Army Veteran Awarded College Scholarship

Scholarship helps veteran achieve new post-military career

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For almost six years, Army veteran Jarrett McDonald was focused on his mission. Jarrett, a Military Police soldier, planned to use his criminal justice degree for a military career. After injuries sustained during a 2010 deployment to Iraq derailed those plans, the VFW and Sport Clips are helping him carve out a new future. Selected as a recipient of a $5,000 VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship", he is working toward his Master's degree in teaching at the prestigious John Hopkins University in Maryland.

After his injury, he realized that in order to still fight crime, the classroom would be a better place. He is now focused on using that passion to teach and improve inner city schools. As a middle-school teacher working with the Teach for America program, he wants to ensure all children grow up with the same opportunities his own son has.

Transitioning back into civilian life can be a daunting task for many service members. As a veteran, military experiences can set them apart from the pack. "Once employers and schools acknowledge the unique ability of a veteran to persevere, opportunity will knock," McDonald said in his scholarship application essay.

While his career goals have changed since leaving the military, his determination and focus on his mission have not. When discussing his future plans he said, "I would like to pursue a doctorate degree in education. My future goals are very limited – simply to commit my life to the children I teach and work with every day. If that is as a teacher, an administrator, or in a school on any side of the city, my goal will not change."

Jarrett joins the more than 140 service members and veterans who have been awarded post-secondary scholarships since the program's inception in 2013. "VFW is a great organization to partner with Sports Clips and to go the extra mile for veterans, like me, who still need school financial aid past their already earned benefits under the GI Bill," said Jarrett.

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The Help A Hero Scholarship was created to provide academic scholarships to service members and veterans in the hopes of easing their transition back to civilian life without incurring a large amount of student loan debt. Click here to find out more about the scholarship and apply!