“I have lived on my own and supported myself for over a decade….I received my diploma from high school at age 17. Due to personal circumstances, I was not able to start college at 18 with my peers and worked as much as possible. At times I have been homeless and jobless, but in 2006 I finally started a stable job. I returned to school at age 29. At first I was embarrassed about my late start and conscious that I was older than most incoming freshmen. What really made me feel a part of the ASU community and my classes was my ability to take on assignments, handle the workload, and seriously put forth the necessary effort and critical thought needed to do well. I have a 4.0 GPA and have made the Dean’s List two years in a row.

My professors have supported my goal of going to graduate school in pursuit of an M.A. in English and if possible, a doctorate in Literature. I would like to eventually teach at a higher learning institution. Unfortunately, with the downturn in the economy, I lost my job in May 2010. The loss of my job hurt me financially. In order to pay for tuition, I have taken out loans and received grants, but still came up short. The Phi Beta Kappa scholarship has greatly assisted me in paying for tuition, books and some of my housing expenses.”

“Lately money has been awfully tight in my family, thus making it hard to accomplish everything that I want to academically. A couple of years ago, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time. Because of all of the medical treatments, it has been incredibly difficult for her to continue working, thus no longer bringing in the same income she was had before retiring. She is my biggest inspiration and I know I would not be the person I am today without her beautiful influence. My father, too, had to retire at an earlier age than he had anticipated due to medical issues. Because of the financial strain that has been placed on my family in such a relatively short amount of time, receiving the Phi Beta Kappa Association has helped relieve some of the economic tension that is associated with attending college. I am quite sure that with my continuing perseverance along with financial aid, I can make my dreams come true.”