

Heart of a Tiger: A scholarship, a calling, and a bright future

7/2/26

By Tisa Mason

HAYS, Kan. - Meet Natalie Timbrook. Her college journey is full of hard work, big moves, and a strong passion for helping others. Natalie grew up in the small town of Ney, Ohio, but she decided to take a big leap. She started her college adventure at Colby Community College (CCC) in Kansas, with her sights set on transferring to Fort Hays State University (FHSU) to finish her degree in agribusiness.

Growing up in a rural community, Natalie has been surrounded by agriculture her entire life. That's why she decided on a career in agriculture.

"I raised market goats all my years in 4-H, which is where I would say my love for agriculture started, and growing up around animals has taught me lessons that shaped who I am today," she shared. "I have so much respect for everyone who works in agriculture because it is the backbone of our country, and there is no other industry I would rather be in."

While studying at CCC, Natalie didn't just spend her time reading textbooks. She wanted to make a real difference in her community. She rolled up her sleeves and worked closely with Dr. Seth Carter, the president of CCC, on all kinds of volunteer projects. Together, they helped run local blood drives, assisted with a fun church carnival, and even picked up paintbrushes to give the campus chapel a fresh look.

Because of her kind heart and great grades, Dr. Carter surprised her with a very special honor: the FHSU Community College President Transfer Scholarship.

"I felt honored when Dr. Carter talked to me about it," Natalie said with a smile. "I am grateful that he chose me for this scholarship. It helps with my transition to Fort Hays State.

"It also feels special because this is a new program and I am excited to be one of the first scholarship recipients."

Natalie shared that Dr. Carter is one of the busiest people she has ever met and one of the best examples of a true leader she has seen.

"He is always searching for new opportunities and working on projects to better CCC, and you can tell he cares about his work," she said. "No matter how many different things he was juggling, though, he found time to do smaller things like painting the campus chapel and going door-to-door collecting cans for a food drive with the presidential scholars."

Dr. Carter had wonderful things to say about Natalie, too. "Natalie is an exceptional student," he shared. "Her intelligence, character, and dedication make her truly deserve this scholarship."

FHSU has partnered with every community college in Kansas to help ensure that students who need and deserve additional financial assistance receive it.

“When students graduate from FHSU, we know them well and understand their unique circumstances, said Dr. Dennis King, FHSU associate vice president for student affairs/enrollment leadership. “The FHSU Community College President Transfer Scholarship was designed to leverage those relationships by partnering with community college presidents and their staff to identify and support students who would benefit most from additional financial assistance.”

Natalie’s story is a perfect example of something huge that just happened at Fort Hays State. FHSU was recently given a massive honor called the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

This special award celebrates universities that do an amazing job partnering with local communities to make the world a better place. In fact, FHSU is now one of only 11 institutions in the entire world to hold two of these special leadership and community badges!

FHSU Provost Jill Arensdorf explained that this big award proves FHSU does more than give tests and lectures. “We don’t just teach; we develop engaged, global citizen leaders who drive positive and impactful change,” she said.

Students like Natalie are exactly what that means. By working hard at a community college and preparing to bring her talents to FHSU, Natalie is helping to strengthen the bond between different schools and communities in Kansas. She is studying agriculture, which is incredibly important for the farms, businesses, and families in our region.

This summer, Natalie is on a brand-new adventure far away from the Midwest. She is working at a landscaping internship on beautiful Hilton Head Island in South Carolina! Instead of the Kansas plains, she is surrounded by the ocean and palm trees.

Natalie’s day usually starts at 6:45 a.m. because of how hot the afternoons are at Hilton Head. A typical day might involve meetings, shadowing managers, or working with different departments outside.

“Our workday ends around 3 p.m., and I like to use the evenings to walk down to the beach, explore the island, and try different foods from the many local restaurants,” she said. “I love being here, and the opportunity to work in such a beautiful place has been a huge blessing.”

With a big scholarship in her pocket and a summer of outdoor learning under her belt, Natalie is ready for her next big step at Fort Hays State this fall. She isn't just a new student joining Tiger Nation. She is a true leader, ready to change the world for the better!