



Black Scholar Awards

2008

PROGRAM

The Eleventh Annual
Black Scholar Awards

sponsored
by

The University of Rhode Island
Black Scholar Awards
Program Committee

7 April 2008

ELEVENTH ANNUAL BLACK SCHOLAR AWARDS PROGRAM
Memorial Union Ballroom
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island
7 April 2008

Presider

Harold D. Bibb, B.A., M.S., Ph.D.
Associate Dean of the Graduate School

Welcome

Christopher D. Hunter, B.S., M.S., Ph.D.
Department of Civil Engineering

Invocation

Donna Gilton, B.A., M.S., Ph.D.
Department of Library and Information Studies

Introduction of Speaker

Donald Cunnigen, B.A., MA., A.M., Ph.D.
Department of Sociology-Anthropology

Speaker

Nicky Sheats, B.A., M.P.P., J.D., Ph.D.
Center for the Urban Environment, Director
Thomas Edison State College

About the Black Scholar Awards Program

The Black Scholar Awards Program was developed by Dr. Donald Cunnigen and Dr. Yvette Harps-Logan, members of the University of Rhode Island Black Faculty Association, in 1998 as a means of recognizing the outstanding accomplishments and contributions of graduating students of African descent. Although Black students received recognition from other entities on campus, the Black faculty wanted to demonstrate their commitment and interest in the recruitment, retention, development, and support of Black students at the University. Presently, the program is organized by the Black Scholar Awards Program Committee.

The University of Rhode Island Black Scholar Awards Program Committee acknowledges the longstanding financial support and encouragement of President Robert Carothers, University of Rhode Island Alumni Association, and the Office of Alumni Relations.

Black Scholar Awards Program Co-ordinators
Dr. Donald Cunnigen and Dr. Christopher Hunter

Keynote Speaker
Nicky Sheats, B.A., M.P.P., J.D., Ph.D.
Director, Center for the Urban Environment
Thomas Edison State College



Dr. Nicky Sheats grew-up in Ewing Township, New Jersey, a suburb near Trenton, New Jersey, where he attended the local public school system. In high school, although he was president of the student council, most of his spare time was spent playing sports. He was second team all county in baseball and football. His parents, the late Elizabeth and George Sheats, were the first in their families to go to college; both having attended Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina. His mother taught junior high school in Trenton for many years; and his father was an officer in the Air Force for 22 years after being trained as a pilot as one of the original Tuskegee Airmen. His brother, Stanley, is a legal services attorney in Paterson, New Jersey.

Dr. Sheats was the first African-American student from his high school to attend Princeton University and he ultimately graduated from that institution with a degree in economics. From Princeton he went on to Harvard University and received a J.D. degree from Harvard Law School and a Master of Public Policy degree from the Kennedy School of government. While he was in law school he was a co-founder of the Third World Coalition, an organization for law students Of Color at Harvard.

After Harvard, Dr. Sheats was a public interest lawyer for almost eight years. He served as a law clerk for the Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals (the equivalent of a state supreme court), a landlord-tenant and housing attorney for Camden Regional Legal Services, a public defender in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and a legal instructor at a community legal

education and college preparatory program in Harlem. During the almost four years, he was a public defender who tried 30 cases and had an unusually high success rate.

While he was a public defender, Dr. Sheats decided he wanted pursue a long-held interest in science. This led him to take post-baccalaureate courses in science at the City College of New York; and eventually to return to Harvard University as a doctoral student in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. In 2000, he received a Ph.D. in Earth and Planetary Sciences. His field of study was biological oceanography and his specialty was light stable isotope biogeochemistry.

But perhaps the most important thing he took from his second matriculation at Harvard was a strong interest in the newly emerging field of environmental justice. Environmental justice is concerned with the disproportionate amount of pollution that is often inflicted upon poor neighborhoods and communities Of Color and is therefore situated at the intersection of the civil rights and environmental movements. While he was a graduate student in the sciences, Dr. Sheats helped to create and teach a course on environmental justice in the undergraduate curriculum at Harvard. That course still exists.

He has worked at several institutions since earning his science degree in the year 2000. He worked for a year as a "science and law fellow" at Environmental Defense, an influential national mainstream environmental advocacy organization. He also spent a semester as a visiting scholar at The College of New Jersey and three years as a post-doctoral fellow at the Earth Institute of Columbia University. At Columbia, he performed research on particulate matter air pollution, which is a public health hazard in most large cities in the United States. During this same period, he was also a founding member of the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, the only statewide environmental organization in New Jersey that focuses solely on environmental justice issues.

In his current position as the Director of the Center for the Urban Environment of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State College, he spends almost all of his professional life providing support to the environmental justice community of New Jersey in several areas. Among the issues his center is attempting to address are particulate matter air pollution, climate change, cumulative risk and impacts, the siting of schools on contaminated land and increasing the capacity of the environmental justice community to address these and other issues. Dr. Sheats is also pursuing scientific research with several academic partners.

Part of his time as a public defender was spent representing juveniles in both criminal matters and family proceedings. Since then, he has consistently volunteered for organizations that help young people Of Color in some manner. During his second stay in the Boston area, he volunteered at a Saturday academic enrichment program for African-American boys called the Paul Robeson Institute that was run by the Concerned Black Men of Massachusetts. His role was to teach science to boys in the third to eighth grades. When he initially returned to New Jersey he served on the board, and as a mentor, for EnvironMentors, a mentoring program that paired an adult with a high school student and asked them to complete an environmental science project. Currently, he is on the board of Legal Outreach, the college preparatory program he worked for previously, and GreenFaith, an interdenominational environmental advocacy project. Legal Outreach uses legal education and law education techniques to prepare youth from Harlem and other parts of New York City to attend college. One of GreenFaith's missions is to engage inner-city youth in environmental issues and advocacy.

He considers it an honor to be asked to speak to African-American undergraduates at the University of Rhode Island and is thankful for the opportunity.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS FOR EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Award	Presenter
William Gould Award for All-Around Outstanding Achievement	Vanessa Wynder Quainoo, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. Department of Communications Studies
Arthur L. Hardge Award for All-Around Outstanding Community Service	Earl N. Smith III, B.S., M.S.W. Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Outstanding Leadership and Contribution to the University Community	Ana W. Barraza, B.A., M.S. Program Coordinator, Center for Student Leadership Development
Harvey Robert Turner Award for Outstanding Service to the University of Rhode Island Black Community	Christopher D. Hunter, B.S., M.S., Ph.D. Department of Civil Engineering
Sojourner Truth Award for Scholarly Persistence and Dedication	Gitahi Gititi, B.Ed., M.A., Ph.D. Departments of English and African and Afro-American Studies
St. Clair Drake Award for Outstanding Scholarly Research	Cynthia Hamilton, B.A., Ph.D. Departments of History and Political Science Director of African and African-American Studies Program
Althea Gibson and Jackie Robinson Scholar-Athlete Awards	Gordon H. Dash, B.A., M.B.E., D.B.A. Department of Finance
St. Elmo Brady Award for Outstanding Achievement in Science	Kendall M. Moore, B.A., M.A. Department of Journalism
Noreen Coachman Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Older Student	Donald Cunnigen, B.A., M.A., A.M., Ph.D. Department of Sociology-Anthropology
Estes Benson Award for Academic Achievement	Melvoid Benson, A.B. North Kingstown School Committee
Onyx Senior Honor Society Ceremony	Donald Cunnigen, B.A., M.A., A.M., Ph.D. Department of Sociology-Anthropology, Onyx Advisor Cynthia Hamilton, B.A., Ph.D. Departments of History and Political Science Director of African and African-American Studies Program, Onyx Advisor

AWARDS

William Gould Award for All-Around Outstanding Achievement

William Gould was a member of the University of Rhode Island Class of 1958. He was the first Black appointed to serve as the chairperson of the National Labor Relations Board. The Gould Award is presented to a senior in recognition of all-around outstanding achievement in the areas of organizational leadership, peer relationships, faculty-student relationships, general service, and academic performance.

Recipient: Kalyanna Champlain and Christian Apollon

Arthur L. Hardge Award for All-Around Outstanding Community Service

Arthur Hardge was a major force in the affairs of Rhode Island's Black community. As a part of his activity, he founded the Talent Development Program at the University of Rhode Island. The Talent Development Program has played an integral role in the growth of the University's Black community. The Hardge Award is presented to a senior in recognition of outstanding service to the Black community outside of the University.

Recipient: Aleah Bagwell Moreino

Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Outstanding Leadership and Contribution to the University Community

Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights leader, scholar, and visionary who played a pivotal role in the integration of American society. The King Award is presented to a senior in recognition of outstanding service in the areas of organizational leadership, volunteer service, and general service in the University of Rhode Island community.

Recipient: Michonne Gamble Rivers and Asad Akinfolarin

Harvey Robert Turner Award for Outstanding Service to the University of Rhode Island Black Community

Harvey Robert Turner was a member of the University of Rhode Island Class of 1914. He was one of the earliest Black graduates of the University. The Turner Award is presented to a senior in recognition of significant contributions made to the Black community of the University through activities that demonstrated a commitment to the community's growth and recognition of others.

Recipient: Matthew Lewis and Maye E. Osborne

Sojourner Truth Award for Scholarly Persistence and Dedication

Sojourner Truth escaped from slavery to become a significant figure in Black history. In delivering her famous "Ain't I A Woman" speech, she made a lasting contribution to American oratory. The Truth Award is presented to a senior in recognition of success despite dire financial, physical and/or personal problems that would ordinarily impede progress.

Recipient: David Bell

Jackie Robinson and Althea Gibson Scholar-Athlete Awards

In 1946, Jackie Robinson broke the color line in American professional baseball. In 1957, Althea Gibson became the first African-American female tennis player to win the Wimbledon singles. As outstanding athletes, they never let the racism of the day defeat their purpose. The Robinson Award is presented to a senior male athlete(s) and the Gibson Award is presented to a senior female athlete(s) in recognition of outstanding performance in sports that highlighted skills of good sportsmanship and the best qualities of the scholar-athlete.

Recipients: Adrian Owen (Football), William Daniels (Basketball), Whitney Hollis (Basketball), and Safiatu K. Mojidi (Basketball)

Saint Elmo Brady Award for Outstanding Achievement in Science

In 1916, Saint Elmo Brady became the first person of African descent to receive a Doctor of Philosophy degree in chemistry. He had a distinguished research and teaching career, including appointments at Fisk University, Howard University, Tuskegee Institute, and Tougaloo College. The Brady Award is presented to the graduating senior with the high academic achievement in the sciences among Black Students.

Recipient: Daryl Mensah

Noreen Coachman Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Older Student

Noreen Coachman was a member of the University of Rhode Island Class of 1973. She exemplified the best characteristics of an older student by obtaining an M.D. after pursuing a secretarial career. The Coachman Award is presented to an older graduating senior who has achieved excellence in academic and extracurricular life while maintaining family and work responsibilities.

Recipient: Angela Lovegrove

Estes Benson Award for Academic Achievement

Estes Benson was a member of the University of Rhode Island Class of 1979. As a student, he was a star athlete, fraternity man, and participant in a variety of campus activities. The Benson Award is presented to a male and a female student with the highest overall academic grade point average among Black seniors.

Recipients: Cynthia Murray (4.00) and Frederick Arnett II (3.92)

Tossie E. Taylor Jr. Community Spirit Award

Tossie E. Taylor Jr. was a University of Rhode Island Ph.D. recipient in cell biology. He served in administrative positions at Delaware State University, Cheyney State University, and the Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council. He was active in numerous community service groups, including Big Brothers, NAACP, Boy Scouts of America, and Rotary. The Taylor Community Spirit Award is presented to an individual or group in recognition of outstanding service that reflects the dynamic spirit of the New England minority community.

Recipient: Nicky Sheats

Saint Clair Drake Award for Outstanding Scholarly Research

Topic: "Reflections from the Back Streets of a Renaissance City: The View from South Providence" African and African-American Studies 466—Urban Problems

The Saint Clair Drake Award for Outstanding Scholarly Research is presented to a senior(s) who have demonstrated the best aspects of scholarly research through the development, execution, and completion of a scholarly research project. It is named for Saint Clair Drake, a noted anthropologist/sociologist who served as a distinguished professor at Stanford University.

A group of University of Rhode Island students in African and African-American Studies 466—Urban Problems conducted outstanding research on the critical issues facing residents of South Providence. This special recognition honors their important contribution to understanding the needs of people of color in Providence.

Recipients: Tanzeem Ajmiri, Victor Gonzalez, Ryan Hughes, Sharon L. Isom, Delvin Johnson, Matthew Lewis, Jacquelyn Moreino, Albert Omijie and Elvis Soriano

PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

Gould Award

1998

Darran Anthony Simon

1999

Danielle Leigh Hill

2000

Chantale M. Edouard

2001

Patricia Dos Santos

2002

Marvens LaPorte

Monica Tavares

2003

Reza Clifton

Cynthia Prudence

2004

Naomi S. Gobern

2005

Pascale Delaunay

2006

Nimofa A. Solola

2007

Jenell B. Yates

Hardge Award

1998

Solomon Comissiong

1999

Marc Hardge

2000

Azikiwe Husband

2001

Ana P. Semedo

2002

Barry O'Connor

2003

Alberto DaCruz

Shaquila Hazard

2004

Andrea D. Hepburn

2005

Raydeana Roderick

2006

Nicole Austin

2007

Sharon L. Isom

King Award

1998

Ebony-Anne Smith

1999

Alissa P. Carroccino

2000

Alissa P. Carroccino

2001

Igor S. Garcia

2002

Laura Santos

2003

Shawalewa Brown

2004

Paulo M. Cruz

Thelma Yaniza Titus

Benjamin Wesley

2005

Emily M. Hall

2006

Brian A. Monteiro

2007

Chris Washington

Turner Award

1998

Nepko Brown

1999

Winston Bedell

2000

Jonathan L. Lewis

2001

Marlon J. Mussington

2002

John C. Cruz

2003

Dorien Agyapon

2004

Claudette M. Bannerman

2005

Candace Ranglin

2006

Aaron M. E. Gardner

2007

Iziarah Roberts

Taylor Community Spirit Award

1999

Brothers United for Action

2001

Jack Reed

2002

Ambrose Jearld

2003

Jimmie L. Davis, Jr.

2004

Peter F. Hurst, Jr.

2005

Geraldine S. Hines

2006

Lisa Churchville

2007

D. Crystal Byndloss

Truth Award

1998

Shirley Consuegra

1999

Celise Craig

2000

Cal Vinson Whitfield

2001

Abner Correia

2002

Nicole Love

2003

Naomi Love

2004

Teresa B. Evans

2005

Alex Bien-Aime

2006

Caroline O. Freeman

2007

Kristie Correia

Robinson Award

1998

John Bennett

LaJhon Jones

Joshua King

Cuffino Mobley

1999

Antonio Reynolds-Dean

Preston Murphy

2000

Silas Otniel Rodrigues Pinto

2001

Leroy Womack

Andrew Wafula

2002

Brackston Poitier

2003

Lazare Adingono

2005

Randy Brooks

Reuben Ray

2006

Tyrese Sullivan

Terrence Mack

Robert Eben Johnson, IV

2007

Darrell Harris

Laejon Brooks

Gibson Award

1999

Martinique Alber

2001

Zinobia Machanguana

2002

Yatar Kuyateh

2003

Gina Rosen

2004

Denise M. King

2005

Pascale Delaunay

2006

Erin Aseli Fleming

Coachman Award**2002****Maria L. Sampson****2003****Bryan Barros****2004****Barbara J. Ellis****2006****Brandy O'Donnell****2007****Frantz Medina****Benson Award****1998****Katrina Douglas****Troy Robinson****1999****Cheryl Anne Connor****Jose Barbosa****2000****Angelica Gomes****Wennzdehl Powell****John Harris****2001****Michael Lyle****Kimberly Anderson****2002****Babatunde Ologun****Joyll Smith****2003****Claudio Rodrigues****Cynthia Prudence****Kimberly Starks****2004****Sharina Niera Savage****Freddie Skipworth****2005****Millie N. White****Adilson M. Ribeiro****2006****Kevin Delle Femine****Natasha L. Soares****2007****Chris S. Washington****Amber L. Wells****James G. Smart****Brady Award****2004****Demond M. Boseman****2006****Destiny Woodbury****2007****Lucelene Almeida****Edmonds Award****2007****Emily Bibb****ASBS President's Award****1998****Darran Anthony Simon****1999****Danielle Leigh Hill****Olajumoke O. Akinrolabu****2000****Silas Otniel Rodrigues Pinto****Uhuru Sasa Anniversary Award****1999****Uhuru Sasa****Hamilton Scholars****2005****Moses Siums****2006****Jacqueline Moreino****Shantae Moreino****2007****Titilayo C. Fakiyesi****Ruth Laurent****Jolene Octavius**

2008 Onyx Senior Honor Society Inductees

Cynthia Murray, 4.00
Olubukola Babalola, 3.97
Frederick Arnett II, 3.92
Robin Covington, 3.56
Elisa Semedo, 3.56
Helena Giko, 3.55
Kimberly A. Pettaway, 3.52
Scott Pimental, 3.46
Calvin R. Alexander, 3.40
Tolulope Adenodi, 3.37
Folasayo Sonaike, 3.28
Lisa D. McLeod, 3.26
Olufunmilayo Y. Jenyo, 3.25
Richileu A. Norris, 3.25
Fabienne Laguerre, 3.23
Kourtney A. Simpson, 3.23
Marie Joseph, 3.18
Ginette J. Bernadotte, 3.16
Frederick K. Holloway, 3.16
Maye E. Osborne, 3.15
Tanzeem Ajmiri, 3.14
Darryl A. Mensah, 3.13
Safiatu K. Mojidi, 3.12
Jihan Minikon, 3.11
Matthew Lewis, 3.07
Courtney King, 3.06
Aleah Bagwell Moreino, 3.05
Joseph McCullough, 3.04
Ankawha Blain, 3.02
Jasmine Konkin, 3.02
Michonne L. Gamble-Rivers, 3.01

Brief History of Onyx Senior Honor Society

In 1974, three administrators and seven Black students at the University of Pennsylvania founded the Onyx Senior Honor Society. Its three main tenets place emphasis on heritage, humanity, and humility. Through these tenets, the Onyx recognizes Black student academic achievement by encouraging and providing incentives for scholastic excellence and community service. Onyx membership is extended to academically accomplished Black senior students with overall grade point averages of 3.00 or higher. The University of Rhode Island chapter is the first New England state university to establish an Onyx chapter.

Past Speakers

1998

*Dr. Harold D. Bibb
Associate Dean of Graduate School
University of Rhode Island*

1999

*Dr. John H. McCray
Vice President of Student Affairs
University of Rhode Island*

2000

*Dr. Robert Carothers
President
University of Rhode Island*

2001

*The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate*

2002

*Dr. Ambrose Jearld
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*

2003

*Dr. Jimmie L. Davis
MITRE, Incorporated*

2004

*Peter F. Hurst, Esquire
Chief-Executive-Officer and President
Urban Financial Group/The Community's Bank*

2005

*The Honorable Geraldine S. Hines
Associate Justice
Massachusetts Superior Court*

2006

*Ms. Lisa Churchville
General Manager and CEO
NBC-10, WJAR*

2007

*Dr. D. Crystal Byndloss
Assistant Dean for Research
Temple University*