

December 2010

Dear Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald,

My name is David Harwath and I am currently a first year M.S./Ph.D. student in electrical engineering at Stanford. I am writing to thank you for your family's generous financial contribution. The Robert F. MacDonald Fellowship Fund founded in memory of your father is what enables me to pursue these degrees.

Simply put, without your support, there is no way that I would be able to afford graduate studies. When I initially applied to Stanford, I knew that even if I got in, I would most likely not be able to attend due to financial concerns. However, when I received my acceptance letter informing me of my fellowship, I was overcome with joy.

My family has a long history in engineering; I am currently the 4th generation Electrical Engineer in my family. Like my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, I attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for my undergraduate studies, but I am the first in my family to pursue a graduate degree in engineering. My entire family is very proud of me, and I am very thankful for this wonderful opportunity.

My research interests are in audio signal processing, speech recognition, natural language processing, and machine learning. I have previously worked on automatic language identification systems, text processing systems for document summarization and segmentation (e.g., for summarizing online news stories), speech synthesis systems, and electronic musical instruments. At Stanford, I am continuing to explore these interests in the hope that I may one day contribute to creating new technology allowing people who speak different languages to communicate in real-time with the use of computerized speech translation systems, or to hold meaningful conversations with computers.

My interests in engineering and audio technology go back to when I wired simple radio circuits as a child; coupled with my interest in the electric guitar, this eventually shifted towards building vacuum tube musical instrument amplifiers. During my undergraduate career, I showcased some of my amplifiers at the Engineering Open House, where I

