Two KU McNair Scholars, Jessica Fleming and Rehmatullah Jaghoori, were honored at the November McNair Symposium as fall graduates from the University of Kansas. Both students received blue honor cords—representative of the color of Dr. Ronald McNair’s flight uniform—for their participation in the program.

Both students will attend graduate school beginning in the fall of 2008. Jessica plans to pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, with an emphasis on forensic psychology. She has submitted applications to several graduate schools, including Fordham University and Central Michigan University. Rehmatullah plans to pursue an MFA in painting and then serve as a professor of art at a major US university. He is applying to twelve graduate schools, including Yale University, Columbia University and Cornell University.

The KU McNair Scholars Program was refunded during the recent competitive McNair grant competition and awarded $1,085,568 to continue operations through 2011. Under the new grant, the program will assist an additional 5 students per year—ensuring that twenty McNair Scholars will have the opportunity to conduct Summer Research Internships annually. McNair Scholars Program associate director Robert Rodriguez said: “In the current political climate, federal funding for TRIO programs such as the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is far from secure. I am so pleased that we will be able to continue to serve current and future McNair Scholars at the University of Kansas.”

Several other KU Educational Opportunity Programs [EOP] were refunded during recent grant competitions, including Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math and Science Center, Veteran’s Upward Bound, GEAR UP and the Educational Opportunity Center. The funding for these programs, combined with the funding for the McNair Scholars Program, ensures that over $6 million in federal funds is provided through the KU EOP to assist low-income, first-generation students complete a post-secondary education.

The KU McNair Scholars Program is currently accepting applications!

In order to be considered for the 2008 Summer Research Internship, students need to apply right away.

For more information, please email mcnair@ku.edu or call (785)864-3412
**Scholar Achievements**

**Patricia Hawley**, assistant professor of psychology, was awarded a W.T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence in Fall 2007.


**Mohamed El-Hodiri**, professor of economics, was selected as one of the 2007 recipients of the Chancellors Club Award.

**Bill Tsutsui**, Director of the Confucius Institute, was bestowed the 2007 George and Eleanor Woodyard International Educator Award on September 6, 2007 at the University of Kansas Faculty/Staff Convocation.


**Paul Hanson**, professor of chemistry, was named one of this year’s Mortar Board Outstanding Educators.

**McNair Mentor Accolades**

**McNair Chronicle**

**Birth Announcements**

**Mykal Bella Conley**

*September 5, 2007*

Daughter of former McNair Scholar LaTasha (Reed) Conley and Mike Conley, Academic Advisor, Upward Bound

**Melina Janae Allen**

*August 24, 2007*

Daughter of former McNair Scholar Jecarma (Newton) Allen and Marlon Allen. Jecarma & Marlon Allen would also like to announce their marriage.

The couple were wed October 27, 2007

**Are You a Former KU McNair Scholar?**

Please visit our updated website at: [www2.ku.edu/~mcnair](http://www2.ku.edu/~mcnair)

Be sure to check out our “Degrees Earned by Former Scholars” page to ensure your information is up-to-date.

Please contact the McNair Scholars Program at mcnair@ku.edu or (785)864-3412 to update your information.
Somali Studies Conference Reflections

By Osman Nur

Current McNair Scholar

In August of 2007, I was invited to present my University of Kansas McNair Research Paper at the 10th Triennial Congressional Somali Studies Conference, held at the Ohio State University (OSU), Columbus, Ohio. The city of Columbus was great to visit not only for its relaxing and quiet downtown, but also for its large university campus. I had never visited a campus as large as OSU. During my stay at the conference, I chose to walk through the campus instead of driving, as the conference was held in multiple locations, and it took me a while to go from one place to another. I received joy as I interacted with the people and environment of the university and downtown.

Attending this conference was such an honor for someone in my shoes because of the chance to reunite with my fellow Somalis and the chance to be seated with Somali scholars and be treated like one, even though I am still an undergraduate student.

This event helped me clearly see the issues that lay within Somali tribes, groups, communities, and more importantly, the modernists and the traditionalists and what needs to be done to reconcile these groups in order to help the nation of Somalia be at peace. One of the many reasons Somalis have less appreciation for academic learning and theories is because Somali thinking is based on oral traditions and living their lives from day to day. If there is no neutral understanding and respect between the modernists and the traditionalists and all other groups, the theories that are being written will remain worthless and will not contribute to developing a normal life within Somalia.

This experience also gave me encouragement and reasons to move forward with my research and educational journey because of the great discoveries and contributions needed in Somalia. The completion and the presentation of my McNair research paper, “The Transformation of Islamic Architecture: The Work of the Somali Sufi Mosque Designer, Mo’alin Nur, ‘Aabow,’” was definitely a testament to the importance of my educational journey as it dramatically changed my thinking process and the way I view everything around me.

If truth be told, it still feels like it was only yesterday that I arrived in this country with my family, not knowing anything of the English language or the American culture. My family and I only arrived in the United States in 1999 and within eight years, I have undertaken and completed a research paper written in a language unfamiliar to me only a short time ago. Without the ongoing encouragement of my family, especially my father, my architecture professors and many organizations, including the McNair Scholars Program, my accomplishments would have remained a dream.

Tutor Spotlight: Grant Blanchon

By Allyson Flaster

McNair Academic Services Coordinator

McNair academic tutor Grant Blanchon finds tutoring to be a natural fit with his background in Spanish and education. He is currently a graduate student in KU’s Latin American Area Studies program, where he studies issues related to immigration, and utilizes his bachelor’s degrees in Spanish and anthropology. While an undergraduate at Kansas State University, he served as a teaching assistant for a cultural anthropology course. Following graduation, he taught English as a Second Language in Romania through the Peace Corps for two years. He continues to apply his teaching skills by serving as a substitute teacher in local middle schools.

Grant has enjoyed serving as a Spanish tutor for the McNair Scholars Program, as the Scholar he assists is very motivated. He states: “Teachers have an ideal: you want to teach people who want to learn—and tutoring allows me to focus on the individual needs of the student.” When Grant is not assisting a McNair Scholar with his Spanish, teaching, or studying, he enjoys playing soccer and refinishing furniture with mosaics.
Earl Brooks is a busy man. He has a plan for his future and finds that time is a limited resource. A transfer student from Kansas State University, Earl found that it set his graduation date back a year, but transferring was well worth it for his future as a professor and researcher. At KU, Earl is double majoring in American studies and music, where he is a saxophone player in his jazz courses. He hopes to be finished with a bachelor’s degree by spring 2009. The little free time that he has is spent watching movies, playing basketball, and going home to visit his family in Topeka.

Earl will work with McNair mentor Dr. Maryemma Graham during the 2008 Summer Research Internship to study race and jazz from a historical viewpoint. He finds that the McNair Scholars Program provides hard to find information, but most importantly it provides mentors that are interested in seeing students succeed and giving the best guidance possible. Following the completion of a bachelor’s degree, Earl’s goal is to obtain his Ph.D. in African American studies within six years. Earl says, “There are a lot of things I want to do and getting my Ph.D. would only be the beginning.”