



Martin Butel (1959)
Hollywood High School

Scholarships for COD Students with LGBT Advocacy or Service Career Goals

Scholarships are available to LGBT students and allies at College of the Desert who are planning a career to advance the well-being and rights of LGBT individuals, couples, or families. Such careers may involve medical or mental health care, education, counseling, social work, or law. Students are eligible regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Each year, two recipients will receive a \$2,500 cash award.

These scholarships are funded by the Estate of Martin Butel and will be managed by Spectrum Institute for academic years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. For future academic years, scholarships will be administered by the College of the Desert Foundation. For every \$2,500 the foundation raises for this purpose, Spectrum Institute will give it a matching grant, up to \$40,000.

Martin Butel was born in 1941 in New York City. His father immigrated from Russia; his mother from Ukraine. By 1950, the family moved to Los Angeles. Early on, Marty knew he was gay but did not feel free to “come out” due to the social oppression and legal persecution of homosexuals during that era. Gays were being excluded from the military and were actively being fired from federal civil service jobs. Homosexuality was considered a mental illness by the psychiatric profession and a mortal sin by mainstream churches. Homosexual conduct, even between consenting adults in private, was a felony in all states. Marty graduated from Hollywood High School in 1959.

Despite the rampant homophobia in society that kept many people in the closet, Marty became active in the gay rights movement during the 1970s. He joined with other activists to lobby for the repeal of criminal laws against homosexuality, to stop police entrapment of gay men, and to have the Los Angeles City Council pass an ordinance prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. All of these goals were realized.

Marty died in 2024. He named attorney Thomas F. Coleman, a longtime friend and fellow gay rights advocate, as executor of his estate. Marty indicated that a portion of his estate should be used to combat homophobia in society. His estate has made a grant to Spectrum Institute to create this scholarship fund. The board of the nonprofit believes that one way to fulfill Marty’s wish is to financially support college students who are pursuing careers that will have a positive impact on the LGBT population.

To apply for this scholarship, students should submit an application to Spectrum Institute. It should be accompanied by an essay explaining the student’s involvement or interest in LGBT rights and how the student will use their education and chosen career to advance the well being and rights of LGBT individuals, couples, or families.



For more information contact Thomas F. Coleman.

tomcoleman@spectruminstitute.org

**Application for Scholarships for
LGBT Students and Allies**
(for academic year 2025-2026)

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Telephone _____

Email address _____ Age _____

High School Attended _____ City _____

Year of Graduation _____ Grade Point Average _____

Are you enrolled in College of the Desert for 2025-2026 _____

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain from any college or university:
___ AA ___ BA ___ Masters ___ Ph.D. ___ JD

Are you currently employed _____ Name of employer _____

Current position _____ List any previous jobs you have had

Organizations for which you have volunteered _____

Please give someone as a reference: Name _____

Contact Info _____ Relationship _____

Your intended career: (check if applicable)

___ medical care ___ mental health care ___ social work ___ education ___ law

___ other (explain _____)

Financial aid you will receive for 2025-2026: \$ _____ loans / \$ _____ grants / \$ _____ other

Along with this completed form, please submit an essay in which you describe why you are interested in LGBT rights and how you will use your education and chosen career to advance the well-being of LGBT individuals, couples, or families. Explain any previous involvement you have had with the LGBT population.

Send application and essay to: tomcoleman@spectruminstitute.org