



McNair Moments

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IMPORTANT DATES

The McNair Program and the Honors College will host a recruiting event on January 31 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Honors College.

Distinguished Lecturer, Dr. Larry Sabato, will address McNair scholars and prospective McNair scholars at a dinner and presentation on Thursday, April 5 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. in the Tennessee Room at the James Union Building.

A GARCIA NAMED FITZGERALD

I stepped off the plane to a roaring crowd. No, they weren't cheering for me by any means. The crowd was the usual that receive visitors or loved ones to Costa Rica. A woman with a sign that said, "AIS" was waiting for me. Little did I know that she would become a dear friend and invite me back anytime.

I had lived in Panama as a child but many years later I was back through the Study Abroad program to teach at the American International School — the next day. The staff was friendly but I was nervous. The first day all my students wondered who I was and why a stranger was here. Later, I was anything but a stranger.

From the beginning most of my students were speaking to me in Spanish and I was answering in English. Although I have slightly darker features, I am not fluent in Spanish. My grandmother came to America at a time when Mexicans were

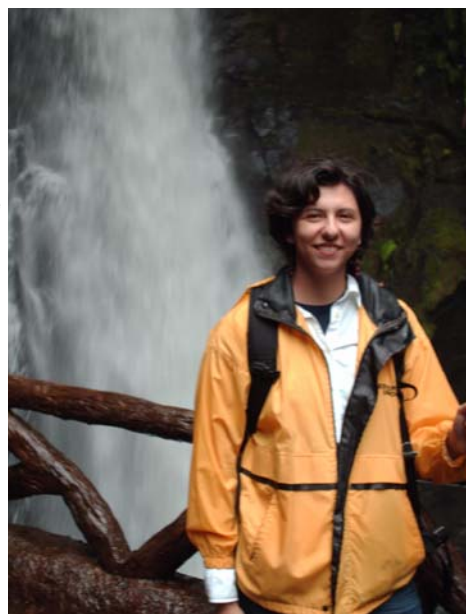
not of high class, so it was imperative that she assimilate. Spanish was only spoken at home. My mother and I learned Spanish with horrible grammar. Though I have roots to identify with, I will always be between three different cultures: Mexicans, Native Americans, and Irish.

Having a name like Fitzgerald and looking like a Garcia (mother's maiden name) doesn't help the situation.

This past December I graduated from MTSU and was the talk of my family, on both sides. Let me tell you about the last four months before graduation.

Costa Rican weather is beautiful, "ticos" are wonderful people, and I took the most beneficial trip of my life to this tiny country. Not only did I have the pleasure of hearing Spanish, but also Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Canadian French, Portuguese and Italian in my classes.

The students and I had three common bonds: We all wanted to speak English,



Anna at a waterfall in Costa Rica.

we all were in a place that was different than our home, and we all wanted to learn. Or at least I hope we all did.

So, how do you teach children about art (my specialty) when you don't speak the same language, have no textbooks, and any artist you reference besides Picasso is unknown to them? Persistence.

I decided to bring them all the way back to the basic ideas of art and to the questions I ask myself which help me look at the world in a more meaningful way. What is art and how is it made? For my classroom I answered it like this: Art is the ordering of experience and it is made in the way you feel you

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The local breakfast.

IAQs

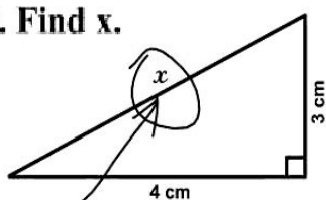
(INFREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

How will the GRE change in September?

The Educational Testing Service, the folks who bring you the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), are making significant changes to the test. For one thing, the exam will be longer — nearly four hours, compared to the current 2.5 hours. Today, the verbal section is 30 minutes and the quantitative section is 45 minutes. In the future, each section will have two 40-minute parts. (The analytic writing section will be 15 minutes shorter.) Since the exam will be more of a grind, it becomes even more important to get a good night's sleep before you take it.

Bubba's answer to question 3 in the quantitative section:

3. Find x .



you answered the previous question correctly. Getting the first five answers right in any section is very important for your score today. That will change. Since the GRE will no longer be adaptive in September, all test-takers will get the exact same test on any given day.

Scoring, too, will change. Now, the range for each section (verbal and quantitative) is 200-800. The mean scores are 470 verbal and 593 quantitative. This fall, the range will be 130-170, with an expected mean of 150 for each section.

The content of the GRE will also differ from today's exam. In the verbal section, the good news is that there will be no more analogies and no more antonyms. On the other hand, there will be more "critical-reading" questions, and sentence-completion questions may have up to three blanks.

In the quantitative section, there will be fewer geometry questions but more word problems. Another change, which will probably reduce the number of "silly" mistakes, is that you will be able to use the keyboard calculator.

Finally, although the writing section will be shorter, your essays will be available to graduate schools for the first time.

You may want to take the GRE now or later, depending on your strengths and weaknesses. □

When you take it will also change. Now, the GRE is offered year-round. In the future, it will be offered 29 times a year, and only on certain dates, so you'll have to pay a bit more attention to scheduling the exam.

The GRE will no longer be a computer-adaptive exam, whereby the difficulty level of a question is based on whether or not

LARRY SABATO @ MTSU

Dr. Sabato will visit the MTSU campus on April 5, 2007. He will appear as a distinguished lecturer from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the Tennessee Room at James Union Building. Dinner will precede his presentation on the topic of overcoming obstacles to a doctoral degree.



20 books on U.S. politics and appears regularly on network television as an elections expert.

Sabato has been described by the Wall Street Journal as "probably the most quoted college professor in the land." He is the founder and director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. He has written more than

At Princeton University, he received a Rhodes scholarship in 1975, entered Oxford University in England and earned a Ph.D. in politics two years later. □



SMILE IF YOU DID WELL

Dr. Mary Enderson, academic coordinator, invited students to an open house to have some lunch and relax during study day before final exams in December. Some of the scholars are pictured above (from left to right): Terri Proctor, Dione Johnson, Kim Cubit, Linda Selby, Sarafina Croft, and Jeffrey Blackman.

WELCOME NEW SCHOLARS!



Jessica
Beard
Geology



Casey
Cole
Mathematics



Christian
Davenport
Psychology



Sierra
Douglas
Recreation & Leisure



Sade
Dunn
Biology

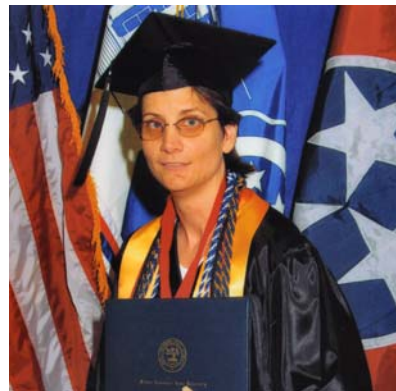
GRANT RENEWAL

As the McNair Program at MTSU nears the end of its second four-year funding cycle and is in the process of applying for a grant renewal with the U.S. Department of Education, we would like to share with you a brief progress report:

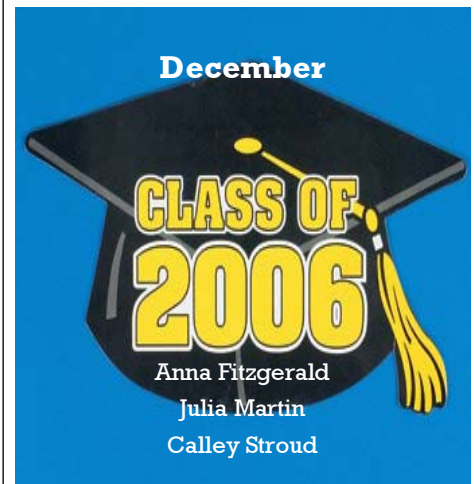
Number of students served	89
Number of graduates to date	59
Number of master's degrees	17
Number in Ph.D. programs	11
Number of professional doctorates	1

MCNAIR MASTERS

Kirsten Boatwright has earned her masters degree in English at Middle Tennessee State University.



MCNAIR GRADS



MCNAIR SCHOLAR MUORCOL IN THE SUDAN



After a peace agreement was signed in 2005 between the national government and the southern rebels in Sudan, thousands of people began to return to their native lands to find nothing but memories of their past lives before the war. Due to the 22 years of civil war, the infrastructure in the south such as roads, houses, schools and hospitals had been destroyed.

As a result, inhabitants started to rebuild their communities all over again. Since I am one of the people who was affected enormously by that war, I thought it necessary to contribute in the development process.

In November 2006, a team of six members (myself included) from three different churches in

Tennessee and Oregon traveled to one of the villages in southern Sudan. Our aim was to conduct educational training in administration. The team was led by two school principals who have more than 15 years of experience, and we taught about 50 elementary teachers.

The classes were held under trees because there were no classrooms. Despite the lack of teaching materials, Sudanese teachers were very motivated because they said their students were hungry for learning.

This was my first trip back since I left Sudan two decades ago. It was a rewarding and eye-opening experience to realize and appreciate the opportunities of American life. — *Muorcol Acut*

Continued from page 1

want to order it such as on paper, in a song, with paint, or sculpture. For those students struggling to understand art, I asked them questions about life. Why do you like to play soccer? Who do you look up to? Why do you like your favorite food? When students would get restless



I would send them outside to look upon the natural wonders of a tropical climate. "Stephen, go outside and tell me how you would draw those lines on the underside of those giant leaves! Rub your hand on the leaf and tell me what you feel!"

After four months of being away from home, my friends, my college career, and the McNair office, I came back to graduate cum laude and with a big medal hanging around my neck. What did these things represent? They represented a woman who had worked hard and changed environmental policy at MTSU, who developed a musical career, who would publish two papers in the *McNair Research Review*, but most of all, these things were the cherry on the top. I am simply a person who knows that life can be short and that when I die I will have no regrets, and nothing I wanted to do will be left undone.

— Anna Fitzgerald



Stella working at American International.

McNAIR STAFF

- L. Diane Miller, PhD, *Director*
- Steve Saunders, *Program Coordinator, Editor*
- Mary Enderson, PhD, *Academic Coordinator*
- Cindy Howell, *Secretary*

POTPOURRI WITH CINDY HOWELL

The McNair Challenger Alliance has two new officers. They are **Claire Marshall**, president, and **Christian Davenport**, treasurer.



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Like all McNair scholars, **Dione Johnson** has been busy lately. She appeared in an MTSU production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and she won the Miss Black and Gold competition. Next is a trip to Cincinnati and Atlanta to audition for the Opera Festival di Roma, a summer music festival in Italy.



Brandy Dacus, Collin Davey, and Terri Proctor have been invited to the Tennessee State Capitol to exhibit posters of their research on February 7.



Former McNair student **Rachel Edmonds** recently won first place among the student papers presented at the Mid South Sociological Association conference in Louisiana. Her topic was self imaging on the internet.

James Edmondson and Dr. Brenda Parker presented a paper titled, "Application of Simulation in Computer Architecture," at the EISTA conference in Orlando, FL.



The University of Notre Dame invited **Jessica Beard** for a graduate school visit in December. She attended as the guest of the Geological Sciences Department, which paid all her expenses for the recruitment trip.