

BIRCH WATHEN LENOX STUDENT PROFILE



Eli Zied '20

Armed with his experience at Birch Wathen Lenox and beyond, Eli Zied, a natural entrepreneur, is ready for anything. His “take life as it comes” approach serves him well as he navigates life and his studies, and looks ahead to the next step: the real world.

Current college/university:

University of Miami

Academic concentration/major:

Entrepreneurship and Finance

Academic/professional plans:

PR/Advertising

An Entrepreneurial Spirit with an Impressive Track Record

ACADEMICS: BWL ILLUMINATES THE WORLD AROUND US

When it comes to big decisions, Eli Zied likes to take it as it comes. Even still, when it came time for him to think about college, Eli recognizes that Birch Wathen Lenox set him up for success. “I was never fazed by the college admissions process. I’m a believer that everything is meant to be, so I’m going to end up somewhere where I’m happy. The process was very smooth for me, and I definitely feel like [BWL] did a good job preparing me in that sense — to excel in college and to not be stressed out about everything.”

But that breezy perspective doesn’t mean he’s lazy — quite the opposite. At 16, Eli founded a streetwear brand called Habits365 that, over the four years it’s been in operation, has grown and morphed along with Eli himself. “My brand essentially encourages positive habits year-round. Your habits determine your success.” Now a junior at the University of Miami, Eli is unsurprisingly studying entrepreneurship, with a minor in finance. He is hoping to use the knowledge he gains in college to take Habits365 to new heights, while also pursuing a career in PR or advertising. “I’ll still have Habits. I plan to keep doing that and keep expanding, but work in other industries also. Habits is always going to be there as my most important ambition.”

Not always motivated or a high-performing student, Eli struggled during his late elementary and middle school years at BWL. He found school to be boring and exhibited little patience for the curriculum, acting out quite a bit. Towards the end of middle school into high school, however, he began to take a different tact and became interested in what BWL has to offer. He credits the strong community and teacher relationships. Eli utilized the academic resources available to him at Birch Wathen Lenox to explore the world around him. He was particularly intrigued by his journalism class. “It was super helpful because you could see how stories were being reported. You could see the different angles that consumers are looking at. I learned a lot about that.” As for the teaching staff, Eli is grateful for the special relationship between student and teacher at BWL. “I definitely formed a close bond with a lot of my teachers. There was a lot of flexibility and availability, just meeting for anything really. There was definitely a strong community aspect.”



www.bwl.org

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SOCIAL AND EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE: THE PRIVILEGE TO BOND

On top of his academic schedule and entrepreneurial life, Eli was the starting point guard on the BWL varsity basketball team. “I definitely miss playing on a team like that. I love Coach Jenkins, and [that experience] will always be with me.” And, in his senior year, Eli launched a collaboration between Habits365 and BWL, designing and producing varsity jackets for the sports teams. “As we’re making more designs, we’re going to keep going with that.” Through his business, Eli is creating a legacy of his own.

Eli sees organizations, clubs, and sports teams as “key to building community” at Birch Wathen Lenox, and he calls the propensity for closeness among the student body “the privilege to bond.” He understands that students at other (larger) schools have not been lucky enough to experience such an intimate learning environment, a trademark of his time at Birch Wathen Lenox. “It’s really easy to form relationships. I have a lot of close friends I’m still in touch with. Forming relationships from a young age and keeping them — a small school is nice for that.” What’s more, he commends the student body for its diversity of thought and personality: “everyone was different in their own ways. You don’t want everyone to be the same. You need differences.”

With an eye towards service, Eli spent formative time volunteering with the Robin Hood Foundation, an NYC organization dedicated to the fight against poverty. It was an eye-opening experience, showing him “what helping the community out really means. Actually participating in it, I thought that was really cool. Hands-on experience is definitely the best experience.” It’s a lesson he will take with him.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Eli may be calm, cool, and collected, but he is hungry for his next steps. Thanks to the foundation set by Birch Wathen Lenox, and the success he’s already found, he sees unlimited possibility. Through his own business and undoubtedly any endeavor he pursues, Eli Zied will leave his mark.

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IN HIS COACH’S WORDS

Throughout Eli’s basketball tenure, he consistently demonstrated a tremendous work ethic, resilience, while steadily persevering through any assigned task. In addition to his intestinal fortitude, he has the distinct ability to clearly express his thoughts, provide insight, and different perspectives to his classmates, teachers, and coaches. This speaks volume towards Eli’s excellent leadership qualities. Lastly, his positive attitude, maturational growth, eagerness to learn, and his unique ability to cultivate relationships is a true testament of Eli’s character. Based on these convictions, I know Eli Zied will be successful at any present or future endeavors.”

— Coach Jenkins

According to Coach Jenkins, Eli’s mentality can be summed up in these maxims:

- Things turn out the best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.
- Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.
- Progress always involves risk; you can’t score a basket if you never shoot the ball.

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