



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GVSU student awarded statewide scholarship for future local leaders from Michigan Townships Association

Delta Charter Township, MI – The Michigan Townships Association has named Baldwin Township resident Doug Ferguson as a 2025 Robert R. Robinson Memorial Scholarship. The annual award aims to encourage today's students to pursue a career in public service.

Ferguson is pursuing his master's in Public Administration, with a concentration in State, Regional and Local Government, from Grand Valley State University (GVSU). With aspirations to serve as a public administrator following his graduation in April 2026, he said his goals in that role include "encouraging public and civic engagement, establishing trust between community and local government, providing a safe/exciting place for families to call home, and embracing/incorporating climate-forward solutions into local operations and planning."

"A career in public service is a special responsibility," Ferguson noted. "Local governments not only ensure the public resources are put to the most efficient use, but more importantly they help curate community connections. At a time when humanity is becoming increasingly isolated and politics are becoming increasingly hostile, local governments bear the responsibility and the opportunity to help connect our neighbors and focus on the things that truly matter to us. Citizens work hard for what they have, and ensuring that everyone has access to the benefits of our democracy is essential to harnessing growth, building community, and living well."

Through his academic, personal and professional experiences, Ferguson has fostered numerous opportunities to serve Michigan's communities and residents. He has worked as an election inspector and precinct chair in his hometown of Baldwin Township (Iosco Co.) since 2018, and has also served as an election inspector for the City of Grand Rapids during the academic year. After earning a degree in Music Education from the University of Michigan in 2022, Ferguson served as band director for Clarenceville Schools for two years, and was also music director for the Alternative Education Academy in Tawas City while pursuing his bachelor's degree.

At GVSU, Ferguson serves as secretary/communications director for the university's chapter for the International City/County Management Association and is a graduate assistant for the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office.

Ferguson's community involvement and future goals made him an ideal candidate for the Robinson Scholarship. "MTA created this scholarship to honor the legacy of long-time township advocate and past MTA Executive Director Robert Robinson by fostering future local leaders," said Marilyn Strickland, Scholarship Committee chair and Newton Township (Mackinac Co.) treasurer, who also serves as MTA District 4 director. "Doug has demonstrated a strong commitment to both his education, and to working toward a career serving Michigan's residents. We wish the very best in his future endeavors in public service."

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Michigan Townships Association awards its Robinson Scholarship to future local leader

Delta Charter Township, MI – The Michigan Townships Association has named Zoann Hallam, who serves Laketown Township (Allegan Co.) as its deputy clerk, as a 2025 Robert R. Robinson Memorial Scholarship. The annual award aims to encourage today’s students to pursue a career in public service.

Hallam is no stranger to serving others, and serving her community. For more than a decade, she has served in various capacities in emergency services roles, starting as a student at Hope College when she worked as a safety communications dispatcher/operator. She then spent six years as a 9-1-1 dispatcher for Ottawa County, and has been a firefighter/emergency services technician with Graafschap Fire Department since 1996, serving Laketown Township and portions of Fillmore Township (Allegan Co.).

“I have dedicated my career and academic pursuits to strengthening local government and public safety, focusing on making a meaningful impact at the municipal level,” said Hollam, who is now pursuing a master’s degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University.

Hallam’s community involvement and future goals made her an ideal candidate for the Robinson Scholarship. “MTA created this scholarship to honor the legacy of long-time township advocate and past MTA Executive Director Robert Robinson by fostering future local leaders,” said Marilyn Strickland, Scholarship Committee chair and Newton Township (Mackinac Co.) treasurer, who also serves as MTA District 4 director. “Zoey has demonstrated a strong commitment to both his education, and to working toward a career serving Michigan’s residents. We wish the very best in her future endeavors in public service.”

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