

Spring 2008

## McNair Messenger- Spring 2008

McNair Staff

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### Scholars Honored with Black History Month Awards



Award-winning Scholars Loren Henderson, Keith Green, and Eilleen Rollerson

On Friday, February 29, three NEIU McNair graduates were honored at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Black History Month Awards Celebration at NEIU. Loren Henderson ('06) and Eilleen Rollerson ('05) each received the Alumni Award of Excellence. Keith Green,

who graduated in December 2007, received the Student Award of Excellence and said, "I am very thankful to fellow McNair Scholar Gerald Chaney for nominating me. The award acknowledges the hard work of students, and in my case, commitment to effecting social justice for marginalized populations."

Several other Scholars recently won awards at NEIU. Preston Fairchild received the Ronald Williams Scholarship for the Spring 2008 semester. Liz Rodriguez received the NEIU Chuck Kane Arts and Sciences Scholarship for the Spring 2008 semester. Gale White received the NEIU Mary Louise Kooyumjian Scholarship for the Spring 2008 semester.

### Research Presentations

Six Scholars attended the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas National McNair Scholars' Research Conference at the University of North Texas (UNT), February 16-18. Maria Chaves, who presented *Playing the "Naming Game: Miami's and Chicago's Latina/o Identity Construction*, said, "Having the experience of presenting my research in front of my peers was great! It was a preview of what my life in academia will be like."

Preston Fairchild presented *An Alternative Model for Treating Huntington Disease Patients*. He said that he "had an absolutely wonderful time at the conference. I'm a more confident presenter with a greater appreciation for community." Other Scholars and their presentations include

Keith Green, *Exploring the Relationship between Possible Selves and Sexual Risk Behavior among College-age African Americans*; Tracy Navarro, *Women in Mexico: The Revolutionary Herself*; Myke Adams, *So Mad about You*, a short film; and Krystle Pereira, *Impossible Ideals: The Commodification of Female Sexuality and its Effects on Young Women and Girls*. "The UNT Conference was an enlightening experience. We were given the opportunity to present our research and get feedback from professors and our peers. It was inspiring to see so many young, intelligent minority students in an academic setting," said Krystle. At the conference banquet, Scholars were inspired by the keynote address of Dr. Erika Camacho of Arizona State University (at center, left) who detailed her experiences as a student of Jaime Escalante, her East L.A. background, and successful academic career as a professor of applied mathematics.

Two Scholars, both English majors mentored by Brad Greenburg, Ph.D., presented their research at the University of Maryland conference on March 13-16.



Scholars with Dr. Camacho at the University of North Texas

### Strategic Planning

Several people associated with the McNair Scholars Program have been chosen to assist in President Sharon Hahs's strategic planning efforts for the university. Scholars Gerald Chaney and Eric Lopez, as well as Dean Janet Fredericks of the Graduate College, have been selected to participate in the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. McNair Director Kim Sanborn is a member of the Strategic Planning Team. So far, the University has conducted preliminary environmental scanning and hired Pappas Consulting Group, Inc. to aid in the process.

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Scholars Chrys Hart and Liz Rodriguez with McNair Director Kim Sanborn at the University of Maryland.

Chrys Hart presented her paper *Casualty or Catalyst? Examining Two Female Roles in "Titus Andronicus" and "Hamlet."* Liz Rodriguez presented *Infiltration and Containment in Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus."*

Several Scholars will present at the NEIU 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium on April 18 and the African American and Latino Research Forum at the University of Illinois at Chicago on April 24.

## Alumni Updates

**Abel Arango** is finishing his master's in Spanish literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Arango, who secured a teaching assistantship, is very enthusiastic about his experience, saying that "to learn has always been tremendously gratifying, but to guide a room of individuals in the learning process is sublime."

**Silvia Avilia** has been busy with her new baby, Adrian, born last November.



*Silvia with little Adrian*

**Colleen Budziak** finished her master's degree at NEIU and is now a chemistry instructor at Harper College. Colleen reports, "I hope to continue on with my Ph.D. in the future, but for now I love teaching my subject to science majors."

**Carolina Campos** is one year from completing her master's degree in teaching at National Lewis. She is also teaching bilingual Spanish classes for the Chicago Public Schools.

**Alvin Raul Cardona** is in his second semester at Roosevelt University in the master of science in journalism program. This spring he was awarded a full-time graduate assistantship.

**Loren Henderson** was recently selected as the first winner of the University of Illinois James W. Compton Research Competition. She received \$5,000 and was recognized at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bridge Awards Dinner at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers in November.

**Eilleen Rollerson** is pursuing a doctorate in sociology at Loyola University at Chicago where she has been elected as student representative to the LUC Library Board. Recently, she presented a paper on the Chicago Housing Authority at the Diversifying Faculty in Illinois (DFI) Annual Conference at the University of Chicago. In April, she will present a paper at the Urban Affairs Association in Baltimore.

**Lisa Krause** recently had her artwork featured in the NEIU Alumni Show, a gallery in Pilsen, and ARTEC 2007 at Peter Jones Gallery. She facilitated a public art and urban planning program through the University of Illinois of Chicago's Great Cities Institute, Afterschool Matters, and Arch-treasures, an art-based community development organization. She teaches after-school art to Chicago Public School students.

**Christine Leone** recently received the Jane Addam's Award and the Dean's Award at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is in her final semester as a master's degree student in social work.

**Michael Magee** completed his master's in education in college student affairs at the University of South Florida. This fall, he will begin the Ph.D. program in educational leadership and policy studies at Arizona State University. In October, he presented research at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in Florida and the Southern Assoc. of College Student Affairs Annual Conference.

**Maximo Marin** has been accepted to the medical schools at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Minnesota, the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Iowa. He will most likely choose the University of Iowa where he intends to earn a master's degree or Ph.D. along with an M.D.

**Evelyn Nazario-Rose** completed her master's degree in educational leadership at NEIU. She plans to begin work on her doctorate in religious philosophy with an emphasis on leadership and organization at Logos University in the fall.

**Patricia Ortega** is in her final semester as a master's degree student in political science at NEIU.

**Alicia Quintero** is enrolled in the Latin American literatures and cultures program at NEIU, where she recently attained a graduate assistantship. She is also a full-time Spanish teacher for the Chicago Public Schools.

**Lina Sweiss** is in her second semester as a Ph.D. student in human development, learning, and culture at the University of British Columbia. Having completed a master's degree in social sciences at the University of Chicago, Lina is currently applying her experience in research to her volunteer work at an after-school program.

## Global Initiatives Day

The McNair Scholars Program recently took part in NEIU's Global Initiatives Day. The Program had a table featuring recent trips to Spain and Poland in hopes of promoting interest in the study abroad programs available at the university. Participants also enjoyed a keynote address from Illinois **Representative Maria Antonia Berrios** from the 39<sup>th</sup> district. After her address, Berrios visited with Maria Chaves and learned about the NEIU McNair Program.



*State Rep. Berrios and Maria Chavez*

## December Grads

The McNair Scholars Program extends congratulations and warmest wishes for continued success to our recent NEIU graduates. **Myke Adams** was awarded a bachelor's in communication, media and theater. He plans to move to California to work in the film industry while pursuing a master's of fine arts. **Keith Green** was awarded a bachelor's in social work, summa cum laude. He has been accepted at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and is awaiting replies from several other schools. **Krystle Pereira** was awarded a bachelor's in sociology, cum laude. **Pejman Ghorbanpour** was awarded a bachelor's in biology and is pursuing a master's in chemistry at NEIU.

## Save the Date!

Be sure to mark your calendars now for the McNair Scholars Annual Dinner. On Thursday, May 1 at 6 p.m., Scholars and their families are invited to welcome the new cohort of Scholars and congratulate those who are graduating. The event provides an opportunity for Scholars' families to become more familiar with the commitment that Scholars make in becoming part of the Program.

## New Cohort Starts

Twelve NEIU students have joined the McNair Scholars Program this semester. Each student will be advised by a faculty mentor and will receive services from the McNair staff.

**Keith Atterberry, Board of Governors Justice Studies**

“Earning a Ph.D. in criminal justice is my ultimate goal. After attaining my Ph.D., I look forward to teaching at the university level and eventually attaining tenure as a full professor. I would like to explore the philosophy of postmodern law and criminology and publish papers and books in that area.”

*Mentor: Loretta Capeheart, Ph.D.*

**Imani Beard, Spanish**

“My goal is to be a successful professor. I plan to assist other students like myself in achieving their short- and long-term goals. My research interest is built around issues that affect the social prosperity of underrepresented groups, especially Latinos. For this reason I want to pursue a Ph.D. in Latina American Studies.”

*Mentor: Victor Ortiz, Ph.D.*

**Brett Coleman, Psychology**

“I’m fascinated by the human mind and behavior. This has inspired my desire to acquire a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. I would like to be involved in research, treatment and teaching as well. I feel that I can bring a fresh perspective and an open mind to these areas.”

*Mentor: Saba Ayman-Nolley, Ph.D.*

**Andrea Cottrell, Political Science**

“I would like to attend graduate school as well as law school in a joint degree program. My focus would be on international relations for my Ph.D. and international law for my law degree. International relations can involve foreign policies and trade agreements, and international law focuses on the legal aspect of those policies. I would like to review those topics from an academic and legal perspective.”

*Mentor: David Leaman, Ph.D.*

**Jeremy Dolan, Philosophy**

“My academic and career goals consist of earning a multidisciplinary Ph.D. which involves the study of consciousness or a similarly related aspect of philosophy of mind. After my Ph.D. work, I would like to teach at a university or work at an independent organization such as the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego.”

*Mentor: John Casey, Ph.D.*

**Lourdes Gomez, History**

“Education enables us to analyze and understand mankind’s current situation and gives us the power to positively change society. Consequently, as a college professor, I will help future generations of students foster a better understanding of the world so that constructive change can take place.”

*Mentor: Richard Grossman, Ph.D.*

**Fernando Gonzales, Sociology**

“My way to make the world better is by attending graduate school and becoming a professor. In this way, I will make a positive impact in the lack of Latino representation achieving higher education. I believe in justice, and I think education is the key to liberation. I will commit myself to this program and have no doubt I will succeed in my journey to a doctorate degree.”

*Mentor: Brett Stockdill, Ph.D.*

**Tamara Martin, History**

“I plan to obtain a Ph.D. in Latin American History, with my focus being Costa Rica. Upon my completion I hope to become a professor. I have chosen this career path because I know that if I’m doing research I will never lose my passion for the subject, and if I’m teaching I will hopefully be able to spark that same passion in someone else.”

*Mentor: Christina Bueno, Ph.D.*

**Nereida Salas, Political Science**

“My goal in life is to attain a Ph.D. in political science with specialization in international studies. As a minority, I feel it is my duty to use the resources and skills I have to give back to my community. Therefore, I plan to do research and use it for advocating environmental and human rights issues. I hope to join a non-government international organization that addresses these issues.”

*Mentor: David Leaman, Ph.D.*

**Kiril Urdov, Economics**

“My goal after completing my Ph.D. in economics is not limited to academia. Surely I will enjoy teaching in a university and working with smart and motivated people. However, I would also like to work for the government or a private research agency. I have an endless passion for research, and making a contribution to the body of knowledge in economics will give meaning to my life.”

*Mentor: Christina Ciecierski, Ph.D.*

**Gale White, Social Work**

“I have a talent for calming and comforting people in crisis. Social work allows me to combine this talent with academic preparation to help people in need. My goals are to attain a Ph.D. and to direct a large facility that would focus on women’s issues like homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse and AIDS/HIV.”

*Mentor: Jade Stanley, Ed.D.*

**Cornelius Williams, Geography**

“The world of geography lends itself to academia by understanding the complexities of the earth structure and its inhabitants with respect to the trend of urbanization in most areas of the world. My interest lies in understanding this process and applying myself to shaping the future of urbanization. My goal is to better understand the environmental effects and population pressures being felt across the globe through research and provide analysis and solutions on local and global scales.”

*Mentor: Dennis Grammenos, Ph.D.*

## Summer Research

Besides conducting research at NEIU, Scholars also have the option of traveling to another university to gain research experience. This summer, Scholars **Keith Atterberry, Imani Beard, and Nereida Salas** will take part in the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) at the University of Illinois at Chicago. **Liz Rodriguez** will participate in SROP at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

The program features faculty-guided research, GRE training, social and collegial activities, and an academic award. SROP is a sponsored by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, which includes all of the Big Ten universities as well as the University of Chicago, in an effort to share resources and promote collaboration amongst the institutions. In January, **Francisco Piña**, recruiter for SROP at UIC, gave a presentation to the Scholars to share the benefits of the program and encourage them to apply.

Scholar **Andrea Cottrell** will also conduct research at Duke University this summer through the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute. The program includes a research component as well as coursework that will foster success in studying political science at the graduate level.

## The Life of Ronald E. McNair

The Ronald E. McNair Scholars Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is a federal TRIO Program. Funded through competitive grants, over 1,000 colleges, universities, community colleges and agencies now offer TRIO Programs in the United States.

The McNair Program was named for astronaut Dr. Ronald E. McNair. McNair was born October 21, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina. He graduated magna cum laude from North Carolina A & T State University and earned his Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. McNair was also a fifth degree black belt karate instructor, performing jazz saxophonist, husband, and father of two.

McNair was recognized as an expert in laser physics and also published papers in molecular spectroscopy, giving presentations on these subjects in the United States and abroad. He was selected by NASA as an astronaut candidate in 1978 and within a year became qualified for an assignment as a mission specialist on Space Shuttle flight crews. He died on January 28, 1986 while serving as a mission specialist on the Space Shuttle *Challenger* when it exploded shortly after takeoff. The McNair Scholars Program honors his memory and his dedication to the pursuit of knowledge and personal excellence.

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