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# **CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CCSF student Thomas Chupein named a Jack Kent Cooke scholar**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, April 26, 2005 — City College of San Francisco's Thomas P. Chupein is one of 25 students nationwide to earn a scholarship of up to \$30,000 from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to attend a four-year college or university.

"The Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship for Transfer Students is the most prestigious honor for community college students intending to transfer," says Dr. Philip R. Day, Jr., Chancellor of City College of San Francisco, adding, "this honor speaks volumes to Thomas' commitment to learning, social justice and global understanding. Needless to say, all of us at City College of San Francisco are incredibly proud of him."

Chupein, 34, plans to transfer to George Washington University, Washington, DC, and major in International Development/Middle Eastern Studies. His career interests include environmentally sustainable development in poor countries. His other interests include Buddhism and global travel.

Traveling alone through five continents, from the frosty Arctic to Sahara heat, Chupein found his life transformed. He gave up a successful career as a beauty salon executive and went back to school to prepare himself for a life of international service and activism on behalf of the world's most vulnerable people. He has since earned a perfect 4.0 GPA at CCSF, winning a handful of scholarships and tutoring fellow students along the way. He also earned a certificate for teaching English as a Second Language and finished in the top five percent of his class during studies at the University of Cambridge in London.

His new path grew out of that two-year journey to more than 30 countries. "Although it brought me to some of the most exquisite places on Earth, this wasn't a holiday," Thomas says. "I saw the devastation of war in the recently ravaged Kosovo and Bosnia. I saw the desperate conditions of refugees in Beirut and the grinding poverty of Georgia and Kurdistan. The inequities I saw solidified my commitment to human rights and social and economic justice."

Chupein intends to seek a degree in international development, go on to post-graduate study, and then work with a non-governmental organization that supports culturally and environmentally appropriate development. "Success is simply defined by the compassion and generosity with which I live," he says. He is currently traveling, following his completion of a three-month internship with Grameen Bank, the pioneer of microfinance development.

The Undergraduate Transfer Jack Kent Cooke Scholars come from community colleges in 18 states. They were selected from among 791 nominees by 519 community and two-year colleges across the country. There is no larger scholarship, or one involving such intense competition, available to the more than 6.5 million students now attending US community colleges for credit.

The Foundation created the program to "make sure financial obstacles do not prevent high-achieving community college students from advancing their education and pursuing their dreams," said Matthew J. Quinn, the Foundation's executive director.