

## Xenia High School Scholarship Information Sheet – Updated Feb. 1, 2022

Name of Scholarship: Kenneth Thornhill Colbert Memorial Scholarship (1977 XHS grad)

Contact person: Katharine (Kathy) Colbert Kraeck, sister (1980 XHS grad)

Address: 1621 S. Crescent Blvd., Yardley, PA 19067

Email address: [kkraeck@live.com](mailto:kkraeck@live.com)

Phone: Home 215-321-9604. Cell 267-391-6320

Application required: Yes

Who Selects: Donor's family

Amount: \$1000

Payment made by: Katharine Colbert Kraeck on behalf of the Kraeck Family

Where payment is to be sent: to recipient's college

General Information: To be awarded to a Black or multi-racial XHS senior who plans to pursue a four-year college degree.

Two Requirements:

(1) Please elaborate on one of the following prompts in 300-500 words.

1. What is one hope -- big or small -- you have for yourself, your family, or your community? Why?
2. What is something about your hometown of Xenia that has shaped you? How would you try or hope to change Xenia for the better?
3. What is the most impactful lesson you've learned outside of the classroom? What impact did it leave?
4. What is something you've learned about yourself during your high school years?
5. What is something you've created -- big or small -- that you are proud of? Why?

(2) Please submit a teacher recommendation.

Additional Information: I would like to include a bio of my brother (attached), to be included in a program and/or shared at the awards ceremony, and to also be given to the scholarship recipient.

### **Kenneth Thornhill Colbert Memorial Scholarship**

Kenneth Thornhill Colbert's roots in Xenia go back for generations. His grandfather, Wilbur Thornhill, worked with his father Albert operating a sawmill and building many homes in Xenia in the early 1900's. The sawmill was later converted to manufacture furniture, where the family built sturdy oak desks, tables and kitchen cabinets.

During the mid to late 1900's, until his death at the age of 88, Wilbur ran a retail furniture business from this same building, where he had no cash register, accepted only cash and checks, and closed the store for one hour each day while he went home for lunch. The building still stands today just off West Third Street in the Water District of Xenia. Thornhill Avenue is named for the family. Wilbur was active in the community and served as mayor of Xenia during the 1950's.

Ken's grandmother Corinne was a third-grade schoolteacher in Xenia and met Wilbur when she was living at a boarding house on Rogers Street. Their daughter, Helen Thornhill Colbert, was born in the home on Thornhill Ave. She was a good student, a musician, and an athlete at a time when there were few female athletes in schools.

Kenneth Thornhill Colbert went to Spring Hill Elementary across the street from his childhood home. In fact, on the last day of school each year, the class would be invited over for a picnic and games in the front yard. He went to Central Junior High School and was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade when the 1974 tornado struck Xenia destroying and damaging several schools. He spent his high school years going to school in the morning from 7:30 to 12:30 at Warner Junior High School, and then all junior high students attended from 12:40 to 5:50 for three years while the "new" Xenia High School was being built. At XHS, Ken was a student scholar, excelling in academics while earning a Varsity letter in football, basketball and baseball. He was quick, smart, witty and funny.

Ken graduated from Xenia High School in 1977, attended Columbia University in New York City, majored in political science, and graduated in 1981. He worked for an Ohio Congressman in Washington DC and for the Ford Motor Company in Memphis. Unfortunately, he succumbed to lung cancer at the early age of 41 in 2001.

Throughout his life, and including his years at Xenia High School, Ken was an ardent and vocal supporter of social justice issues, encouraging equal access and opportunities for people of color and diverse backgrounds. We would like to honor Ken by increasing equity, in some small measure, toward higher education with this scholarship.

The scholarship is given by Katharine Colbert Kraeck, 1980 graduate of XHS, and her family who live in Yardley, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia.