my heart." With Lucas's plans for graduate school in pharmacology, and his passion for helping others, she said helping need-based students in the chemical sciences seemed an ideal way to realize his dreams.

"Lucas just couldn't believe he was accepted here, and that he was going to such an incredible school that he loved so dearly," she recalled. "He never thought he could afford to go here, so giving others that opportunity is really important."

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.