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Hudson senior gets national scholarship

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Jake Robinson, 18, will graduate from Hudson High School and attend Texas A&M in the fall with the help of a \$20,000 scholarship from the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans. The university will match the scholarship.

Jake Robinson could be considered an above-average high school student: he's the Hudson High School salutatorian, he plays basketball and tennis, and he's a member of student council, National Honor Society, Christians in Action and Key Club.

But the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans saw something even more remarkable in the young man, and named him one of the 2010 Horatio Alger National Scholars.

Among the 104 students to receive a \$20,000 scholarship from the association, 11 professional men and women were honored, including former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Only five Texas students received the honor, including Robinson.

Founded in 1947, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans honors the achievements of outstanding individuals who have succeeded in spite of adversity, according to the association's public relations official.

Robinson, the fourth child of five, said he grew up with an alcoholic father — a struggle he has carried for years.

His essay focused on the adversity he had overcome and compared himself with another member of the distinguished association, Colleen Barrett, president emerita of Southwest Airlines, who said her father was also an alcoholic and her mother was a stronghold in her life.

"Despite everything, my mother always pushed me and my siblings even when we didn't want to," Robinson said. "It all turned out for the better."

Along with the scholarship, Robinson was flown to Washington, D.C., an all-expense paid trip, to receive his award April 7-11.

"It was the first time I had ever flown," Robinson said. "I've never been that far away without family."

Robinson spent time with other scholarship recipients touring the nation's capitol and meeting the likes of CNN anchor and talk radio host Lou Dobbs, actor Tom Selleck and Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas.

"Clarence Thomas was a really cool guy; very inspirational and had a very positive attitude," Robinson said. "The different speakers each day talked a lot about our future and to persevere through college and life and never give up."

Robinson plans to attend Texas A&M in the fall and major in electrical engineering. The university has promised to match his \$20,000 scholarship.

The Horatio Alger Association also gave each student a Dell laptop to begin their college careers.