September 10, 2024

Dear NJ-NY Metro SFPE Members,

Thank you for awarding me the James R. O'Neil/W. Robert Powers Joint Scholarship! I am extremely excited to receive this award as it will greatly aid me in my journey to becoming a fire protection engineer.

Currently I am a senior at the University of Maryland pursuing a bachelor's of science in fire protection engineering. Last semester I saw a substantial improvement in my studies, finishing on the dean's list. In early 2025 I plan on taking the FE exam and in May I plan on graduating from the university. This semester I am the social chair for the UMD SFPE Chapter, teaching fellow for ENFP101 (Intro to FPE), and a student ambassador for the Department of Fire Protection Engineering. I am extremely involved in the fire protection community at school and help organize and lead many events.

This past summer I had the opportunity to intern with NAVSEA, supporting the fire protection systems of the entire naval fleet. As a team of engineers we troubleshooted, programmed, and wired conventional and addressable fire detection systems aboard ships. I also researched potential virtual backside firewatch systems that could be deployed and implemented on ships. This is a portable fire detection and suppression system that could monitor the backside of an enclosure. My work contributed to the safety of the entire Navy and gave me a strong hands-on experience in FPE.

I would like to thank you again for awarding me with the James R. O'Neil/W. Robert Powers Joint Scholarship. I appreciate the support of all the members and look forward to meeting more at future events!

Thank you,

Robert McCandless

Robert (RJ) McCandless