

Forté Foundation Announces Winner of the 2025 Edie Hunt Inspiration Award
Prestigious Annual Award Recognizes an MBA Student for Advancing Women in Business

Austin, TX (April 15, 2025) – Forté Foundation, a nonprofit founded to increase opportunities for women in business leadership through access to business education and professional development, today announced the 2025 winner of the annual Edie Hunt Inspiration Award.

This year's winner is **Hannah Tolan**, a student at **Cornell's Johnson Graduate School of Management**.

The Edie Hunt Inspiration Award, named for Forté's Board Chair Emeritus, celebrates MBA students at the non-profit organization's partner schools who advance Forté's mission to "get more women leading". This annual award recognizes outstanding contributions to their school or community.

Hannah grew up learning the importance of leadership and advocacy. She was selected for the award for her efforts in fostering a supportive and caring environment for her peers. "At Johnson, I wanted to create a community in which women could be themselves, be confident, and encourage other women," she says.

Being an advocate for women comes naturally to Hannah, whose single mother adopted her and her sisters, teaching them, she says, to "be strong, independent women who can do anything."

With the goal to "motivate women to get involved, stretch themselves, lead, and be successful," Hannah led by example by participating in an impressive range of activities while at Johnson, including helping to launch the new finance club, VC@Johnson, and encouraging more participation from women within the venture capital space as investors, operators, and founders. [Research](#) has shown that solely women-led companies attracted just 1% of venture capital funding in 2024. Additionally, Hannah secured panelists to provide exposure to women leaders in venture capital and private equity at events.

Hannah also coordinated the Forté Buddies Program, which pairs incoming Forté Fellows scholarship recipients and conference attendees with current students who can answer questions prior to the start of school and Forté conferences. She organized and co-led events like Forté Fellow meetings and hosted Forté Ask Me Anything events that encouraged women interested in finance and consulting to attend the [Forté Financial Services Fast Track Conference](#).

Hannah accomplished these things while working part-time in various roles, including at two venture capital funds and serving as a 2024 investment banking summer associate at Jefferies.

"Hannah Tolan has demonstrated exceptional leadership for her classmates throughout her experience and we are so thrilled and honored to recognize her with the Edie Hunt Inspiration Award this year," said Elissa Sangster, CEO of Forté Foundation. "We are also incredibly proud of the nominees and applicants who are continuously working to enhance the future for professional women, to guide them in their career journey, and provide role models and communities to inspire them."

Forté Foundation received many nominations and named three finalists who have also greatly impacted the community of women in business. They include:

- **Anushaa Shiv Shanker Das, Georgetown University McDonough School of Business** – Served as President of the Partners & Families Club and designed programs — mentorship circles, career gatherings, and "potlucks with a purpose"— to help women partners navigate their careers. Anushaa also regularly spoke on panels such as "Can Women Have It All?", and hosted brunches, "Experience Georgetown" events, and coffee chats to inspire confidence and ambition in prospective women applicants. As a peer advisor, she coached over 70 women in interview preparation and other areas of career support.

- **Joanne Bartolome, ESADE Business School** – As President of the Women in Business & Allies Club (WIBAC) at ESADE, Joanne created a supportive community by hosting impactful initiatives such as Women in Entrepreneurship campaigns. These efforts highlighted the gender disparities in funding for women entrepreneurs while inspiring meaningful action. As a board member of the InspireWomen Society, she helped design a program focused on self-development to prepare young women for leadership roles. At ESADE, she spearheaded a mentorship program to offer career advice and support. As an entrepreneur, she became a Digital Advisor for the Women’s Entrepreneurship Strategy with Alberta Women Entrepreneurs, a national initiative supported by the government of Canada to empower women across the country by equipping them with the resources to succeed.
- **Nneka Kyari, York University Schulich School of Business** – As the Forté Campus Ambassador at Schulich, Nneka created the first-ever Forté “Lookbook” to celebrate and promote the achievements of the 2025 Forté Fellows. This resource has played a crucial role in helping the Fellows secure internships and full-time positions, ultimately advancing their careers. She also organized the inaugural Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Forté Conference in March 2025 in celebration of International Women’s Day. The event attracted over 300 women graduate students, final-year undergraduates, and professionals, to participate in impactful sessions and networking opportunities, empowering them to take bold steps toward leadership. Beyond initiatives at school, Nneka also mentors young women who are exploring business careers, offering guidance on navigating their paths, applying for graduate programs, and developing the confidence needed to pursue leadership roles.

About the Edie Hunt Inspiration Award

Edie Hunt Inspiration Award nominees must be enrolled in a full-time program as a second-year MBA student at a Forté sponsor school or enrolled full-time in a one-year program. Recipients receive a \$2,500 cash award, a complimentary [Forté MBA Women's Leadership Conference](#) registration, and other additional benefits. The award was created in 2009 to honor the Chair Emeritus of Forté Foundation’s Board of Directors, Edie Hunt. Edie was with Goldman Sachs for over 30 years, a partner from 2004 to 2011, and most recently served as Chief Diversity Officer and Advisory Director until the end of 2013 when she retired. She is a graduate of the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago.

ABOUT FORTÉ

Forté is a nonprofit organization with the goal of achieving gender parity at all levels of business. Forté works closely with business schools, corporations, and universities to ensure women have access to opportunities at every stage of their careers. Forté offers a wide variety of resources, including MBA prep, professional development, leadership education, and a diverse community of successful women. Upcoming opportunities for incoming MBA women include [MBA Takeoff](#), [MBA Financial Services Fast Track Conference](#), and [MBA Women’s Leadership Conference](#). For more information, visit fortefoundation.org.

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