

Fred Russell-Grantland Rice Scholarship in Sports Journalism, 2023–2024



Ty James Levine

College of Arts and Science, Class of 2027

Undeclared

Westport, CT

“My family and I are beyond grateful for this scholarship. I am so appreciative of your generous donations and will use this opportunity to continue to pursue my interest in sports media.”

Tell us about your background (where you're from, interests, family). Why did you choose Vanderbilt, and what influenced your decision?

I was born in New York City and grew up in Westport, Connecticut. During high school, I played for my school's basketball team and was heavily involved with the media program. I spent all four of my years doing a weekly radio show and calling football and girls' basketball games. My involvement with the program evolved into sports writing for social media, creating a reality TV show called "Squash the Beef," and doing a radio show about philosophy entirely in Spanish. After visiting schools in the summer going into my senior year of high school, Vanderbilt stood out as my top choice. Vanderbilt's emphasis on involvement in Nashville's community and extracurricular participation was a perfect fit for the type of student I am. What was most important to me in choosing a school was the opportunity to explore my interests seriously and build relationships with people who are looking to do the same. These factors combined with the addition of this scholarship make Vanderbilt the perfect place for me to spend the next four years.

How did Vanderbilt's financial aid affect your decision to attend?

This scholarship has been a huge blessing for my family and greatly lightens the burden of paying for a private university. After I was accepted into Vanderbilt by early decision, I spent my winter searching for merit scholarship opportunities. When I discovered this scholarship, I immediately thought it could be a great fit. After going through the application process and being awarded the scholarship, Vanderbilt became the best possible fit financially along with its academic compatibility. Being awarded this scholarship for something I am so passionate about and being able to significantly lighten the financial burden of college is an amazing feeling and makes Vanderbilt the place to be.

What does a Vanderbilt education mean to you?

Vanderbilt's academic flexibility and unique course offerings make it such a special place to go to school. I already took a philosophy class called "Death and Dying" and look forward to taking classes like Spanish Business and Japanese Animation in the next few semesters. I have the opportunity to learn about niche subjects from professors who are extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the material. Outside of the classroom, Vanderbilt emphasizes getting involved in your interests. With an endless number of student organizations, professional opportunities, and ambitious peers, I do not doubt that Vanderbilt will lead me down a path of finding success doing something I am passionate about.

Are there student programs or activities that have significantly impacted you thus far and what programs or activities are you most excited to get involved with during your time at Vanderbilt?

Coming into this year, I knew that I wanted to continue being involved with radio. Immediately, I signed up for VandyRadio and went through training to create my weekly show called "Including but Not Limited to." As the name implies, it is a talk show where I talk about whatever is on my mind. I have been bringing in a friend as a guest each week and so far we have talked about sports, reviewed bottled water, and discussed the psychology behind maximizing your portions at Chipotle. Additionally, I have gone to some meetings for the sports business club, but the timing now conflicts with my radio show. I have also been rushing for Greek life this fall and meeting upperclassmen has also broadened my community.

What intrigues or excites you most about the Immersion experience graduation requirement?

The Immersion experience represents everything that I love so much about Vanderbilt. More than just sitting in a classroom, a Vanderbilt education prioritizes practical experience and knowledge. Fortunately, my visions (freshman orientation program) faculty advisor runs the Immersion program. She has highlighted the flexibility and space for creativity associated with the program. Studying abroad, pursuing an internship opportunity, or going freestyle and exploring a passion project will be an endlessly rewarding way to conclude my Vanderbilt experience.

How have you found a sense of belonging at Vanderbilt?

There is genuinely no better place for me to spend the next four years than Vanderbilt. In almost every aspect of my Vanderbilt experience, I have met people that I love and I have found a sense of community. Through my classes, living on Commons, and mutual friends I have found so many people that I have become close with. Living in a small town in Connecticut, it is crazy to think that one of my best friends is from Los Angeles. I have met so many people of different ages and backgrounds and I have found such a strong sense of belonging in this eclectic community.