

My name is Garrett Miller and I am applying for the June Nelson Memorial Scholarship.

Growing up in a commercial fishing family, I have spent nearly every summer on a commercial fishing vessel. My love and dedication to the commercial fishing industry is above any other. By the time I was 18 months old, my parents knew that I would be a commercial fisherman. My mother tells a story, from when I was about one and a half to two years old, when I was out fishing with my father. My father apparently had a lot of trust in me, because at such a young age, he would let me run the deck's hydraulics by him just showing me hand signals for right, left, up, down, and stop. I would be standing out on deck in my shorts, T-Shirt, and my little Extra-tuff boots, getting fish slime and jellyfish in my eyes, without blinking, just waiting for those signals. Usually jellyfish burns your eyes quite painfully, but my Mom says my father said that I did not have a care in the world of it. These stories mean a lot to me, as my father's commercial fishing vessel capsized when I was 6 and he did not survive. It is stories like these that I have been hearing/creating my entire life so far, first with my father, and now with my uncle and grandfather. All of these stories and actions bring me that much closer to my goals. It didn't matter if I was boating out on the ocean, or if I was walking along a small stream, I always had a fishing rod in the water. My love and passion for fishing was brought onto me from my family. My uncle, father, and grandfather, all have been in the commercial fishing industry for many years. My grandfather owned several vessels, which he fished over the course of 50 years. My father, Ryan G. Miller, fished for about 20 years, until his fishing career ended. On October 14, 2005, the F/V MRS capsized, in which my father was deceased. I was only 6 at the time. My family was very devastated, but this accident did not crush our passion for the fishing industry, it only made us respect the waters of Southeast Alaska more than we ever have. I now fish with my uncle, who has been a father figure to me since the accident. I started fishing for him full time in the summer of 2011, where I Dungeness Crabbed and Salmon Purse Seined with him. That was the start of another generation of commercial fishermen in my family.

The commercial fishing industry in Alaska helps society in many different ways, but there are a few key ways on how commercial fishing helps my community healthy and prosperous. First of all, fishing provides many different jobs all year around, whether you are fishing for salmon in the summer, or fishing shrimp and halibut in the fall. Commercial fishing also creates other jobs that do not require you to be out on the

water. There are jobs at the local fish processors in Wrangell, where there can be a couple hundred employees in the summer. There are also jobs at the Wrangell Boatyard, where many fishing vessels are hauled out for maintenance. The Wrangell Boat Shop is another business that is supported by commercial fishing vessels needing maintenance after a long hard year of battling the elements. Another job that is supported by commercial fishing are the Wrangell Harbors and the Wrangell Harbor Department. Commercial fishing is a large asset to the Wrangell community both socially and economically.

The main goal that I have had in life for as long as I can remember, is that I always want to live life to the fullest and be all I can be as a captain of a commercial fishing vessel. That has been my forever dream and now that I am eighteen years old, it is all starting to fall into place. I am becoming more in tune with the industry, but with all the captains and politics, which are a big part of the industry as well. I have already recommended a few of my friends job opportunities, when other captains came to me asking if there was anyone I could recommend to be a good clean crew member. This has shown me that I am proving myself to the other captains that I am reliable and trustworthy. Commercial fishing is my dream, passion, and my way of life.