



# THE MCNAIR CHRONICLE

Lawrence, Kansas

## 2006 Fall McNair Graduates Honored

### Inside this issue:

<i>Mentor Accolades</i>	2
<i>Scholar Achievements</i>	2
<i>Birth Announcements</i>	2
<i>Heartland Conference</i>	3
<i>Call for Applications</i>	3
<i>Tutor Spotlight</i>	3
<i>Scholar Spotlight: Derrais Carter</i>	4

Three KU McNair Scholars were presented with honor cords in recognition of their participation in the KU McNair Scholars Program and the impending conferral of their bachelor's degrees.

**Eric Benavidez** plans to participate in the PREP Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program in spring 2007. He also plans to pursue a Ph.D. in mathematics starting in the fall 2007 term. Eric is presently applying to graduate schools, including Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The University of California, Berkeley, and The University of Kansas.

**Kirby (Mullenberg) Zimmerman** will soon be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. She will attend Weather Officer Course at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, then report to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, where she plans to work toward a Masters of Meteorology at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

**Delia Kimbrel** will enter graduate school in fall 2007. She plans to earn a Ph.D. in sociology and social policy, with an emphasis on race, gender, wealth inequality and stratification. She is in the process of applying to graduate schools, including Brandeis University, The University of Chicago, and Northwestern University.

Congratulations fall graduates!



Fall graduates were awarded McNair Scholars Program honor cords. From left to right: Delia Kimbrel, Eric Benavidez, and Kirby Zimmerman.

### McNair Scholars Program Staff

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

**Dr. Ngondi Kamatuka**  
*Director, Educational Opportunity Programs*

**Dr. Robert Rodriguez**  
*Associate Director*

**Allyson Flaster**  
*Academic Services Coordinator*

**Linda LaPierre**  
*Office Manager*

## Former Scholars Give Back to TRIO

Two former KU McNair Scholars recently accepted TRIO staff positions at the University of Kansas.

**Laurie Ramirez** is the new Support Service Coordinator at Supportive Educational Services (SES). She is responsible for assisting SES students with the creation of an individualized academic support plan and providing academic, personal and career counseling. Laurie has a Master's of Social Work degree.

**Mulubrhan (Misgana) Negash** is the new part-time Academic Advisor with the Educational Talent Search Program. She provides workshops and advises middle and high school students at three schools. Mulubrhan is pursuing her master's degree in counseling psychology at KU.

Laurie and Mulubrhan join former Scholars **Katherine Acosta**, Educational Talent Search Middle School Academic Advisor, and **Michael Lemon**, Career and Academic Counselor at the Educational Opportunity Center, in giving back to the TRIO community as staff members. Katherine is presently pursuing a master's degree in international studies at the University of Kansas, while Michael is a master's student in the KU counseling psychology program.

## Scholar Achievements

**Hiwot Michaels** has been accepted in to the University of Kansas Bioscience Initiative IMSD Program.

☪

**Michael Young** served as an intern in the Paris-based architecture firm *Ateliers Jean Nouvel* during summer 2006.

☪

**Derrais Carter** presented "It's Bigger Than Hip-Hop: Culture, Identity and the College Student" at the 2006 Miliken University Students of Color Conference.

☪

**Osman Nur** received the 2006 Edith and Edwin Kratz Scholarship from the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

☪

**Christy Bradley** was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and joined the Multicultural Scholars Program in 2006. She was also awarded the English Faculty 1927-35 College Scholarship for 2006-2007.

☪

**Cindy Lynn** received a Provost Undergraduate Research Award in fall 2006.

☪

**Christian Marzette**, former McNair Scholar, began the KU Counseling Psychology Ph.D. Program in fall 2006.

☪

**Aaron Thomas**, former McNair Scholar, is a writer for "Friday Night Lights," an NBC television show.

☪

## McNair Mentor Accolades

**Bill Tuttle**, professor of American studies, was named a Fulbright Distinguished Chair and will teach in the Netherlands during the spring 2007 semester. Dr. Tuttle was also awarded the Steeples Service to Kansas Award.

☪

**Paul Hanson**, professor of chemistry, has won KU's 2006 Honor for an Outstanding Progressive Educator (H.O.P.E.) Award. The award is presented by the undergraduate senior class to one exceptionally inspiring educator each year.

☪

**Elaine Gerbert**, associate professor of East Asian languages and literatures, presented at the Danish University of Education in Copenhagen, Denmark. Her presentation was entitled: "Locating the Humor in Guro Nansensu."

☪

**Anita Herzfeld**, professor of Latin American studies, presented at the International Congress of Americanists, held in Seville, Spain in July.

☪

**Joseph Donnelly**, director of the Center for Physical Activity and Weight Management at KU's Lifespan Institute, has been named the director of the Center for Physical Activity, Nutrition and Weight Management.

☪

**Shane Lopez**, associate professor of counseling psychology, and **Matthew Buechner**, associate professor of molecular biosciences, received 2006 Kemper Fellowships.

## Birth Announcements

Congratulations to **Dr. Robert Rodriguez**, Associate Director of the McNair Scholars Program, and his wife Irina on the birth of their daughter.

**Gabriela Anya Rodriguez**  
arrived on May 24, 2006 at 2:02 p.m.  
She weighed 6 Lbs and 15 Oz.



Congratulations to **Linda LaPierre**, Office Manager of the McNair Scholars Program, and her husband Travis on the birth of their daughter.

**Milena Diann LaPierre**  
arrived on August 27, 2006 at 7:05 p.m.  
She weighed 4 Lbs and 14 Oz.



## Heartland Conference Reflections

By Cindy Lynn  
KU McNair Scholar

The Heartland Conference: What started out as a quick road trip to Kansas City quickly became a means to stretch beyond classroom limitations. The conference brought together students predominantly from a tri-state area (Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri) who share the mission to reach for the stars. Interdisciplinary topics, focused research, and open discussions provided a unique space and environment for students from all walks of life to learn from each other.

Workshops offered session topics such as how to write an admissions essay and what to expect as a GTA. Scholars, advisors, educators, and speakers positively and actively responded to presentations which sometimes raised more questions, joined in the search for answers, and challenged the status quo.

Noted academics provided keynote addresses at the lavish banquet as well as good natured humor and audience participation. Many Scholars also took the opportunity to visit nearby museums or enjoyed the Plaza Art Show ambiance with new friends. But most of all, participating McNair Scholars learned to appreciate the hard work, dedication, guidance, and direction provided from our own devoted McNair staff and faculty mentors. We can't thank you enough for your investment in our future.



Nine KU McNair Scholars participated in the 2006 Heartland Research Conference in Kansas City. Pictured above: Cindy Lynn

## Tutor Spotlight: Michael Gomez

Michael Gomez, McNair Academic Tutor and Ph.D. candidate in KU's clinical child psychology program, serves as a therapist and coordinator for the KU Child and Family Services Clinic, a non-profit organization that provides affordable outpatient therapy to the Lawrence community. In addition, he serves as a graduate teaching assistant for developmental psychopathology and cognitive assessment courses. His research focus is the effect of acculturation on high-risk Mexican-American children's resiliency, and his future goal is to return to his native Texas to open a community mental health clinic for underserved children and families. In his spare time, he listens to jazz and frequents Kansas City music venues.



Michael Gomez  
McNair Academic Tutor

While an undergraduate, Michael was a McNair Scholar and tutor for first-generation college students at Texas Tech University. He believes his experience as a McNair Scholar gave him the information and tools needed to navigate academia; he states that "before I became a McNair Scholar, I didn't know how far I could go." As an Academic Tutor, he is serving as a role model and resource for the present generation of McNair Scholars at KU.

### Are you a former KU McNair Scholar?

Please visit our updated website at:  
[www.ku.edu/~mcnair](http://www.ku.edu/~mcnair)

Be sure to check out our "**Degrees Earned By Former Scholars**" page to ensure your information is up-to-date. You can update your academic and contact information on the site—just click on "**Former Scholars**" to get started!

### The KU McNair Scholars Program is presently accepting applications!

In order to be considered for the 2007 Summer Research Internship, students need to apply right away.

For more information, please e-mail  
[mcnair@ku.edu](mailto:mcnair@ku.edu) or call  
(785) 864-3412

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**We're on the Web!**  
[www.ku.edu/~mcnair/](http://www.ku.edu/~mcnair/)

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## *Scholar Spotlight: Derrais Carter*

By Allyson Flaster  
KU McNair Academic Services Coordinator

Derrais Carter barely has time to sleep. A transfer student, he arrived at KU from Emporia State University this fall and wasted no time getting involved on campus, including as a leader of Black Men of Today, historian for the Black Student Union and as a participant in the Multicultural Scholars Program. The sociology and African-American studies major also maintains his own blog—*Black Tuesday*—which he describes as a “weekly celebration of Black expressive culture,” and owns his own company—*Ankh Presentations*—which he uses as a vehicle to facilitate discussions of identity and leadership development in community and campus organizations. Also an avid reader, Derrais admires professors Michael Eric Dyson, bell hooks and Mark Anthony Neal, who share his interests in Black popular culture, feminism, and interdisciplinary studies.

Derrais will work with McNair Mentor Dr. Chico Herbison during the 2007 Summer Research Internship to study the Black public sphere and hip-hop culture. Following the receipt of his bachelor’s degree in 2008, his long-term goal is to earn a Ph.D. in American Studies, then secure a tenure-track position as a professor. A self-described “huge nerd,” Derrais enjoys sharing information with others. He wants the McNair Scholars Program community to know that “if anyone wants to talk, I’m open to them.”

To view Derrais Carter’s blog, go to: <http://blacktues.blogspot.com>



Derrais Carter  
KU McNair Scholar