Stanley M. Zedalis Military Affiliated Student Scholarship  
2016 Honoree – Latoya Lucas

Established in 2015, the Stanley M. Zedalis Military Affiliated Student Scholarship is an annual grant of $500 designed to support a military affiliated student enrolled at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA), while honoring yearly the service of a disabled veteran of the US Armed Forces. The Scholarship is open to all graduate, undergraduate or high school students who meet the eligibility requirements. Award recipients are selected by the UNCSA Military Affiliated Student Task Force. An annual grant of $500 will be awarded to two recipients in 2016. The Scholarship is to provide money for educational supplies/costs.

The 2016 Scholarship honors Latoya Lucas.

Latoya Lucas has proven that a person can persevere with a little encouragement, resiliency and determination.

In 2003, just one month after the initial invasion, Latoya served with the 101st Airborne Division in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was severely wounded during an enemy ambush. As a polytrauma wounded soldier, Latoya sustained severe shrapnel wounds, traumatic brain injury, burns, and several other severe wounds. After a five-month hospitalization at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and nearly three years of rehabilitation, Latoya emerged an even more determined individual.

Latoya has always recognized that there is pride and honor in serving others. Whether serving as a soldier in the United States Army, or providing her time and expertise supporting various organizations and companies.

Since her retirement from the U.S. Army, Latoya has been fortunate to become a much sought after consultant, advocate, and motivational speaker in the United States. With resiliency, she believes that everyone has the ability to succeed when faced with life-changing obstacles. Latoya encourages others through the example of her own life story. She outlines the steps that she followed that ultimately helped her remain positive through her darkest time as a severely wounded service member as well as during her lengthy recovery process.

Latoya is a two-time appointee member of the United States Department of Veteran Affairs Committee on Women Veterans. The committee is responsible with advising the Secretary of Veteran Affairs about female veteran initiatives. Latoya has received numerous awards and recognition for her outstanding achievements in government, non-profit business, and volunteer activities. She is the recipient of the Tony Snow Public Service Award, ASALH
“Living Legacy Award”, Soroptimist International “Woman of Distinction” award and many more. Her military awards and decorations include the Purple Heart Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with two campaign service stars, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Combat-Action Badge.

Latoya graduated from the University of Northern Colorado Cum Laude with a Bachelors degree in Communication Studies. She is currently pursuing Postgraduate studies at Wake Forest University.

She is an award-winning author of the book, "The Immeasurable Spirit: Lessons of a Wounded Warrior about Faith and Perseverance."

For news articles which feature Latoya please visit:


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/14/women-at-war-unseen_n_1498291.html

http://www.greatcomebacks.com/News/NewsStory?ID=47