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McNair Scholars Program

This program is federally funded by the United States Department of Education in the amount of \$258,469.

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KU Honors Dr. Ahmad Khalil, Second Ph.D. Recipient

By Robert Rodriguez
McNair Project Coordinator

"I passed my final Ph.D. defense today and I'm done with school forever..." With those words, former KU McNair Scholar Ahmad Khalil announced via email to his friends and family that he had reached the goal that all Scholars strive for, the Ph.D. Ahmad entered the KU McNair Scholars Program in March, 1999 and graduated from KU in May, 2000. As a McNair Scholar, Ahmad conducted a research project entitled "Effect of Alcohol on the Function of Neurotransmitters and Enzymes," under the tutelage of Dr. Douglas Ruden in the Summer of 1999. After graduation, Ahmad went on to graduate school at the University of Florida College of Medicine to pursue a doctoral degree in the Interdisciplinary Program in Biomedical Sciences with an emphasis in Molecular Genetics and Microbiology. He received a graduate assistantship that paid him a salary in addition to waiving his tuition.

During his doctoral studies at the University of Florida, Ahmad has thrived in his research endeavors, producing three publications in addition to making over a dozen professional presentations. His scholarly activities have earned him a wealth of awards, including the Predoctoral Basic Science Outstanding Research Award at the 2004 American Society of Human Genetics Conference in Toronto and the 2004 Graduate Fellowship for Outstanding Research Award from the University of Florida College of Medicine.

Ahmad's doctoral research is on Histone modifications and chromatin dynamics of the mammalian inactive sex chromosomes. In a recent email, Ahmad expressed his gratitude to the KU McNair Scholars Program writing, "I'm very grateful to you and the McNair staff for your help over the years." *Congratulations, Dr. Khalil!*



Dr. Ahmad Khalil

Scholar Receives Gilman Scholarship

Momina Sims, a sophomore majoring in Spanish and Latin American Studies, is the first KU student to be awarded the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. Momina studied at the University of Costa Rica in San Jose, Costa Rica this past spring. The Gilman International Scholarship Program provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving federal Pell Grant funding to participate in study abroad programs worldwide. At present, Momina is in the process of completing a required Service Project to encourage peer-to-peer education on study abroad, international education, and the Gilman Scholarship. For her project, Momina is exploring the differences in the experiences of minority students who study abroad. "I believe that the task of designing my own project and then later putting it into effect will give me great experience for future research and grant proposals," Momina said.



Momina Sims

Scholar Achievements

Michele “Shelly” Bointy received numerous awards, including the MARGO Award for outstanding performance in Master’s of Social Work Clinical field practicum in Spring 2004. Shelly earned her MSW degree this past spring and currently works as a retention specialist for the Student Support Services (TRiO) Program at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Sarah Smarsh ran the New York Marathon on November 7, 2004. She completed the 26-mile course in 4:55:14. Sarah is in her second year of graduate school, pursuing a Masters of Fine Arts degree in nonfiction writing at Columbia University. She was recently awarded a Departmental Research Assistant position, which includes a fellowship for approximately \$13,000, as well as a small living stipend.

Former Scholar Elizabeth Boldridge: A KU Woman of Distinction



Elizabeth Boldridge

By Linda LaPierre
McNair Office Manager

Former KU McNair Scholar, Elizabeth Boldridge has been featured in the 2004-2005 KU Women of Distinction Calendar. The calendar highlights Boldridge’s achievements along with 16 other notable women at KU. Boldridge is currently a Doctoral student in Educational Policy and Leadership, with a concentration in Higher Education, and a minor in Psychology.

Calendars are still available in The Emily Taylor Women’s Resource center, 400 Kansas Union, and are free of charge.

To view all of the KU Women of Distinction, please visit
<http://www.ku.edu/~etwrc/wod-0405/index.html>

McNair Mentor Accolades

Four former McNair Mentors received prestigious Kemper teaching awards from the University of Kansas. Congratulations to:

Debra M. Ortega, Associate Professor, Social Welfare
Yolanda Jackson, Associate Professor, Applied Behavioral Science

Anthony Corbeill, Professor, Classics

Tanya Hartman, Associate Professor, Fine Arts

Two former McNair Mentors have been approved for sabbatical leave in the spring 2005 semester:

Tanya Hartman, Associate Professor, Art
Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Associate Professor, English

Rick Snyder has received the Robert S. Daniel Teaching Excellence Award. He received the award at the APA’s national convention from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, American Psychological Association Division 2. The conference was held on August 30, 2004 in Hawaii.

Paul Laird, Professor of Musicology has published *The Baroque Cello Revival: An Oral History on Scarecrow Press*. He has also reviewed Geoffrey Block’s *Richard Rodgers*. It is to be published in the next issue of Music Library Association Notes.

Charles Marsh, Associate Professor of Journalism has published *Strategic Writing for Public Relations, Advertising, Sales and Marketing, and Business Communications* in collaboration with David Guth, Associate Professor of Journalism, and Bonnie Short, KU Journalism graduate.

Joe Donnelly, Director of KU’s Center for Physical Activity and Weight Management, has gained support for his plans for a regional weight loss and weight-management agency as reported by the *Kansas City Business Journal*. Support for the agency is said to be coming from area businesses and scientific leaders. Donnelly also has the endorsement of the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute.

KU Co-hosts Heartland McNair Conference in Kansas City

By Tanya Kooi
McNair Academic Services Coordinator

The Eighth Annual MO-KAN-NE Ronald E. McNair Heartland Research Conference was held September 17 – 19, 2004 at the Marriott Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri. Over 125 students from across the country attended the conference, including ten KU McNair Scholars. The Scholars attended a graduate recruitment fair, gave oral and poster presentations on their research projects, and listened to conference speakers including Dr. Doris Wright Carroll of Kansas State University, Dr. John Ishiyama from Truman State University, and Laura Bathurst from Kansas State University. Jamey Brannon, a KU McNair Scholar, commented “I enjoyed meeting all the McNair students from other schools and talking to them about their research. Everyone was very friendly. It was a good experience for me to present my research in an academic setting.”

Scholar Attends Access to Knowledge Conference in Missouri

By Mulubrhan Lemma
McNair Scholar

Through the network I have gained through the McNair Scholars program, I was able to attend the Access to Knowledge Conference at the University of Missouri. The conference was held from November 11-13 and included workshops, presentations, panels and keynote speakers. Being a McNair Scholar has allowed me to attend or participate in many McNair conferences. I have had many opportunities to build networks with faculty members and with school administrators including the dean of the graduate school. What makes Access to Knowledge stand out is that its population is composed of undergraduate students as well as graduate students. I was able to meet several graduate students from all over the nation. Specifically, at one luncheon the conference arranged it so that people in the same major sat together. I met students that told me of their graduate programs and their faculty members from an insider's point of view. This is something that helped me tremendously as I have been seeking out schools in preparation for graduate study. Previously, I had limited the graduate schools I was considering due to my interest in cross-cultural psychology. After discussing this with the graduate students, I learned of many more professors who are welcoming of cross-cultural perspective for their particular interests. This would not have been possible if it was not for the staff at the McNair Scholars Program who provide access to activities that will prepare me for graduate school. I am very appreciative of the McNair Scholars Program as it continues to expand my horizons.



Mulubrhan Lemma

WANTED

Any contact information for the following former McNair Scholars:

Sonya Douglas Lynda Ly
Katherine Humphrey Charles Turner
Bessie James Shelley Witt
Tammy Lowe

If you have any information, please e-mail
Tanya Kooi (kooi@ku.edu)

Our Newest McNair Citizen

By Robert Rodriguez
McNair Project Coordinator

While all McNair Scholars are either U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents, their countries of origin are as far away as Syria and Nigeria. Our most recent McNair Scholar to go through the naturalization process to become a citizen is Jecarma Newton. Jecarma came to the United States from the Bahamas as an eight year-old in 1991. She became a citizen on November 19, 2004. "I don't feel any different since becoming a citizen because I've lived here for so long," Jecarma said, "But I'm glad that I'll finally be able to vote."



Jecarma Newton



Alicia Ford is McNair's New Program Assistant

Alicia Ford joined the McNair Scholars Program staff in August 2004. She is currently a doctoral student in KU's Counseling Psychology program and holds a M.S. in Counseling Psychology from KU and a B.S. in Psychology from Truman State University.



Alicia Ford

2005-2006 Arnold L. Mitchem Dissertation Fellowship

Applications are now available for the Arnold L. Mitchem Dissertation Fellowship. The goal of the fellowship is to increase the presence of underrepresented groups in the professoriate through support of doctoral candidates who are completing their dissertation. For more information, or to download an application, please visit <http://www.marquette.edu/mitchem/>

Interested in becoming a KU McNair Scholar?

Applications are now being accepted for the current academic year. Call (785) 864-3412, or send an email to mcnair@ku.edu for more information.

Are you a former KU McNair Scholar?

Call us toll free at 1-877-842-5232 or send an email to mcnair@ku.edu, and we will include an article about you in the next issue of *The McNair Chronicle*.

The University of Kansas

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Scholar Spotlight: Melanie Privat

By Alicia Ford
McNair Program Assistant

Congratulations to McNair's next graduate, Melanie Privat! Melanie graduates in December 2004 with degrees in psychology and sociology and is looking forward to celebrating her accomplishment with family and friends.

Although she is graduating at the end of this semester, Melanie doesn't plan to take any time off from school, "I'm really excited to start my graduate work because I think it will be really different from undergraduate classes," she said. In the spring, Melanie will be enrolling in counseling classes that will give her a head start on the master's degree and will continue with her research position at KU's Center for Research on Learning.

Melanie is applying to master's programs in clinical and counseling psychology and was able to complete her applications before Thanksgiving (talk about time management!). Her goal was to finish them before finals, when end-of-semester projects and studying for exams consume her time. Melanie found that the key to completing her applications was working on them after she finished her regular work. She stated, "I did my applications whenever I had free time. Not mixing them with schoolwork helped me to focus on my thoughts about graduate school."

Melanie's hard work in her undergraduate courses and her research experience with the McNair Scholars Program should help her easily move on to graduate work. Ultimately, she would like to be a licensed psychologist and have her own practice that provides psychotherapy services to adults.



Melanie Privat