In his 1931 book, *The Epic of America*, author James Truslow Adams stated that the American dream is “that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. A dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.”

Though those words were written almost a century ago, their message resonates with Bryan Davis, a freshman in management information systems and the first recipient of the College of Business Administration’s new American Dream Scholarship.

“My definition of the American dream is the ability to take nothing but your determination and use that to ignite your passion to arrive at a reward that is far greater than what you started with,” said Davis. “It’s about using the resources around you to improve not just yourself, but the community and society around you. The American dream is creating something greater than yourself with whatever it is you have.”

A native of Topeka, Davis grew up in a single-parent household, working 30 hours per week throughout high school in an effort to help make ends meet at home. Despite that heavy workload, he still managed to graduate from Topeka High School with a 3.9 GPA while also being heavily involved on campus. He was the president of the Black Student Union, active in the Youth Entrepreneur program and even founded a new club called M.A.L.E., or Men Achieving Lifelong Education.

“My mother always instilled in me that education is the key to opening whatever doors you find in your way,” said Davis. “During high school, I made sure to get as involved as possible, to get to know as many people as possible, so I could take in their different perspectives and backgrounds and learn from them.”

The drive for involvement didn’t stop once he stepped onto the K-State campus in August. In his first year in Manhattan, he has already gotten involved in the K-State Black Student Union, being named a delegate on the Big 12 Council for Black Student Government. He also took part in the MAPS Scholar program last summer and is an active member of the Multicultural Business Student Association and the CBA Professional Advantage program.

“When I visited Kansas State, the sense of community really drew me in,” Davis said. “The love that students have for one another and their drive to better themselves and those around them is something that I really admire.”

It is that drive to get involved and better himself through education that made Davis the ideal choice for the college’s first American Dream Scholarship.

“Bryan Davis is most deserving of the American Dream Scholarship,” said Andrae Desai, associate dean for academic administration and chair of the college’s scholarship committee. “With this scholarship, he is able to devote all of his time to academics and leadership activities without worrying about financial burdens. Bryan is a perfect example of the intent of this scholarship, and we thank our alumni for making his American dream possible.”

The American Dream Scholarship is funded by “Dream Teams” of 50 young alumni who each pledge $10 per month for four years. Through these donations, each team provides one College of Business Administration student with an annual scholarship for four years. According to Tim and Sue Regan, 1978 K-State graduates and the philanthropic mentors of the American Dream program, Davis’ scholarship is the first of many to be funded by the program.

“This scholarship is just as its name implies, to provide the American dream of a Kansas State University education to a student who would otherwise be unable to afford this valuable asset,” Tim Regan said. “I was the oldest of nine children from a family without the resources to pay for my college education, and I am eternally grateful for the scholarships I was able to receive that made it possible to obtain my American dream of a Kansas State education. With the help of other grateful alumni who’ve had similar help in achieving their dreams, we would like to create as many American Dream scholarships as possible for the next generation of K-Staters.”

That paying it forward mentality is something that is not lost on Davis.

“The fact that the scholarship is funded by young alumni means a lot to me, and I hope to be able to give back to it in the future,” Davis said. “It means opportunities for people like me and in situations like me, and I couldn’t be more grateful.”