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Message From the Executive Director Welcome to *The Journey*!



The Newsletter has a new name. Although Ronald H. Brown's life ended more than fifteen years ago, his journey continues. As the Program grows, develops and moves forward, it keeps central to its mission those ideals that were embodied by the late Secretary: leadership and service. The Ron Brown Scholars, all 281 of them, are living legacies, testaments to the strength of our core mission. We invite you to join us on *The Journey*. You will be amazed and impressed with their stories and their dedication to education, to each other and to helping the greater community.

In this issue of *The Journey*, you will read about Scholars like Geraldine Pierre (2004) and Sheila Adams (2001) who have both already succeeded immensely in their chosen pathways and remain steadfastly committed to leading and serving others. Sheila demonstrates her capacity to lead by serving as editor-in-chief of a new law journal based at Columbia School of Law, while Geraldine recently completed an amazing service project in Kenya by enlisting the skills of her fellow Scholars and seeking the financial support of the Ron Brown Scholar Community Service Foundation. You will be introduced to our newest class of Scholars— sixteen vibrant and diligent young people who will undoubtedly make an impact wherever they go. We invite you to welcome our newest Advisory Board members, Michelle Ifill and Tony Waller.

For those of you who continue to ask, I would like to expand upon the ways you, your company or your organization can become involved in the Ron Brown Scholar Program. The Program works because of a high degree of personal attention to the academic, personal and career growth of the Scholars, as well as their will to succeed. Scholars assist each other in their efforts to further themselves and collaborate to improve their communities. We are effective because of friends like you who encourage, mentor, advise and support our Program and our vision.

Unlike more traditional scholarships, which focus primarily on awarding funds, we have envisioned and created a community of Scholars that share a life-long link and are motivated to do their utmost to give to society, each other, and the Program. Our Scholars embrace our motto: *the value of one, the power of all*. Many organizations talk about instilling a culture of philanthropy in their alumni, but doing so is not easy. The Ron Brown Scholar Program hits on what philanthropy experts say are key to success: It fosters a spirit of belonging, offers a way to contribute to social change and provides a continued value in graduates' lives.

As we continue to move forward, our goal is to reach our previous number of 20 new Scholars a year while simultaneously providing mentoring and networking opportunities to the more than 6,000 qualified applicants we must turn away each year. (We are launching a new initiative, Ron Brown CAPtains to accomplish just that and reach out to high school students).

We encourage you to stay tuned, become involved and consider contributing by doing one or more of the following: Sponsoring a Scholarship; Becoming a Mentor; Sharing your time and talents; Becoming a Friend; Taking a Scholar to lunch or dinner; Helping us to develop service and leadership opportunities for Scholars; Sharing the Program with your circle of influence; Hosting an event or by funding a summer internship.

Thank you for joining us on *The Journey*! – Michael A. Mallory

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RBSP Welcomes Michelle C. Ifill and Thomas A. Waller to Advisory Board

The Ron Brown Scholar Program is pleased to welcome to its Advisory Board Michelle C. Ifill and Thomas A. "Tony" Waller. Ms. Ifill's background is corporate law and Mr. Waller comes to the Program from Corporate Affairs for Wal-Mart. Both new members are sincerely invested in their respective communities and will provide immeasurable expertise to the Advisory Board.

As Vice President and Deputy General Counsel at Verizon Business, Ms. Ifill leads a team of attorneys and legal assistants that provide commercial legal advice and contract negotiation support for the over \$12 billion in revenue generated by the Global Sales and Strategic Services business segment.



Michelle Ifill currently serves as Vice President and Deputy General Counsel at Verizon Business.



Tony Waller is a Senior Director for Corporate Affairs at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Fellow board member and retired Senior Vice President of Global Communications at Verizon Business Terri Dean introduced Ms. Ifill to the Program several years ago and is pleased to see the relationship bloom. "We are fortunate to have Michelle join our Advisory Board. She has been an admirer of the Program for some time and now we feel blessed that she will be working closely with us to help the Ron Brown Scholar Program remain the preeminent program of its type! Michelle, welcome aboard!" says Dean.

In addition to her new Advisory Board responsibilities, Ms. Ifill serves as Arbitrator for the National Association of Securities Dealers and is a founding member of the MCI Legal Diversity Council, a member of the Corporate Counsel Women of Color, the National Bar Association, and on the Executive Board of the Westchester Chapter of Jack & Jill of America, Inc, a national non-profit organization dedicated to the interests of children.

Mr. Waller is Senior Director of Corporate Affairs Constituent Relations for Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. and is based in Arkansas. In addition to his business commitments he also serves as Chair of the NAACP ACT-SO Advisory Council and is on several other national boards.

His community and civic engagement has garnered many awards, including the first ever Spirit of Democracy Emerging Leaders Award, presented by the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. He has twice received the Donald H. McGannon Award, the highest distinction given by the National Urban League to a corporate individual in recognition of one's efforts in the community.

As a graduate of the University of Virginia, Mr. Waller is a "die-hard WAHOO," and remains active, having served on the board of the Walter N. Ridley Scholarship Fund, named after its first African-American graduate. His interests are varied and include a passion for the arts and a knack for languages. He serves on the Corporate Advisory Council of the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas and speaks Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese.

The Program is pleased and proud to have Ms. Ifill and Mr. Waller join the Advisory Board and hopes that you will have an opportunity over the coming years to make their acquaintances. Their combined knowledge and support will be immensely valuable. ■

Program Hosts 2nd Annual American Journey Awards

The 2nd Annual Ronald H. Brown American Journey Awards held at the J.W. Marriott in Washington, DC on March 25th was a capacity event honoring four deserving recipients and raising funds for the Ron Brown Scholar Program. Advisory Board members Marva Smalls, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Chief of Staff for Nickelodeon/MTVN and Family Group and Tom Werner, Chairman of the Boston Red Sox and partner and co-founder of Carsey Werner were enthusiastic hosts of the evening and helped highlight the incredible honorees.

Established in 2009, The American Journey Award seeks to honor those individuals who exemplify the vision and transformative ideals of the late Secretary and serve as models to which the Scholars should aspire. This year's distinguished honorees included: Thomas Hale Boggs, Jr., Julian Bond, and C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown.

Thomas Hale Boggs, Jr., founding partner of Patton Boggs, LLP, hired Ron Brown into his firm and helped him progress to the partner level. Their combined visions helped build the firm into one of the most formidable law offices in Washington, DC, which incorporated a spirit of service and giving that still stands today. Mr. Boggs has been a supporter of the Ron Brown Scholar Program since its inception and continues to generously donate the law firm's offices for the finalist interviews during the annual Selection Weekends. Mr. Boggs was introduced by his esteemed colleague Rodney Slater.

Dr. Julian Bond, a national icon, was a key figure in the civil rights movement and is active as the Chairman Emeritus of the NAACP and a board member of the Southern Poverty Law Center. His life has been dedicated to helping others advance and reach their potential, fulfilling their dreams. He continues to inspire individuals, serving as a distinguished professor



Mike Mallory (second from left) joins American Journey Award recipients Thomas Hale Boggs, Jr. (far left), Eddie Brown (second from right) and Julian Bond (right).

at American University and a faculty member in the History Department at the University of Virginia. Advisory Board member Thaderine MacFarlane presented Dr. Bond with his award.

Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown are committed community philanthropists who donate their time, energy and resources to a host of local priorities in their hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. Mr. Brown is founding manager of Brown Capital Management and Mrs. Brown's background is in education and



American Journey Awards recipients Eddie and Sylvia Brown are presented their award by Tom Wilcox (far right), President of the Baltimore Community Foundation.

business. With a passion towards education, the Browns have created new opportunities for Baltimore's youth, including the Turning the Corner Achievement Program, which provides support for young people in high school and beyond. The director of their foundation, Tom Wilcox, introduced the Browns and presented them with their award.

The 2011 American Journey Award honorees represent Ron Brown's dedication to service and helping others achieve their goals. Ron Brown Scholars and the 2011 finalists, along with a host of longtime and new friends, including members of the Brown family, gathered to make this event an incredibly special evening. Ron Brown Scholar Program founder Anthony M. Pilaro provided opening remarks recognizing Michael Mallory for his vision and dedication to the Program and the Scholars. Washington, DC Mayor Vincent Gray and his daughter Jonice Tucker Gray both gave brief remarks welcoming guests to the city and highlighting the importance of scholarship support.

After dinner and the awards presentations guests were entertained by the musical talents of Free Spirit and danced into the night. ■

Legacy of Late Secretary Commemorated

On the same weekend that the Ronald H. Brown American Journey Awards were held, a section of street in Washington, DC between Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues was renamed "Ron Brown Way" to commemorate the late Secretary. The following week, the former Secretary of Commerce was again honored when President Barack Obama, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and Congressman Charles Rangel dedicated the Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building in New York City.

From Homeless Child to Star Student

The Washington Post

By Robert Samuels, Friday, April 1, 2011, 9:25 PM

The opponent in the wrestling match tossed Michael Robinson into the front row. It was the regional high school wrestling tournament, and the illegal move was an act of psychological warfare. “It was one of those moments when things escalate,” said Principal Debra Mugge, who watched the match, horrified. Her star student was bruised but not shaken. He took a deep breath, returned to the mat and won the bout. “Life is analogous to a wrestling match,” reflected Michael, a three-sport athlete, trombonist, student government president and straight-A student at Springbrook High School in Silver Spring. “Everything you do is based on preparation. What the outcome will be is based on hard work. A lot of your success is determined by heart.”

The young life of Michael Robinson is a story of sweat, studies and struggle. He is Springbrook’s first Ron Brown scholar; the designation, named after the late Clinton administration commerce secretary, comes with a \$40,000 scholarship. It’s the latest accolade for an 18-year-old who grew up fatherless on a diet of canned foods and rice, endured months in a homeless shelter, and is now a first-generation college prospect choosing among Columbia, Princeton and Yale. At each of those schools, about 7 percent of applicants were accepted this year. Of the 6,200 who applied for the Brown scholarship, 16 won the prize.

Michael’s teachers say his success is a measure of a teenager obsessively focused on achievement. Sometimes they wonder if he’s even aware of the odds that were stacked against him. Despite all the obstacles, he can think of only one thing that’s really bothered him: “Getting that B,” he said, laughing about a quarterly progress report in an AP course last school year — the only blemish in 12 years of report cards.

Early on, his mother suspected her son had a gift. He wasn’t a particularly early reader or talker, but 41-year-old Chimene Jules notes with a laugh that “he was potty trained—fully potty trained—at 18 months.” Jules, who was a retail manager in Manassas, raised five children on her own. She and Michael’s father had a fall-

ing out, and he’s been out of the picture since Michael, the third child, was 2. “We lived paycheck-to-paycheck,” Jules said, “and I worked hard to keep a roof over their heads and make sure they had food every night.” Many nights, though, she could afford to give the children only rice or oatmeal.

School fueled Michael. He was post-



2011 RBS Michael Robinson will attend Yale University this fall to study Political Science.

ing perfect math and reading scores on assessment tests. His neighbors had horses; he had a copy of “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.” In April 2004, Jules lost her job. She fell behind on payments on her home, then maxed out her credit cards trying to stay afloat. Five months later, she told the three children who were at home to pack up the little they had; they had to move to a homeless shelter.

The family of four slept in a single room. Michael’s mother and sister shared a queen-size bed. He and his younger brother slept on bunks. They looked forward to Fridays, when Pizza Hut donated pies to the homeless. Michael was 11. He remembers pleading with his bus driver to drop him a block from the shelter after football practice because he feared teasing from his peers. But the experience only made him more focused. “Life is going to take you through difficult times

and to places you don’t expect,” Michael reflected. “When I was young, I figured that if I wanted to succeed, I had to take advantage of every opportunity in school and sports. It could be that thing that would take me to the top.”

He kept getting straight As in school. After school, he’d pester his mother: “What did you do today? How many jobs did you apply for?” Jules tried not to say that she was becoming depressed. She lost 30 pounds. She caught pneumonia and was hospitalized for eight days. Finally, after three months at the shelter, Jules found a job as a property manager. She later bought a house in Silver Spring. In retrospect, Michael thinks he was probably too hard on his mother. He didn’t know any better, he says. But she says it was Michael’s push that helped her pull through.

His tenacity extended even to the minor annoyances of school life. As student body president at Springbrook, Michael noticed that students who brought their lunches from home had no way to heat up food. So Michael started what became known as the “microwave project.” Teachers hated the idea. They feared that students might use the machine incorrectly, even blow it up. Plus, there was no money. But Michael solicited donations to purchase two small microwaves. The principal acquiesced. “I just tell people that Michael Robinson wanted me to do it,” said Mugge, shrugging. No fewer than five people can be seen waiting to use the machines every lunch period, according to the assistant principal. In fact, the school is adding a third. “If anything, my legacy will be microwaves!” Michael said, laughing.

With graduation nearing, his weighted grade-point average is the second highest at Springbrook — a 4.69, with seven Advanced Placement courses. The teacher who once gave him a B ended up writing Michael’s college recommendation letter. “I thought,” Michael said, “he would be able to describe how hard I work and that I don’t give up.” ■

Scholar Spotlight: *Sheila Adams, RBS 2001*



Sheila Adams has secured two highly prestigious clerkships to commence upon her graduation from Columbia School of Law in May where she is a Warren/Sherman & Sterling Scholar. Clerkships are “a good way to hone your legal skills,” says Adams, who plans to launch her law career from her upcoming work with the Honorable Raymond A. Jackson, federal judge for United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. In 2012, Adams will clerk for the Honorable Carl E. Stewart, federal judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Such clerkships are not only highly prestigious, but also highly competitive. Adams’ success in securing two clerkships has thus attracted a great deal of attention, earning her a feature in The Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.’s *Alumni in the News* newsletter. The positions are both well-deserved and hard earned.

In the years following her graduation from Harvard University in 2005, Adams volunteered at a school in north-eastern Brazil, completed two years of legal internships, and interned with the NAACP’s Legal Defense and Education

Fund. Under her direction as editor-in-chief, the *Columbia Journal of Race and Law* (the “*Journal*”) made its official debut on February 18, 2011. She notes in the debut issue, “The relevance of race in our society and, thus, the law, continues to be very much a reality, and the increasingly multi-racial and

multi-cultural nature of our communities both complicates and enriches this sphere of academic inquiry.” Articles in the *Journal* will focus on topic areas such as affirmative action, immigration, employment law, community development, criminal law, environmental justice, voting rights and education.

While Adams’ rising success is due, without question, to her innate work ethic and persistent inner drive, Adams credits the Ron Brown Scholar Program for helping her along the path to where she is today. “It’s the gift that keeps on giving,” says Adams of the scholarship, “The money is just the beginning.” Though Adams said the scholarship money was extremely useful as it allowed her to focus on being a student instead of worrying about making ends meet, the

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Former Alumni Association President Reflects on Scholar Program



RBS Diarra Lamar currently serves as Engagement Manager at McKinsey and Company.

Diarra Lamar, a 1997 Ron Brown Scholar and the first president of the Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association (RBSAA), has come a long way since first entering the Ron Brown Scholar family. Now an Engagement Manager at the Philadelphia branch of McKinsey and Company, Lamar has achieved great professional success in an unusually short amount of time. His position at McKinsey and Company is his first position out of medical and business school, and Lamar credits his capability to secure such a prominent position so early on to his “ability to develop a broader than normal set of skills in a very rapid time period.” He says that he owes this in part to his experience of “being a thought-partner to a seasoned professional like Mike [Mallory],” which enabled him to practice thinking quickly and coming up with alternative, but effective, solutions.

Lamar believes that the Ron Brown Scholar Program will continue to become more and more prominent in academic circles, “because of its grassroots nature and culture,” citing the Program’s affinity for the generation of new ideas, as well as the Scholars’ “self-propelling energy and focus.” When not pushing the boundaries in his professional

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Congratulations 2011 Ron Brown



Dextina A. Booker
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
High School: The Secondary School
for Law
College: Massachusetts Institute of
Technology



Brandon R. Hill
Hometown: Eden Prairie, MN
High School: Eden Prairie HS
College: Stanford University



Desmond C. Garner
Hometown: Forkland, AL
High School: Alabama School
of Math & Science
College: Vanderbilt University



Esther O. Owolabi
Hometown: Westchester, IL
High School: Fenwick HS
College: Georgetown University



Kaila J. Gilbert
Hometown: La Vergne, TN
High School: La Vergne HS
College: Vanderbilt University



Hana C. Page
Hometown: Lakewood, WA
High School: Clover Park HS
College: University of Pennsylvania



Malcolm D. Grayson
Hometown: Fort Wayne, IN
High School: Northrop HS
College: Harvard University



Zachary T. Hall
Hometown: Worcester, MA
High School: Abby Kelley Foster
Charter HS
College: U.S. Military Academy

2011 Ron Brown Scholar

The 2011 Ron Brown Scholars would like to thank you for the opportunity to be Ron Brown Scholars and part of an inspirational community. The RBS scholarships will allow us to attend our dream schools and support us in our journey to achieve our dreams. We are most thrilled about the opportunity to be part of an amazing community of scholars and committee members, and professionals who have provided us with support and service. The 2011 Selection Weekend was truly a life-changing experience. We are most grateful for the opportunity to strengthen our relationships with the RBS community and achieving our dreams and using our successes to give back. Once again, thank you for this opportunity; we are excited to be part of this community.

ntions to the own Scholars!



Keon K. Pearson
Hometown: Toledo, OH
High School: St. Francis de Sales
College: Harvard University



Maia Roberson
Hometown: Reston, VA
High School: Oakton HS
College: Brigham Young University



Robert L. Poole, III
Hometown: Kent, WA
High School: Kentridge HS
College: Stanford University



Michael L. Robinson
Hometown: Silver Spring, MD
High School: Springbrook HS
College: Yale University



Qaren Q. Quartey
Hometown: Gaithersburg, MD
High School: Watkins Mill HS
College: Harvard University



Brianna R. Sullivan
Hometown: Riverdale, IL
High School: Thornton Township HS
College: University of Michigan

rs Express Their Thanks

the RBS community for the life-changing opportunity
onal group of professionals and Scholars.
eam universities and pursue our passions for learn-
n careers. Yet, it is not the money that we are most
y to have met each other, RBS alumni, RBS donors
ve all ignited our passions for learning, leadership
een an inspirational moment for us all, as we real-
f leaders. Most importantly, we are ecstatic to have
he RBS community as each of us works towards
e back to our communities and society as a whole.
excited to be part of the RBS family!



Aubrey J. Walker
Hometown: Altadena, CA
High School: Polytechnic HS
College: Harvard University



Chanel E. Washington
Hometown: Lakewood, WA
High School: Lakes HS
College: Harvard University

RBS Selected as 2011 Georgetown Law Graduation Student Speaker

Danielle Andrews-Lovell, a 2002 Ron Brown Scholar and 2006 Harvard graduate, will be speaker at her May 22, 2011 Georgetown Law commencement ceremony. Following Andrews-Lovell's nomination by her peers at the law school, she underwent a competitive process that involved writing a speech, auditioning before her peers, and gaining the majority of her peers' votes to become a commencement speaker. "I'm really humbled by the opportunity to convey a message that I think is very important," says Andrews-Lovell. Her speech will focus on Andrews-Lovell's belief that "continuing to hold on to who you are is the most important thing that you can do, especially when you only have one life to live."

Andrews-Lovell bestows great importance upon "remembering where I come from." In the same way that the Ron Brown Scholar Program enabled her to pursue greater heights in her academic career, she hopes to enable others to better themselves. "I need to be of service to the other people who may also need a boost, like the Ron Brown Scholar Program gave me. "No service is too small," says Andrews-Lovell, who tries to do all that she can to help others. She places particular interest in giving back by acting as a mentor to younger ambitious students and a support for her peers.

Andrews-Lovell credits the networking opportunities provided by the Ron Brown Scholar Program with part of her success. The Program network exposed her to people she "might otherwise not have even been able to speak with on



Student Speaker Danielle Andrews-Lovell grew up in Miami, Florida.

the phone," which helped to reinforce her philosophy of "always pushing for that greater thing." Andrews-Lovell is an optimist and credits the Program for cultivating a confidence and persistence that feeds into her philosophy that "nothing is too far to reach. Rejections aren't rejections, they're just opportunities to push for that next big thing."

With her graduation pending, Andrews-Lovell is certainly destined for great things. She congratulates the newest members of the Ron Brown Scholar family and invites all Scholars to contact her whenever she can be of assistance. Though she is very busy, she never feels too busy to help out a fellow Ron Brown Scholar. "My experience [with the Program] has been amazing," Andrews-Lovell says. ■

Ron Brown Scholar L.E.A.D. Series Lands in Local Schools

The Ron Brown Scholar Program, with funding provided by Bank of America/Merrill Lynch, has distributed 30 instructor manuals and over 400 student workbooks in the local Charlottesville and Albemarle County public schools. The versatility of the L.E.A.D. Series can be demonstrated by the number of ways in which educators plan to use the materials and resources. Some teachers are using the L.E.A.D. books in middle school classrooms; others are using them at the high school level in both the regular classroom and in special programming like AVID and leadership courses.

This local project enables the Program

to see firsthand how L.E.A.D. can be used and lends to the growth and development of the Series as it expands to a wider audience. For example, RBSP staff met with AVID staff (Jeffrey Smith and Yumeca Webb) at Charlottesville High School to discuss implementation of a series of Ron Brown Scholar speakers into their Friday speaker sessions.

One of the main goals of the Series is to have participating students develop their own service projects. In anticipation of project proposals, the application for students to apply for Community Ser-

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The RBS Program meets with teachers from the Albemarle and Charlottesville school districts.

Ron Brown Scholars: Faces of Leadership in the Community

Faces of Leadership? Yes. The beginning of the 2011 year saw Ron Brown Scholars in their prime as they enlightened and inspired large crowds of spectators while participating in panel discussions on two different occasions.

On January 26th, various Scholars from across the nation traveled to Washington, DC to participate in an event hosted by the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center at Edvantia: "On the Pathway Towards Educational Excellence: Working Together to Eliminate Inequities." Ten Scholars had the opportunity to speak to a variety of education leaders from around the country, ranging from U.S. Department of Education officials to teachers and local community leaders. Scholars examined their own primary and secondary educational experiences and compared them to those of today's youth. They answered questions related to mentorship, academic enrichment, social justice, extracurricular activities and innovation, and explained how the aforementioned can help to create educational equity for students. The Scholars' perspectives on education invigorated listeners who sought to continue the conversation with the RBS and further collaborate in taking steps to establish educational equity.

Not long after this exciting educational conference, six Scholars from the New York City region took part in a discussion at the Clifford Chance Law Firm on February 28th to close out the firm's Black History Month celebration. The event, entitled "Faces of Leadership: Achieving Success through a Lifetime of Service," was a complement to an art exhibition currently on display at their Manhattan office showcasing photographs and essays of Ron Brown Scholars that appear in the book, *I Have Risen*. During the panel discussion, Scholars



Scholars gather for education panel discussion in Washington, DC.

answered questions focused on service, including: 1) what first inspired them to serve, 2) the various ways in which service can take form in society, 3) how the service one performs tends to change over time, and 4) ways to broaden the lens of service to eliminate the fallacy that only the successful can and should "give back." The event inspired deeper conversation and created an opportunity for Scholars to travel to New York City schools to address high school youth. In fact, a follow-up event is scheduled for June with one of the schools in attendance that evening, Gotham Academy.

The positive feedback and desire for future collaboration from panel event attendees demonstrates the impact of the collective power of Ron Brown Scholars. The Scholar Program plans to feature many more such opportunities in the near future. ■



**Ron Brown Scholar Program, in partnership
with LearnServe International
announces**

this summer's conference:

**Faces of Leadership:
Youth Empowerment
Through Service**

**August 11-13, 2011
Georgetown University
Washington, DC**

Program Donor Reflects on Ron Brown's Legacy

Sue Esserman, a former employee of Ronald H. Brown and one of the Ron Brown Scholar Program's generous supporters, reflects on her time with Ron Brown, following the late Secretary's fifteenth anniversary. "His joy in life was infectious and his confidence and resilience were—and are—motivating," says Esserman, adding, "Ron Brown had an inspirational impact on me that continues to this day." Though Esserman first heard of the Program just one year ago when one of her Commerce Department colleagues invited her to the Selection Weekend dinner, she was immediately "very taken by the vibrancy of the Ron Brown Scholar Program. I love the idea of the network, the family and the mentoring that the Program provides."



The Program is a fitting part of Brown's legacy, Esserman says, because Ron Brown was always "bringing others up, reaching out to excluded persons, and creating opportunities." Esserman

emphasizes Brown's ability of "seeing everyone," in the words of President Clinton, and believes that ability was "what was so unusual about him and what we need so much more of in this world, if we are to be successful."

Brown might be most pleased with the networking and the public service aspects of the Program, Esserman believes, because they create opportunities for the Scholars while "leaving the ladder down" for community members. "There are many scholarship programs, but the network and Ron Brown's legacy make this one very special to me." Likewise, the network is what differentiates the Program from typical scholarship programs. "It's not a static program," Esserman says, "It's not a scholarship for a year, but rather a network for life—and that is invaluable."

The Ron Brown Scholar Program depends upon friends like Sue Esserman

to continue its commitment to enabling bright young African Americans to reach new heights both for themselves and for society. Several donors, including Esserman, stepped up in the past two years to enable the Program to commit resources to a greater number of rising college freshmen than expected. In the years ahead, Michael Mallory, Vanessa Evans, and other primary figures in the Program hope to increase the number of scholarships awarded back to a full twenty per year. They, as well as all past, present, and future Scholars, thank the Program's donors for their continued support. ■

Ron Brown Scholar L.E.A.D. Series Lands in Local Schools

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vice Foundation funding have been distributed to all teachers and administrators who have been involved with L.E.A.D. The proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis as students work to design their community service projects. For instance, Allen Robinson (Science, CHS) anticipates his classes will produce their projects toward the end of the school year; whereas Monica Green and Kinya Beckwith (Buford Middle) have been integrating the L.E.A.D. materials since the beginning of January and have assigned as the final project in their classes the creation of a community service project.

RBSP staff maintains contact with teachers and gives periodic reports to administrators. As of March 2, six schools in the area are participating, 442 student workbooks have been delivered, and 24 teachers have been enrolled in the online version of the L.E.A.D. Series. ■

Former Alumni Association President Reflects on Scholar Program

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career, Lamar follows Ron Brown's legacy of "leaving the ladder down" by reaching out to young black students and mentoring Ron Brown Scholars with interests in medicine or business. Despite his high-powered career, Lamar still makes the time to review resumes and applications as well as talk with Scholars about their summer and college options. Lamar plans to continue giving back indefinitely: "This is a big focus for me." ■

Scholar Spotlight: Sheila Adams, RBS 2001

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networking opportunities that the Program provided and continues to provide, as well as the community of like-minded peers which Adams credits with constantly re-inspiring her, are so much more valuable. Adams concedes that far too few people of color aspire to secure clerkships, intimidated by the latter's prestigious legacies. She thanks the Ron Brown Scholar Program for fostering a culture that empowered her to "go out and push the envelope." ■

Community Service Foundation Supports Borehole Project in Kenya

Last year RBS Geraldine Pierre (2004) used a Ron Brown Scholar Community Service Foundation grant to fund construction of a water well for the people of Masue Village in Makueni, Kenya where they face a severe water shortage. Serving as head of the project, Geraldine traveled to Kenya over the holidays in order to work with local support to execute the plan. She enlisted the assistance of fellow Scholars Ku McMahon (1999), Mike Woodward (2004) and Danielle Andrews-Lovell (2002) for the larger scope of the project. Ku holds a doctorate in Environmental Health and has worked extensively with water quality projects in developing countries. Mike's experience working with non-profit community organizations is profound; his own organization, Project Skill Build, has won numerous national awards. Danielle served as point person for the project while Geraldine not only made the local contacts but also traveled to Africa over a span of three weeks.

A major mid-project shift to construction of a well rather than a borehole

(based on geosurvey and water tests completed in December) required the raising of additional funds due to an extended timeline for completion. Geraldine and her Scholar partners successfully raised additional funds from private donors to support these changes.

She credits local Pastor John Ndolo and Professor Peter Lewa who worked as the main supervisors of the project for successful facilitation of the planning and implementation and for staying on top of all logistical details. "This project was successful because there were people on

the ground in Kenya to help with bargaining, making contacts, and overseeing the project. With this project taking place in a rural village in a developing country, time, money and access were all very crucial factors that would have been more challenging without the proper on-the-ground support."

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Geraldine Pierre shown left and far right (top photo) works on water well project in Kenya and celebrates its completion with members from the village.

Kudos to . . .

Danai Kadzere, RBS 2010 thank you for your hardwork on the Spring 2011 RBS Newsletter.

The RBS Class of 2007 on their recent completion of their undergraduate degrees.

Katori Hall, RBS 1999 for her recognition as the 33rd winner of the Blackburn Prize for Outstanding Women Playwrights.

Maria Velazquez, RBS 2000 for her upcoming articles in *Women in Judaism* (Sept. 2011), *The Subduction Zone* (June 2011) and the *WisCon Chronicles* (May 2011).

Jade Craig, RBS 2002 as the next Editor-in-Chief of the *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*.

Dorian Dargan, RBS 2007 on his recent feature in the *Real College Guide* as one of the 2011 Top 10 Young African Americans Who will Make a Difference.

Kristin Hall, RBS 2007 for receiving the Marshall Scholarship which she will use for study at the University of Oxford in the fall.

Catherine Ntube, RBS 2007 on receiving The Michael C. Rockefeller Fellowship awarded to six Harvard seniors for a year of purposeful travel. She will spend the year in Peru.

Daren Miller, RBS 2008 on his recent appointment to the Duke University Board of Trustee's Undergraduate Education committee.

Alumni Convene in Washington, D.C. to Discuss Connectivity

As part of its central mission, the Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association strives to keep all Scholars connected through conferences, service opportunities and both informal and formal gatherings. Recently, the alumni's executive board has initiated conversations about how to organize their growing network of events across the country. These discussions have collectively been included under the umbrella of "connectivity" and have led to more detailed questions such as: What are our current methods for staying connected and which ones do we use most often? Would a regional structure



Scholars gathered in Washington, DC for the annual alumni meeting to discuss the initiatives of the Association.

make sense? How might we call upon and utilize Friends of Ron Brown Scholars (FORBS)? How can we best focus on service while also remaining connected?

Scholars who attended the annual meeting during Selection Weekend this year are bringing action items to the larger body.

In order to continue to build upon the strong alumni base to fuel the Program's continued success, the Alumni Association would like to put a regional structure in place consisting of one or two point people in strategic locations throughout the country. This regional point person would be in contact with an area FORBS who can offer assistance and connections to additional resources.

Events can take many forms: family dinners, Broadway play night, education discussion panels, bowling, etc. In fact, in the spirit of connectivity and service, May Lugemwa and Robert Smith (Executive Board Event Co-chairs) are currently in the process of creating what they hope will become an annual event for all Scholars. The June Day of Service will provide Scholars across the country with an opportunity to participate in a local service project. May and Robert suggest that each year the day will focus on a different topic area – this year's focus will be on education.

This summer's upcoming conference will offer attending Scholars the chance to give back by presenting workshops on varying topics for District of Columbia high school students. By the end of the day, these high school students will walk away from the conference with an action plan for a service project to take back to their respective schools. Also during the conference, there will be break-out sessions for the specific regions so Scholars can get to know other Scholars in their area and that area's point person. This will be an excellent opportunity to brainstorm ideas for events.

As the Program continues to grow and add new family members, it is important to continue to provide experiences that engage Scholars in professional networking, fellowship and service. This connectivity initiative seeks to support and enhance all of these. Get involved today! ■

Community Service Foundation Supports Borehole Project in Kenya

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Geraldine commends her Scholar team. "First-hand knowledge of borehole and well-digging and water safety from Ku McMahan was important to the success of this project." With Mike's organization and Danielle's support on the ground back in DC, this project was destined for smooth sailing.

Of her experience in Africa she recalls attending the church service of Pastor Ndolo: "Pastor Ndolo called me up to the front of the church to introduce me to the congregation. Through translation, I learned that he introduced me as his friend from America who brought tremendous blessings and happiness for him and the rest of Kenya."

The Ron Brown Scholar Community Service Foundation was established to support the good works of Scholars and it heartily encourages applications from groups of Scholars such as Geraldine's. In this case, multiple minds and hands working together have provided a village in Africa with clean, safe and accessible water. The days of digging shallow water wells and carrying heavy water pails for miles are no longer. ■

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