



CUTLINE: VP of Enrollment and Workforce Innovation, Amy McClellan (left), SSCC President, Dr. Nicole Roades (left center), SSCC Student, Zaylee Arrington (right center), and PTK Advisor, Sam Ginn (right)

Arrington Named 2026 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholar

Southern State student Zaylee Arrington, of Highland County, has been named a 2026 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholar and will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Arrington's goal is to graduate high school with her Associate of Arts degree. She hopes to continue her college education to study psychology and neurology, with the possibility of pursuing brain and mental health research. She remains open to where her interests may lead.

The Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholarship Program helps new Phi Theta Kappa members defray educational expenses while enrolled in associate degree programs. Scholars are encouraged to assume leadership roles by participating in Society programs and are selected based on scholastic achievement, community service, and leadership potential.

Above all, Arrington's personal goal is to stay true to herself. She hopes to embrace every part of being human—being emotional, confused, happy, and imperfect—while pursuing her dreams. As she looks toward her future, Arrington encourages others to be patient with themselves and recognize the importance of avoiding burnout. "The most important thing in building your success," she stated, "is knowing who you truly are, with or without that success."

Arrington shares two quotes that inspire her: Queen Lili‘uokalani’s “Never cease to act because you fear you may fail” and her papa’s “Life is good,” one of her greatest inspirations.

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation provides funding for the scholarships, with a portion earmarked for members who are veterans or active members of the United States military. Additional donations to the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation support multiple Global Leaders of Promise Scholarships earmarked for international students.

“The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation has a long history of providing financial assistance to outstanding students at community colleges,” said Jane Hale Paulsen, President of the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation. “We are proud to partner with Phi Theta Kappa to make it possible for more deserving students to achieve their educational goals and support tomorrow’s leaders of the global community.”

The funds provided by the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation not only aid college completion but also give students the opportunity to engage in Society programs and develop leadership skills to become future leaders in their communities.

“Research shows that Phi Theta Kappa members are four times more likely to complete a college degree than their peers,” said Amanda Karpinski Gorman, Executive Director of the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation. “The Leaders of Promise Scholarships recognize students for what they have achieved already and ensure that financial need isn’t an obstacle to achieving their academic goals.”

Sam Ginn serves as PTK Advisor for Southern State and is responsible for recruitment of new members, accompanying students to meetings/conventions, mentoring Chapter officers, and assisting them with the development of leadership skills and fundraising activities. “Zaylee exemplifies what I love about our Phi Theta Kappa chapter,” Ginn stated. “She conducts herself with understated confidence and graceful professionalism. Her future is truly promising.”

“I am thrilled to congratulate Zaylee on being selected as a recipient of the prestigious Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise scholarship,” said SSCC President Nicole Roades. “It is always rewarding to see community college students recognized for their academic accomplishments, leadership, and service. On behalf of Southern State, I extend my sincere congratulations to Zaylee and wish her continued success as she pursues her educational goals.”

About Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa is the first honor society recognizing the academic achievement of students at associate degree-granting colleges and helping them to grow as scholars and leaders. The Society is made up of more than 4.4 million members and nearly 1,250 chapters in 11 countries, with approximately 220,000 active members in the nation’s colleges. Learn more at www.ptk.org.

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