

Governors State University

OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship

Newsroom

Marketing and Communications

8-4-2020

From GSU to Peace Corps and Back to GSU

Office of Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://opus.govst.edu/newsroom>

University Park, IL,
August
04,
2020

From GSU to Peace Corps and Back to GSU



Athanasios "Tommy" Kolovos ('19, Anthropology and Sociology), [2018 GSU Lincoln Laureate](#) and [2019 Commencement speaker](#), has returned from Peace Corps Madagascar to [Governors State University](#) to pursue a [Masters of Art in Political and Social Justice Studies](#). The newest addition to his list of stellar accomplishments? The B. Chambers fund of the National Association of Black and White Men Together Scholarship.

The fund was established as a "call to arms" for young, mindful innovators and seeks to award outstanding LGBT students.

"We are living in a truly powerful moment in history where individuals are questioning how their intersectionality relates to their relationship with the state, which is so important when we consider societal inequalities that have been plaguing the United

States for generations! The scholarship offered me an opportunity to join a community of outstanding and intelligent men that are looking to ask questions like this."

GSU Newsroom: What brought you back to GSU?

Kolovos: I was evacuated from Peace Corps Madagascar mid-March because of the pandemic this year and had to make a new game plan. A majority of Eastern African volunteers were re-located to Ethiopia to wait for a plane to bring us back to the United States. It was there that I made the decision to go back to GSU for my graduate studies. As a first-generation undergraduate student, I had received wonderful support from faculty and staff. I was also extremely impressed with the new Political and Social Justice Studies program, and how relevant the coursework was for my future ambitions. I am beyond ecstatic to be a GSU Jaguar again!

GSU Newsroom: Why PSJS?

Kolovos: I am studying for my M.A. in Political and Social Justice Studies. It is one of GSU's newer graduate programs and it's an extremely unique social justice approach not only captivates the foundational values of our institution but, it is relevant in today's world. I am aiming to graduate by summer 2021.

GSU Newsroom: How did you hear about the scholarship and what does it mean to you to win it?

Kolovos: I first learned about The B. Chambers fund of the National Association of Black and White Men Together through one of my GSU mentors and role model, Dr. Phyllis West. I was a part of Dr. West and Dr. Nicole Koonce's Global Brigades trip to Panama back in January 2019, which is the motivating event that persuaded me to join the U.S. Peace Corps. The scholarship means a lot to me mainly due to the unique events with racial relations we are seeing in the United States.

GSU Newsroom: What's next for you?

Kolovos: I have a few different ideas in the works! Currently, I am working on my application to *The Mitchell Scholarship*, and if I win that I will study peace studies in Ireland starting September 2021. If I am not selected to be a Mitchell Scholar, I will continue my service in the United States Peace Corps and re-apply as a volunteer. Hopefully I can take my graduate studies and all I will learn this year back to Madagascar!