

THE JOHN RICHARD TEMPLIN SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

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John Richard Templin

Founder and Settlor of the John Richard Templin Scholarship Trust

John Richard Templin was a distinguished engineer, horticulturist, business leader, and philanthropist whose enduring legacy continues through the John Richard Templin Scholarship Trust.

An American-born engineer who made New Zealand his home, Templin combined professional excellence with a deep commitment to the advancement of engineering, horticulture, education, and community development.

Through the establishment of the Trust in 1958, he sought to create opportunities for talented New Zealand graduates to gain international experience and return home equipped to contribute to the nation's development.

Establishment of the Trust



Engineering and horticulture were often described as Templin's "two loves." Recognising the value of education and international experience, he sought to create a lasting legacy that would support future generations after his lifetime.

This vision culminated in the creation of the John Richard Templin Scholarship Trust, established by deed on 18 March 1958. The Trust was designed to provide scholarships to promising New Zealand graduates in engineering and horticulture, enabling them to undertake advanced study, research, practical training, or professional development in North America.

Templin's status as an alumnus of Ohio State University influenced the Trust's original scholarship objectives, with Ohio State identified as a preferred institution. However, he deliberately ensured flexibility so that scholars could pursue opportunities at other approved institutions in the United States or Canada where appropriate.

Importantly, he viewed the scholarships not only as a means of advancing individual careers but also as a mechanism for strengthening New Zealand. Scholarship recipients were expected to return to New Zealand after completing their studies and apply the knowledge and skills acquired overseas for the benefit of their profession and the wider community.

Scholarship Entry Requirements

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

Academic Qualifications

Engineering Scholarships

- Have graduated from the University of Canterbury with a Bachelor of Engineering degree (or have qualified for the award of that degree); or
- Have been awarded a Diploma in Agricultural Engineering by Lincoln University.

Horticulture Scholarships

- Have been awarded a degree or diploma that includes plant botany or horticultural science by Lincoln University, the University of Canterbury, or an equivalent horticultural or botanical qualification.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be a British or New Zealand citizen and;
- Be under 30 years of age at the date the scholarship is awarded.

Selection Committee

Applications open on 1 October and close on 31 October each year.

After applications close, they are assessed by the Scholarship Selection Committee.

The Committee reviews each application and selects candidates who best demonstrate academic merit, potential, and alignment with the scholarship's purpose. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend a virtual interview to further discuss their application.

Following the interview process, the Selection Committee determines the scholarship recipient(s).

The scholarship is valued at approximately NZD \$60,000, with the final award amount subject to adjustment to reflect changes in living costs.

Successful recipients are expected to commence their approved programme within 12 months of selection and make the most of the opportunity through dedicated study, research, or professional development.

In keeping with the Trust's vision, recipients are required to return to New Zealand on completion of their scholarship and contribute their knowledge and experience to their profession for a minimum of two years.

Recipients may also be asked to provide progress or completion reports to the Trustees.

Ethan Thomson

University: New York University, New York

Degree: Master of Science

Specialty: Computer Science

Duration of Study: 2 years

What inspired you to apply for the scholarship, and how did receiving it make it possible for you to pursue your overseas studies?

Having previously completed a PhD in Earthquake Engineering, I realized my true passion lay in computer science and data analytics. Receiving the scholarship made this career pivot possible, relieving the financial burden when an MSc in CS at NYU felt financially daunting and allowing me to fully commit to translating my engineering background into computer science.

Can you describe a memorable experience from your time studying overseas and how it influenced your personal or professional development?

Living in New York City while studying at NYU was transformative. Taking deep learning at a world-class research university placed me on the cutting edge of research, while balancing intense coursework with the vibrant, fast-paced rhythm of Manhattan pushed me outside my comfort zone. Immersing myself in the quintessential NYC lifestyle, from late nights near Washington Square to the energy of the local tech scene.

How has the scholarship and your overseas education impacted your career since graduating?

The scholarship completely reshaped my career trajectory. Fresh out of NYU, my CS degree launched my career in tech startups as a data engineer. Over the past five years, that strong foundation has allowed me to thrive in a number fast-paced startup environments, where I constantly work on challenging and rewarding problems which utilize my research and engineering backgrounds every day.

Looking back, what lasting impact has the scholarship had on your life, and what would you say to future students considering applying?

Five years later, the scholarship was the key decision that unlocked my career. It gave me the freedom to reinvent myself, moving from civil engineering to high-impact roles in tech startups. To future applicants, I would say: don't be afraid to chase both adventure and education. Taking that leap will shape your life in ways you can't predict.

Corbin Heywood

University: Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Degree: Master of Electrical Engineering

Specialty: Radio Frequency

Duration of Study: 1 Year

What inspired you to apply for the scholarship, and how did receiving it make it possible for you to pursue your overseas studies?

My goal was to expand my horizons, both with education and with my cultural experiences. I thought that the USA was the perfect place for that goal given its extensive history in producing excellent engineers, and plethora of high-class institutions. However, given the cost of international student tuition, I knew that it simply would not be possible without the support of a scholarship. The J.R. Templin Scholarship aligned perfectly with my experience as a soon-to-be graduate engineer, and with my aspirations.

Can you describe a memorable experience from your time studying overseas and how it influenced your personal or professional development?

At the conclusion of my Master's project, I had the opportunity to present my work alongside my mentor at an international conference on Space Sailing in New York City. Not only was it incredible to be attending such a conference, but to present work a project that you're deeply invested in, is extremely rewarding. That experience really made me appreciate the opportunities that an engineer has to make an impact with the skills that they learn through university.

How has the scholarship and your overseas education impacted your career since graduating?

Since graduating I have been working full-time at Rocket Lab where I have been able to put my graduate degree to use in the most fulfilling sense. Not only did the knowledge of topics gained at Cornell prepare me, but so too did the pace and culture of work. Without that education, I doubt that this opportunity would have arisen.

Looking back, what lasting impact has the scholarship had on your life, and what would you say to future students considering applying?

Without repeating what's already been said, this scholarship has also given me a greater sense of pride. Not just for myself, but for my parents and grandparents too. It has made them happy to see their (grand)son do so well in an overseas institution and beyond, and for that I'm extremely grateful. For future students that meet the J.R. Templin Scholarship applicant criteria, I suggest that you reflect on what matters to you most, and what you have to lose by simply giving it an honest shot.

Early Life and Education

John Richard Templin was born in the United States of America and graduated from Ohio State University in 1903 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Early in his career, he recognised the transformative potential of steam turbine technology and pursued opportunities in this emerging field.

His engineering expertise led him overseas, including an appointment that brought him to New Zealand in 1905 to install steam turbines for the Christchurch Tramways Board. During this period, he met his future wife and developed a strong connection with New Zealand.

Following further engineering work in Bangkok, Siam (now Thailand), in 1906, Templin returned to New Zealand permanently in 1910. Although he spent most of his life in New Zealand, he retained his United States citizenship throughout his life.

Engineering Career

After returning to New Zealand, Templin worked as an electrical engineer for a gold mining enterprise on the West Coast. In 1914, he established himself as a consulting engineer in Christchurch, building a respected professional practice that he continued until his retirement in 1938.

His reputation for technical expertise and sound judgement resulted in numerous business appointments. He served on the board of Skellerup Industries Limited and several associated companies within the Skellerup Group, including the Dominion Salt Company Limited. Through these positions, he contributed to the growth and development of New Zealand industry and commerce.

Templin's engineering career reflected the qualities that defined his life: innovation, foresight, practical application of knowledge, and a commitment to advancing industry through technical excellence.

Contribution to Horticulture

While engineering was central to Templin's professional life, horticulture was an equally important passion. He became one of Canterbury's most respected horticultural figures and dedicated significant time and energy to promoting horticultural education and excellence.

His involvement included membership of specialist organisations such as:

- The New Zealand Lily Society
- The New Zealand Rose Society
- Christchurch horticultural organisations
- The Civic Beautification Committee

These roles reflected his belief that horticulture contributed not only to economic prosperity but also to the quality of community life and the enhancement of public spaces.

In 1937, he was elected to the Management Committee of the Canterbury Horticultural Society. He subsequently served as:

- Chairman in 1942
- President in 1956

His leadership and service were widely recognised throughout New Zealand's horticultural sector.

Recognition and Honours

One of Templin's most significant honours came when the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture conferred upon him the prestigious designation of Associate of Honour. This distinction was reserved for individuals who had rendered exceptional service to horticulture and was limited to a small number of recipients nationally.

Contemporaries considered him one of the most deserving recipients of the honour, recognising his substantial contribution to the advancement of horticulture in Canterbury and New Zealand more broadly.

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