



For Immediate Release  
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## **TUCSON TEEN AWARDED \$25,000 SCHOLARSHIP FOR BIRD CONSERVATION RESEARCH**

### **Finnegan McGill Named 2025 Davidson Fellows Scholarship Winner**

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**TUCSON, Ariz.** — Finnegan McGill, 17, of Tucson, has been awarded a \$25,000 Davidson Fellows Scholarship for his science project, *A-BiRD: Automated Bird Recognition Device — Revolutionizing Ornithological Research for Global Bird Conservation*. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship is one of the nation's most prestigious honors for students 18 and younger. McGill's award is part of the program's 25th anniversary year, which is granting a record \$825,000 to 21 students nationwide.

"Being selected as a Davidson Fellow is an incredible honor and a milestone in my academic journey," McGill said. "More than anything, this award affirms my commitment to science, innovation and environmental stewardship. It means that the hundreds of hours I've spent researching, coding and testing in the field have made a real contribution to a problem that matters."

McGill designed A-BiRD, a machine learning-powered field unit that autonomously identifies bird species by their songs and determines call direction. Tested during the fall migration, the device logged more than 21,000 verified birdsong events across 98 species. Scalable and low cost, it provides consistent, high-quality data that can support long-term conservation efforts worldwide.

A senior at Tanque Verde High School, McGill is also active in community service as a certified therapy dog handler and animal rescue volunteer. He is a varsity athlete, a musician with the Southern Arizona Youth Symphony and student body president at his school.

"For 25 years, the Davidson Fellows Scholarship has recognized some of the most remarkable research undertaken by young people in the nation," said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. "The 2025 class of Fellows continues to raise the bar for achievement as we celebrate this milestone year, marked by innovation, perseverance and the hundreds of alumni whose work continues to make a lasting difference in their fields and communities."

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers college scholarships to students 18 or younger, who have completed significant projects that have the potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$10.7 million in scholarship funds to 469 students since its inception in 2001, and has been named one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships by [U.S. News & World Report](#). It is a program of the Davidson

Institute, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Reno, Nev. that supports profoundly gifted youth.

### **About the Davidson Institute**

Founded by Bob Davidson in 1999, the Davidson Institute recognizes, nurtures and supports profoundly intelligent young people, and provides opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive difference. The Institute offers support through a number of programs and services, including the Davidson Fellows Scholarship and the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](#). For more information about the 2025 Davidson Fellows, please visit: [DavidsonFellows.org](#).

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*High-resolution photos are available at*  
[DavidsonFellows.org](#)