

Dear Class of '55,

I was exceedingly honored to have been a recipient of the Class of '55 Award. Thank you very much for making this trip to Rome possible for me. I am very grateful of your support in my endeavor to broaden my educational and life experiences.

I knew that this trip to Rome would be amazing; I knew it would take my breath away. As expected, the trip was astounding, all the monuments, ruins and paintings, outstanding. However, there was a single instance that stood out and will always be in my thoughts. It was seeing Caravaggio's Medusa, painted upon a rounded shield in the Uffizi Gallery of Florence. I had seen the picture numerous times in class, indeed I had even taken a Baroque art class centered around the picture, nonetheless, the painting had never really held my attention – my respect, of course – but my interest, not as much. However, on seeing the real thing I was overwhelmed; this was the “wow” moment of the trip for me. Everything made sense - paintings, sculptures, I finally felt like I understood art. All the history I had learned and all the facts I had forgotten about art history suddenly came back to me. It's a hard moment to explain, but it will probably one of the most incredible moments I'll ever have had. I truly believe I understand and appreciate art much more than I ever did before.

Class of '55, I would like to thank you for your help. I knew I would enjoy the voyage, and I knew it would be a trip I would never forget, but I didn't realize the full impact it would make upon me as a scholar and a person. It's true that I have still much to learn about art and its history, but I feel like I am finally ready to understand and interpret art in my own way and not just regurgitate facts. I feel extremely privileged to have been a recipient of this award, it has helped me in more ways than words can express. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Janet Northey