



# McNair Moments

*Middle Tennessee State University*

☆☆ Reaching for the stars, each and every day! ☆☆

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## McNair Coordinator Greets Scholars

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It is with great pleasure and pride that I present the Middle Tennessee State University "McNair Moments" newsletter.

MT McNair Scholars hold a very special place in my life, as do their faculty mentors and our program administrative assistant, Ms. Cindy Howell. Being given the opportunity to work with dedicated, caring, and knowledgeable individuals is what makes my job so special and creates a program that is a great experience for all involved.

The efforts of our scholars and their mentors, and the success they enjoy, sustain my belief that through hard work and steady direction great things can happen. I believe our scholars are dedicated to diversifying the academic environment and to making this world a better place. This is evident from the high percent

of our scholars entering graduate school, many at their first choice institution.

The MT McNair Scholars Program can only be considered a success when you, the scholars, are able to reach your dream of earning a PhD and then share your knowledge with the rest of the world. My goal is to help lead you to the right doorways on your quest of fulfilling that dream.

One of the cornerstones that make this program a success is our faculty mentors. Without them, you would not be able to receive the valuable research experience which impresses graduate school selection committees. Always remember to show your appreciation to your mentors and the other dedicated staff who

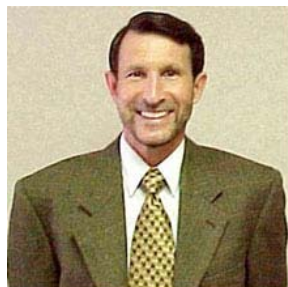


**Ms. Linda Brown shows dedication to the scholars and the program.**

help you achieve your goals.

I look forward to helping each and every scholar throughout the coming year. Please know my door is always open.

*A special thank you to Kirsten Boatwright for the hard work she put into creating our first McNair Moments!*



**Dr. Tom Cheatham  
Dean, College of Basic & Applied Sciences**

## The Honor of Being a McNair Scholar

Our first Academic Coordinator, Tom Cheatham welcomed the second class of McNair Scholars with the following words: "There are 20 McNair Scholars out of 20,000 students at MTSU. The first GRE math preparation seminar will ask you to calculate the corresponding percentage. I'll tell you — it is one tenth of one percent. Wow! What an honor to be selected to

receive the special attention and perks you get in this program."

Three years after the program's initiation, McNair Scholars are considered some of the university's elite students. In addition, the attention and perks scholars receive have both increased. Scholars enjoy a one on one relationship with their faculty mentors.

They are treated to thousands of dollars worth of special graduate preparedness training classes and receive opportunities to present their work at conferences around the country. McNair Scholars are also highly recruited by some of the best graduate programs in the country. A great honor indeed.



## Etiquette Dinner Teaches More than Manners



**McNair Scholars Work for their Supper at Etiquette Dinner**

Dr. Katie Kemp, Professor of Marketing at MTSU's Jennings A. Jones College of Business, played hostess and taskmaster at one of the McNair Program's first major events of the summer.

Scholars, staff, and a select number of invited guests met at the Foundation House on June 17th for an evening of dining and education. The Etiquette Dinner, which is held every summer, is designed to teach scholars the proper protocol for

those dinner meetings with faculty.

Among Dr. Kemp's words of wisdom for diners:

- Never slurp.
- Don't stab your food,
- Don't touch the cherry-tomatoes!

Most scholars were relieved that Dr. Cheatham was in attendance, as he took most of the heat. When Dr. Kemp pointed out that Dr. Cheatham was cut-

ting his meat incorrectly, he smiled sheepishly and said something about the inability of old dogs to learn new tricks. As one scholar put it, "It's the hardest meal I've ever worked for."

That sentiment notwithstanding, most scholars agreed the evening was very educational and enjoyable.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to Dr. Kemp, who most scholars noted, never got the opportunity to eat her own dinner.

## McNair Scholars Research Symposium = Success

The 2002 Research Symposium, hosted by and for the McNair Scholars Program, was a capstone event for a summer filled with learning, mentoring, and researching opportunities.

McNair Scholars presented their research through oral presentations and many included posters of their summer's work

as well. Noteworthy posters were awarded ribbons.

The day began with a presentation on the effectiveness of technology in the classrooms of MTSU and ended with a look at "The Supreme Court's Impact on Minorities in Higher Education."

Most scholars agreed, the

most exciting moments of the symposium came after lunch when scholar Ryan Husak was taken to task by an audience member who disagreed with the conclusions drawn. Ryan, a philosophy major, stood his ground and enthusiastically defended his position gaining the respect of all his fellow scholars.

**Scholar, Ryan Husak, Presenting Research**



**Dr. Orlando Taylor, Dean of Graduate Studies, Howard University**

## Howard University Dean Visits with Scholars

Dr. Orlando Taylor spent the morning of July 29th speaking to the deans and chairs of the various colleges at MTSU. He then turned his attention towards the McNair Scholars.

Answering questions and speaking freely about what it takes to succeed as a graduate student, Dr. Taylor urged schol-

ars to focus on programs that looked at the "whole" student. Dr. Taylor explained to scholars that many graduate programs are interested only in the numbers: GRE scores, GPA figures, or even just filling minority spots.

With advice on everything from getting into the best pro-

gram to getting the best financial package, Dr. Taylor made believers of all the MT McNair Scholars and even recruited some to his own university. Howard University is now scholar Sharon Caton's first choice.

## Scholars Present at SAEOPP/UTK McNair Conference

MTSU McNair Scholars Kirsten Boatwright, Sharon Caton, and Sherry Scott were among the presenters at this year's 8th Annual SAEOPP/UTK McNair National Scholars Research Conference held in Knoxville July 11–14th.

In addition to the presenters, several other scholars from our program attended and all had the opportunity to moderate sessions throughout the conference.

Scholars from universities throughout the country pre-

sented research in areas ranging from Science and Mathematics to Humanities and Education. In addition, attendees visited with graduate programs from around the nation through a graduate fair that boasted over thirty participating institutions.

Dr. Robert Belle, Jr. director of the Office of Federal TRIO Programs and Higher Education Programs lit a spark that lasted all weekend with his opening address. Urging participants to make the most of their McNair opportunities, Dr.

Belle gave a heartfelt speech that left many searching for a hanky.

Dr. Joyce Daye Clayton, president of SAEOPP closed the program Sunday morning by relating her own personal experiences and urging all participants to keep working toward their goals.

Many MT Scholars left Knoxville with both new friends and new opportunities for the future.

## Summer Birthdays

- 5/02 - Freneka Minter  
Sheila Matthews
- 5/09 - Travis Laurance
- 5/11 - Janet Awokoya
- 5/21 - Sherry Scott
- 6/01 - Ryan Husak
- 6/11 - Arieta Thomas
- 7/09 - Shemika Harris
- 7/13 - Nicole Clarke
- 7/16 - Brian Winfrey
- 8/26 - Thomas McCuddy
- 9/01 - Bethany Brent
- 9/04 - Monte  
Hendrickson
- 9/22 - Stephanie Renner
- 9/24 - Lauren Wright

## Where Are They Now?

In upcoming issues of McNair Moments we'll be talking with some of the scholars who have begun their graduate careers. In the meantime, we thought you might like to know where they disappeared to:

- Rhonda Earl - MTSU
- Melody Haley-Buckley - Univ. of Miami
- Nicole Clarke - UK
- Danielle Larkins - UGA
- Nathaniel Mills - Lehigh
- Freneka Minter - UT - Health Sciences Center
- Raven Neese - NC State
- Janet Awokoya - UMD
- Bethany Brent - MTSU
- Tashauna Buchanan - Ball State
- Lauren Wright - UGA

As our past scholars have already proven, there's no telling where we'll end up. So be sure and look for the insiders view of these universities from scholars you know and trust.



*"Whether or not your reach your goals in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them. You're Eagles! Stretch your wings and fly!"*

**-Ronald E. McNair**

## Dr. David James on Mentoring

Dr. David P. James, Dean of Educational Development and Degree/Extension Centers and Special Programs at Prince George's Community College in Maryland, brought words of advice for both scholars and mentors this past summer. In his Mentee-Mentor workshop, Dr. James gave hints on every-

thing from selecting the right mentor to what to do if you find yourself with the wrong mentor.

Several of the McNair scholars were joined by their mentors, making the experience even more educational.

Dr. James spent time lectur-

ing and included group activities aimed at helping scholars define what they should be looking for in a mentor relationship.

If you missed this workshop, stop by the McNair office and pick up a copy of Dr. James' PowerPoint presentation.



**Dr. David P. James  
Dean, Educational Development, Prince George's  
Community College**

# McNair Staff Member Inspired by Scholars



**Ms. Cindy Howell, McNair  
Admin. Assistant and  
MTSU Student**

Ms. Cindy Howell has been with the McNair Program since the first summer in 2000 and most scholars will admit that they are inspired by her ever-present smile. This semester, Ms. Cindy says she has gained some inspiration from the scholars as well.

“McNair scholars have inspired me,” Ms. Cindy says when explaining why, after a lengthy absence, she has returned to the classroom.

The most obvious question is “where does she find the time?”

In addition to her History class, which meets once a week, Ms. Cindy is also mother to two sons, grandmother to

three grandsons, the pictures of whom cover her office walls, and happily expects her fourth grandchild early next year.

She is active in her church and was recently selected to be a juror, a position that offers a first-hand history lesson.

Despite the time constraints, Ms. Cindy is adamant in her belief that “you need to get a degree.” And while she admits, “I’d much rather stay at home than study,” she also says of her class schedule, “I started with one (class), maybe next year it’ll be two.”

Ms. Cindy’s burden is eased somewhat by the fact that her husband Ray, joins her in class.

In fact, they scored exactly the same on their first exam, although Ms. Cindy was quick to point out that they missed different questions.

“Sometimes I wonder how Ray and I got through our Associates Degrees,” says Ms. Cindy. “I don’t remember it as being hard.” On the other hand, she states that three years of watching scholars has convinced her that it IS hard work.

Ms. Cindy’s hard work, both in and out of the classroom, is truly inspirational.



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## McNair Scholars Program

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## Welcome All!



The MTSU Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program is a Federal TRIO Program that is funded by the US Department of Education and Middle Tennessee State University, a Tennessee Board of Regents Institution. MTSU is an equal opportunity, non-racially identifiable, educational institution that does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.