McNair Awards Banquet

By Robert Rodriguez
Project Coordinator

Held on May 5th, 2004, the annual McNair Awards Banquet presented a special opportunity to recognize the graduating McNair Scholars. As the date of the banquet coincided with Cinco de Mayo festivities, McNair Scholars, mentors and other guests were treated to a fajita buffet and the sounds of Latin music at the “Boots” Adams Alumni Center.

The 2003-2004 McNair graduates include: Gerardo Castillo (mentor Tanya Hartman); Crystal Clark (mentor Leon Greene); Kristy Croom (mentor Chuck Marsh); Keturah Harding (mentor Richard Branham); Michael Lemon (mentor Rick Snyder); Latasha Reed (mentor Roma Lee Taunt); Cylus Scarbrough (mentor Stephen Grabow); Laurence Showalter (mentors Kathy Suprenant and Michael Godard); Jasmin Smith (mentor Chico Herbison); Jennifer Sweeton (mentor Ruth Ann Atchley).

Featured speakers included former scholar Madinah Hazim and Gerardo Castillo, who shared their experiences of being McNair Scholars before a receptive audience.

Five special awards were presented to outstanding graduates: the Latina Sullivan Memorial Award went to Latasha Reed; the Eagle Award for Leadership was presented to Jennifer Sweeton; the McNair Spirit Award went to both Gerardo Castillo and Crystal Clark; and the Ronald E. McNair Challenger Award was bestowed upon Michael Lemon.

Shanta Griffin to become KU’s first McNair Ph.D.

By Robert Rodriguez
Project Coordinator

In August 2004, Shanta Griffin will become the first University of Kansas McNair Scholar to earn the doctoral degree. A Ph.D. student in the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, she recently completed an internship at the Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology at Boston University School of Medicine/Boston Medical Center and is currently a Forensic Psychology Fellow at Brown University Medical School.

While a student at KU, Shanta was a member of Omicron Delta Kappa, a national honor society for juniors and seniors, and was selected to carry the Olympic torch as it made its way through Lawrence in 1996. Her McNair research project was entitled, “The Social Interactions of People with Schizophrenia,” under the mentorship of Dr. Rue Cromwell. She graduated from KU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in 1996.
Scholar Achievements

Jasmin Smith won the “Outstanding Woman Student in Community Service” award, presented by The Emily Taylor Women’s Resource Center and the Commission on the Status of Women on April 20, 2004. Jennifer Sweeton won the “Agnes Wright Strickland Award” for her academic record, demonstrated leadership in matters of University concern, respect among fellow students, and the indications of future dedication to services at the University.


Scholars Present Research at Rocky Mountain McNair Conference

By Ms. April C. Bradshaw
McNair Scholar

In late April, while some KU students were beginning to stress out over end-of the semester deadlines and finals, Scholars Eliticia Vieyra, Mulubrhan Misgana, Crystal Clark and April C. Bradshaw attended the Colorado State University 9th Annual Rocky Mountain McNair Research Symposium and Graduate Education Conference held in Englewood, Colorado. The presentations and the conference were phenomenal, not to mention the nifty bags, portfolios, and yes, food, Scholars received for their participation. Students from all over the country attended the conference and enjoyed the amazing accommodations at the Inverness Hotel and Conference Center as well as the “Colorado excursion trips” provided by Colorado State University to the mountains and to the mall.

Overall, the trip proved to be very pleasant, and most of all hilarious, particularly between the hustle and bustle of the forty-five minute drive to the KCI airport in a big-HUGE utility sized-industrial van with a hyperactive-recently divorced-and in a new relationship-chain smoking-airport shuttle guy. He had the air-conditioning on the whole way even though it was freezing outside! And of course, there was April’s sixty-pounds worth of shoes, clothing and other accessories—not to mention her hair. The Scholars’ found themselves, well, never having a dull moment. Friendships solidified and new ones forged. This is a conference that all of the Scholars concur they will never forget!

EOF Grant Awarded to KU McNair Scholars Program

The KU McNair Scholars Program received an Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Grant in the amount of $2700 from the University of Kansas Student Senate on April 6, 2004 for the 2005 fiscal year. This grant will be used to help reimburse McNair Scholars for costs incurred in their graduate school application process.

EOF Grant Awarded to KU McNair Scholars Program

Jack E. Fincham, dean of Pharmacy, received the 2004 University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Pharmacy Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Joe Harrington, associate Professor of English, has been named the Walt Whitman chair in American literature and culture at the University of Groningen, Netherlands. The appointment is for the 2005 spring semester and is awarded through the Fulbright Distinguished Chairs program.

Cornel Pewewardy, associate professor of teaching and leadership, published “Culturally Responsive teaching for American Indian Students” in the ERIC Clearinghouse of Rural Education and Small Schools.

Deborah Dandridge, KU archivist, was a chair and a member of the 50th anniversary national commission for the Brown v. Board of Education conference, March 14-17, 2004 at the University of Kansas.


Joe Donnelly, KU exercise and weight management researcher, has been recognized by the KU community for his guidance of the Weight Control Research Project, a popular program which will now be brought to western Kansas. His findings about the effects of exercise and diet were noted in the March/April 2004 issue of Psychology Today.


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As a current McNair Scholar, I was fortunate enough to be one of four selected to attend the Maryland McNair Research Conference held during the week of Spring Break. The shuttle van left promptly at 5am carrying Kate Harding, Gerardo Castillo, Michael Lemon (scholars) and Robert Rodriguez (Project Coordinator) and myself.

The conference itself was fully packed with speakers from various universities, who gave informative talks on a wide variety of academic topics. I was personally most impressed with the other McNair scholars' presentations. Their topics ranged from “Masculinity and Sexuality” to the “Effects of Sept. 11th on Government and Airline Relations.”

Promptly after the conference concluded we directed all of our energy and attention to our nation’s capitol, Washington D.C. There, we spent 2 full days of museum and memorial sightseeing. “It was an unforgettable experience,” stated Michael. “Many of us left with great memories, pictures and blisters!”

Overall the trip was educational, informative, and fun. The friendships we made during the conference, Gerry’s speech at our nation’s capitol and our fun nights out on the town will not be soon forgotten. Thanks to the McNair scholars program, Robert, and the Scholars who made this trip so memorable!

Interested in becoming a KU McNair Scholar?
Applications are now being accepted for the next 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.
We’re on the Web!
www.ku.edu/~mcnair/

Scholar Spotlight: Jasmin Smith

By Vivian Volante
McNair Student Assistant

As Jasmin Smith says, “The McNair Scholars Program is about passion. Taking what you love and learning all you can about it.” Jasmin, a senior who will be graduating this August with a Bachelor of Arts in Human Development, recently joined the McNair Scholars Program in order to research biracial issues. Her research on how gender and race impact identity has helped her learn more about the world around her as well as herself. She feels that the program allows for individuals to take their passions and use them for the benefit of their community. Jasmin says, “One person can make a big impact on a community, so if you have a passion you should do something about it. Your actions can make a big impact.” Jasmin recently won the “Outstanding Woman in Community Service Award” from the Emily Taylor Resource Center for her dedication to various service agencies. Her immediate plans after graduation are to work with the Americorps Program. She then plans to pursue a master’s degree in Public Health. Jasmin says, “We all have a duty to serve our community.”

SRI 2004 Important Dates

June 1, 2004 - SRI officially begins, kick-off picnic at Centennial Park, checks disbursed
June 30, 2004 - Rough drafts due, checks disbursed
July 27, 2004 - Research Presentations (at KU McNair Symposium)
July 30, 2004 - Final drafts due, checks disbursed
August 23, 2004 - checks disbursed