

## ***I HAVE RISEN: ESSAYS BY AFRICAN- AMERICAN YOUTH*** *Scholar Program Publishes First Book*

**T**o commemorate the ten-year anniversary of the death of the late Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown and to draw attention to the extraordinary scholars who are following his example and choosing to make a difference in the world, the CAP Charitable Foundation, Ron Brown Scholar Program, has released its first book, *I Have Risen: Essays by African-American Youth*. The coffee table book features essays written by a number of its scholarship recipients and showcases powerful stories and reflections of young African American scholars. Far from being a simple compilation of success stories, the book gives a glimpse into the hearts, passions and minds of a group of young people who, separately and together, promise to rock the world.

The anniversary volume features 50 essays submitted when the Scholars, then high school students, applied to the highly selective program. The assembly of essays highlights a community of inspiring African American youth who not

only overcame personal and financial hardship, but translated that hardship into unrelenting commitment to help others and better the world. These are students of great promise, who portend not only to reap enormous personal

## I Have Risen

ESSAYS BY AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUTH



*I Have Risen: Essays by African-American Youth; To read essay excerpts visit [www.ronbrown.org](http://www.ronbrown.org).*

success, but also to lead as agents of change for their families, communities and the future.

“We have been inspired by the fire, persistence and compassion of our Scholars,” says RBSP Executive Director Michael Mallory. “At this ten-year milestone, we wanted to highlight these young

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## CELEBRATING A MILESTONE—10 YEARS IN OPERATION

By: Lindsay Cothrine, RBS '05



*Lindsay Cothrine, RBS '05 (left) enjoys a moment admiring the book I Have Risen with fellow 2005 RBS Lowell Caulder.*

**I** have always been one for celebrations. There is definitely something to be said for sitting back, having great conversation, eating wonderful food and sharing memories with a bunch of your family. However, I have come to realize that it also helps if your family consists of hundreds of students, scholars and esteemed leaders of our society.

It also doesn't hurt if you have the privilege of sitting at the table with the Honorable Judge John Charles Thomas.

I wasn't sure exactly what to expect for the 10th anniversary, or the book unveiling. However, judging from my own experiences with the organization, primarily my own Selection Weekend and the 2005 conference, my expectations were high.

Little did I know how far my expectations would be surpassed.

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## Message From the Executive Director

Dear Scholars & Friends,

**T**en Years! Some days it's hard to believe it's been ten years since the inception of the Ron Brown Scholar Program. As I sit and think about all that has transpired, it seems incredible. Our successes are tremendous; a family of over 200 Ron Brown Scholars, the Council on African American Affairs, the RBS Alumni Association, a coffee table book and last but definitely not least, so many friends, so many connections between us. To start with only a vision and have so many individuals work tirelessly to bring it to fruition brings me immense joy and satisfaction.

Of our 201 recipients to date, all have either graduated from college or continue to matriculate. We are extremely proud of this zero failure rate, but we are even more impressed by the astonishing rate at which Ron Brown Scholars are establishing themselves as successful business people, doctors, educators, artists, entrepreneurs and leaders for the emerging generation of African American excellence; but most importantly, they all have a genuine concern for others.

Operating with the vision of "One Degree of Separation," that every Ron Brown Scholar should be able to connect to the entire RBS universe by simply reaching out to one other Scholar, this year the Alumni Association has made financial, technological, social and communications advances to ensure those connections. Now boasting more than 100 members, the alumni association is thriving. A self-operating organization, they have positioned themselves to begin philanthropic work throughout the country.

In its five short years of existence the Council on African American Affairs has generated and published serious, thought-provoking research. Its articles on minority health disparities have appeared in respected journals like *The*



*Journal of the American Medical Association* and *Journal of Ethnicity and Disease*. Last year the Council created StandUp!, an award-winning documentary, companion workbook and high school civics curriculum designed to use the civic engagement lessons of the sixties to develop a new generation of leaders. Always at the forefront of issues affecting the black community, the Council is currently filming a documentary on the communities affected by Hurricane Katrina and its long-term impacts on education. We are discovering where and how we can do effective research.

With this our ten-year anniversary, we celebrate our accomplishments, but we know we must position ourselves to meet the challenges of the future. We remain committed to providing an outstanding college education to young, gifted African Americans and will continue to engage and support them as they strive to make a difference in the world.

But to continue to thrive, the Program must reach diverse sources to meet the needs of our extraordinary group. Generous funding from

the CAP organization has facilitated the Program's strong start. We are hopeful that our friends will answer the call for support and help us reach our financial goals.

Over the last ten years your contributions to the Program have been invaluable and unprecedented. As we move into this, our next phase of development, we hope you will continue to support the Ron Brown Scholars as they work to make a difference. Your commitment to us has made the first ten years memorable; help us to make the next ten years historical!

With warmest regards,

Michael A. Mallory

## Celebrating A Milestone—10 Years in Operation (continued from page 1)

The 10th Anniversary / Selection Weekend dinner this past March brought back a lot of memories. Since I was a member of the class of 2005, I remembered my own selection dinner fairly well. I had felt extremely fortunate to sit amongst other RBS who, not only had won the scholarship, but were doing amazing things with their lives. I felt privileged to sit with Judge Thomas and Sybil Fix who, ultimately, would coordinate the publication of *I Have Risen*. I had been

excited to meet such amazing scholarship candidates, astounding individuals who surely deserved the scholarship more than I.

I also had to constantly lie to myself in a sort of pathetic reassurance that I would, in fact, make it past the second day and perhaps get one of the coveted spots.

Now clearly a lot has happened since that evening in 2005. Coming back this March was nostalgic. I remembered all too well what it felt like to wear those incriminating yellow

nametags. This year, armed with a blue tag and a year's worth of experience being a Scholar, I was better able to converse and enjoy my surroundings.

A supportive RBS family and financial peace of mind will do that for you.

The event, held in the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in D.C., was outstanding. The gallery, which boasts phenomenal paintings and sculptures

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# Answering the Call

## The Campaign for the Ron Brown Scholar Program

**M**ice, rats, roaches, bacteria and downtrodden people have colonized the Will Rogers. Its prison-cell-sized rooms house whole families. Human feces are smeared on the shower walls of its communal bathroom. An aggregate stench of rot, urine, alcohol and vomit permeates the hallways. There are crying beeps from smoke detectors with dying batteries, shouting crack addicts, louder-shouting crack dealers, cigarette burns on the carpets, peeling paint, barred windows, a malfunctioning elevator and creaking stairs.

During my thirteenth and fourteenth years, the Will Rogers was my home and the home of other people forgotten by society, the people on skid row, people like my mother. She worked the graveyard waitress shift at Denny's, while my father was out somewhere "giving my mother space" and dealing with his depression. The Will Rogers Hotel is the place where I first became conscious of critical choices I would have to make in my life and of the actions I would take to implement them." - **Immanuel R. Foster, 2002 Ron Brown Scholar, currently attending Harvard University**

Immanuel Foster has known poverty and homelessness. He has felt estranged from mainstream American society. But instead of despair, he feels hope. Instead of disdain for others challenged by their circumstances, he feels compassion. A very special young man, he has the courage, the intellect, and, most importantly, the heart, to seize opportunities and to apply what he learns to make life better for others. Immanuel Foster is a Ron Brown Scholar.

The Ron Brown Scholar Program is the brainchild of Anthony M. Pilaro, an accomplished attorney, investment banker and philanthropist, who established it through the CAP Charitable Foundation, which he chairs. The Program honors an exceptionally dedicated public servant, the late Ronald H. Brown, U.S. Secretary of Commerce under President Bill Clinton. The Program provides generous college scholarships to as many as 20 African American high school seniors each year who are academically talented, highly motivated and financially needy. But Ron Brown Scholars are more than just bright, ambitious young men and women. They also demonstrate a remarkable commitment to

public service—they feel called to make a difference in their home communities and the world at large.

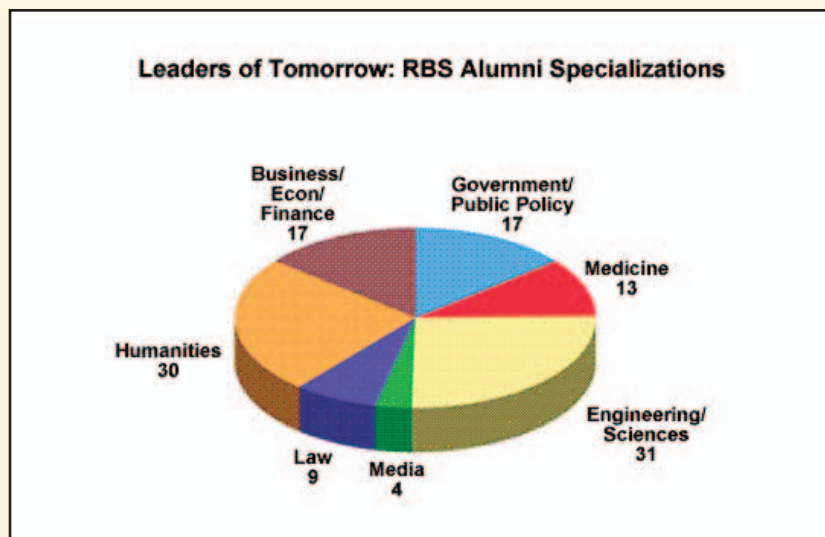
The Ron Brown Scholar Program aims to address our nation's need for inspired—and inspiring—leaders. More than 24 percent of all African Americans live in poverty, a figure more than double the rate among white Americans. Nearly 40 percent of all Americans living in poverty are children, and women head 28 percent of the families who live below the poverty line. Ron Brown Scholars, most of whom can find themselves represented in these statistics, are selected to receive scholarships because they exhibit the potential to help find answers to some of our most vexing and persistent problems—poverty, race relations and family dysfunction, among others. In short, these young people show promise as future leaders for their generation.

Since its creation in 1996, the Ron Brown Scholar Program has awarded 201 scholarships to students who study at some of the most prestigious colleges

and universities in the country. The Program then continues to engage these future leaders as they graduate and go forth to effect positive change. The Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association, for example, was established in 2001 to offer Program graduates, as well as current Scholars, opportunities to network with and support each other. The Council on African American Affairs, a center for thought leadership based in Washington, D.C., was established that same year to provide a base where Program Scholars and Alumni can frame and debate critical public policy issues that affect black Americans.

By all accounts, the Ron Brown Scholar Program is a resounding success. Talented program alumni are making their mark as activists, policymakers, educators, physicians, researchers, attorneys and artists, among other careers. In addition, they have created a vibrant network—a family of likeminded individuals—to sustain them

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## RBS Parent Expresses Gratitude

May 18, 2006

Dear Ron Brown Staff:

*I received my I Have Risen and I almost did a back-over flip in spite of my osteoarthritis. What a joy to see our children's beaming smiles and feeling their deep down seriousness of taking on the world. Thanks to the Ron Brown Scholar family and everyone who had a hand in their preparedness, they are good and ready to fulfill their dreams and to continue on helping their fellow humankind. Ron Brown must be somewhere smiling on it all and embracing the young people's efforts and success.*

*As I read through my book, I try to go slowly as I savor each Scholar's essay. I don't want it to come to an end. Some now, some later. But it's kind of like reading the Bible, I become so enthralled and so mesmerized that I can't put it down and before I know it, I've been through one beautiful story after the next. I read dreams, hope, pride, inspiration, bravery, determination, resiliency, courage, strength, acceptance of challenges, humbleness, thanksgiving, God and people— loving - the list goes on and on. It's some kind of reading. I tell you that. I'm with them and I'll always be in their corner. I'm so very proud of them and I love them all as my own.*

*I tell anyone who will listen that we have lots and hundreds and thousands of young adults who are out here doing remarkable things in this world. The media may cause many folks to see blacks and minorities as illiterates and "thugs". Maybe they don't want to believe just how many young folks are intelligent and bent on a course of doing good deeds in this world. There are many programs that help many minorities. Harvard, the best school in America, will now offer a free education to students whose parents earn less than \$40,000 a year. Harvard realized quite early that schools that rejected minorities were losing a wealth of knowledge and talent that could be channeled back for the betterment of this country and the world. I'm glad Jennifer went to Harvard. I knew Jennifer had chosen the right school when I read the former president's (Mr. Neil Rudenstine) essay to the incoming freshman class when Jennifer was a freshman there. He was the best. He was always trying to pull things together for the students, community, the country and for everyone in it. Living arrangements there were diversified. It was said that he wanted whites to live with blacks so maybe whites could also learn from blacks how to manage through hard times. Well, if that were true, it didn't matter. What mattered was that whites and blacks did live in rooms together and everyone was better off for it. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in order to save the union. Didn't matter the reason. What mattered most of all was that slaves were freed from the oppression and horrors of slavery.*

*Jennifer's middle school principal said it was so very hard to go through the application process each year. He said that it's the hardest thing in life he has to do each year—choosing only 46 students among so many smart and promising youngsters. He rounds it out by allowing 50 students instead of 46. He said this makes him feel a notch better (smile). But he agonizes over the ones (so many!) he has to turn away. He said it seems that everyone who applies (in the hundreds) is well qualified to attend DeLaSalle Academy - a private non-denominational middle school for minorities. I call the school an oasis in a desert.*

*I know the Ron Brown Scholar Selection Committee has the same problem. I'm sure they want to accept almost all, if not all, of the students who apply for the program. St. Aloysius Education Clinic, the same. The Eagle Foundation, the same. I could go on and on. Oh yes, there are hundreds and thousands of little Ron Brown persons in this world. I tell everyone this who will listen to me and then I tell them, using the words of a song in this cool Broadway play "Hairspray" Jennifer took me to see, "Now go and tell that!"*

*Thanks again for my treasure. It was the best Mother's Day gift ever. The book will definitely be put on the living room table where others can read and enjoy.*

*Jennifer said our book is a gift to parents, but we can always contribute or donate whatever and whenever we choose to for the scholarship program. I would like to contribute a little something to the Ron Brown Scholar Program and the Ron Brown Alumni Program.*

*My best regards to the Pilaros and the Ron Brown Scholarship staff. I hope to see your loving smiles again.*

Sincerely,

Sadie Banner

### **I Have Risen Advance Praise**

"Black poverty and black advancement have existed side by side in America since the civil-rights era. The Ron Brown Scholar Program, by offering means for advancement to promising students who have known poverty, brings us one step closer to proving that this disparity is neither natural nor necessary. I loved reading the essays of these talented young minds."

—Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Director of the W.E.B Du Bois Institute For African and African American Research, Harvard University

"What a wonderful collection of thoughts, hopes and dreams - and what a wonderful collection of young people it must have taken to produce them."

—William Raspberry

Former Washington Post Columnist; Professor of Public Policy, Duke University

"When we lost Ron Brown, I worried that the tremendous influence he had on young people would die with him. In reading these essays by students inspired by his commitment to service, I'm heartened to know that Ron's spirit lives on and will continue to make America a better place."

—Cokie Roberts

Political Analyst, ABC News and National Public Radio

## Council Focuses Second Documentary on the Educational Impacts of Hurricane Katrina

By: Karla Hardy, RBS '01, Council Research Fellow

We went to New Orleans with a mission: to collect the stories of young people affected by Hurricane Katrina. Our goal carried with it a desire to empower the local citizens to take action in the aftermath and help one another, displaying the fiber of

civic engagement during a time when it is critically needed. In my mind, we would bring hope to a war-torn people who still needed help to lift their spirits.

During our first day on the ground, the disaster was readily apparent. The “cleaned-up” streets of New Orleans featured rows of houses torn to splinters. Church buildings with crosses still intact caved in the middle, leaving them rightly deserted on a Sunday morning. Peering into the windows of homes, we saw pictures, furniture and toys covered in debris, soot, mold and mildew. Cars and boats rested in what used to be the living rooms of loving families. The streets were clear enough to drive safely, but eleven months after Katrina hit, much of New Orleans was far from clean. I grieved for the downcast faces of the children I expected to see the next day during our interviews.

We found children with a powerful sense of humor and laughter glowing in their eyes. They were doing just fine in the aftermath of the storm. Far from resting on a sense of powerlessness, these kids were engaged in activities that would leave their communities better than they had been before the storm. Rethink, a nonprofit organization of

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## “Hey! How Was Morocco?” and Other Difficulties of Returning

By: Ihotu Ali, RBS '03

*12:15 am, Morocco time.*

I’m sitting in the Casablanca airport and shocked and numb to the idea that by this time tomorrow I will be once again in the United States of “Amreekya,” hearing English on the streets, using vaguely familiar green currency bills and greeting family and friends whose faces and voices have already begun to fade in my memory.

Reading my new copy of “Un Marocain a New York” just to stay awake until my 7am flight, I find my thoughts wandering back over every lingering instant in the past five months, trying to package insights and comparten-

talize lessons, and yet retain the vitality and spontaneity with which each moment actually occurred. Trying to not let 6 months of my young adult life be packed stiffly into a box for the corner of my mother’s house, nor even glossified and sorted and titled with glitzy pens into scrapbooks and journals. I want the months I spent living in Rabat, Morocco to remain raw and real, incomplete and imperfect, un-romanticized and un-summarized.

Looking back, I was a fairly good study abroad student. I practiced my Arabic letters and French conditional phrases, watched

Arabic-dubbed Brazilian soap operas with my host mother and learned to keep my dignity despite linguistic mistakes that screamingly labeled me “foreigner.” I visited the countryside, the desert, the valleys, the ocean and reveled in how such natural beauty had been bestowed on the continent of Africa, motherland of civilization. I sat in French-style cafés, cultural leftovers from the Protectorate period, and watched the desert sun set over palm trees.

I walked along the rocky ocean coast and passed billboards and construction equipment announcing the debut of development projects: Major Tourist Complex by 2010. In my white-walled American university courses I remembered being an endless advocate for development in Africa, but at that moment I thought of my host brother Amine, unable to ever again surf freely at this untouched beach. The feeling was bittersweet.

I ate with my host family from one communal plate and rolled bread in my fingertips to scoop up bits of stew, the same way I use fufu at home for Nigerian stew. Yet I was surprised to meet Moroccan after Moroccan who denied being African and couldn’t even locate Nigeria on a map. As ignorant as many Americans, they thought all “black Africans” lived in poor villages, corrupt

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*Ihotu Ali, RBS '03 (second from left) shown at home with her host family enjoying some “Moroccan-influenced” Nigerian stew she tried to cook up.*



## Alumni Association Launches Capital Campaign

By Karla Hardy, RBS '01 – Co-Director, RBSAA Fundraising

We are so excited about the *10 at 10 RBSAA Capital Campaign!* Since its launch this past spring 2006, 10 at 10 has collected \$2,965 in contributions, with \$12,375 in pledges over the next 5 to 10 years. The class of 2001 leads the pack in pledges, with \$4,550 pledged in contributions over the next 5 years. But, the class of 2000 proudly claims the honor of having already contributed almost \$1,900 in cash, making it the number 1 class in contributions. Are you and your class ready to step up to the challenge?

The *10 at 10 RBSAA Capital Cam-*

*paign* is the first-ever major fundraising effort of the Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association. Our goal is to raise over \$10,000 this year as we commemorate a great milestone as a family—the selection of our 10th class of Ron Brown Scholars. In addition, we're issuing a challenge to each class to raise \$10,000 over the next 5 to 10 years. Which class will reach their goal first?

The \$10,000 raised during the *10 at 10 RBSAA Capital Campaign* will lay the foundation for our long-term development as an organization. In addition to our

efforts to keep the Alumni together through social and service activities, our primary goal as the Alumni Association is to become an endowed philanthropic organization with the financial ability to offer grants, change lives and give back to our communities for a long time. The \$10,000 marks the cornerstone of the RBSAA endowment.

One day, we expect our efforts to raise endowment funds from major outside

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RBS Alumni gather during the 1st Annual RBS Family Reunion, August 4, 2006.

### RBSAA Announces New Leadership

**President:** *Leah Hodge*

**First Vice President:** *May Lugemwa*

**Second Vice President:** *Ryan Stewart*

**Treasurer:** *Marquise McGraw*

**Secretary:** *Amanda Johnson*

**Director of Mentorship:** *Kara Lee*

**Director of Service:** *Tristan Ivory*

**Co-Directors of Fundraising:** *Melanie Forbes & Karla Hardy*

**Co-Directors of Alumni Events:** *Tracy Moore, II & Maria Velasquez*

sources will be highly successful. But our first step is to show donors that we, as Alumni and Scholars, believe enough in the vision and work of the Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association to give of ourselves. We need to give first.

Will you pledge your gift right now? Simply send us an email at [rbsalumni@gmail.com](mailto:rbsalumni@gmail.com) indicating your commitment to making a contribution now. Pledge your continuous gift over the next 5 or 10 years. Write your check and send it to us. Make your check payable to Ron Brown Scholar Program, 1160 Pepsi Place, Suite 206, Charlottesville, VA 22901. Any pledge and gift will be greatly appreciated, as future outside donors will admire and give more easily if there is 100% participation from us. All contributions are tax deductible.

Please be a part of our sustainable legacy. ■

## New Advisory Board Announced

The Ron Brown Scholar Program is pleased to announce its first ever Advisory Board for the Program. To date, the following individuals have agreed to serve:

Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA  
Earl G. Graves, Sr.  
Jonathan Mariner  
Toni Morrison

**REGINA BENJAMIN**—Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA, is founder and CEO of the Bayou La Batre Rural Health Clinic in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. She is former Associate Dean for Rural Health at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in Mobile where she administered the Alabama-AHEC program and USA Telemedicine Program. In 1998 she was the United States recipient of the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights. In 1995, she was elected to the American Medical Association Board of Trustees, making her the first physician under age 40 and the first African-American woman to be elected. She also served as President of the American Medical Association Education and Research Foundation (AMA-ERF) and is a current member of the AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs. In 2002 she became President of the Medical Association State of Alabama, making her the first African American female president of a State Medical Society in the United States.

Born in 1956, Dr. Benjamin attended Xavier University in New Orleans and was a member of the second class of Morehouse School of Medicine. She received her MD degree from the University of Alabama Birmingham. She completed her residency in family practice at the Medical Center of Central Georgia. After entering solo practice in Bayou La Batre, Alabama (a small shrimping village along the gulf coast), Dr. Benjamin spent several years moonlighting in emergency rooms and nursing homes to keep her practice open. She received an MBA from Tulane University and converted her office to a rural health clinic.

**EARL G. GRAVES, SR.**—Earl G. Graves is a nationally recognized authority on Black business development and the founder and publisher of *Black Enterprise* Magazine. In 1972, he was named one of the 10 most outstanding minority businessmen in the country by the President of the United States and received the National Award of Excellence in recognition of his achievements in minority business enterprise. He is also listed in *Who's Who in America*, and in 1974 was named one of *Time* Magazine's 200 future leaders of the country.

Today, he is Chairman of Earl G. Graves, Ltd., parent corporation for the Earl G. Graves Publishing Company, publisher of *Black Enterprise* Magazine—a business-service publication targeted to black professionals, executives, entrepreneurs and policy makers in the public and private sector. It has been profitable since its 10th issue and yearly sales currently over \$53 million, are steadily increasing. *Black Enterprise* has a paid circulation of 500,000 with a readership of more than 3.7 million. It is carried on board most major airlines and can be found on newsstands nationwide. Since 1997, the magazine has been a five-time recipient of the FOLIO: Editorial Excellence Award in the category of Business/Finance consumer magazines.

In January 2006, Mr. Graves named Earl "Butch" Graves Jr. as the company's new Chief Executive Officer. The promotion of Graves Jr. to CEO represents the transition of Earl G. Graves Ltd. to the next generation of leadership. His formal title is President and CEO.

**JONATHAN MARINER**—Mr. Mariner currently serves as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Major League Baseball in the Office of the Commissioner. In addition to his daily responsibilities for overseeing the Major League Baseball's central office budgeting, financial reporting, and risk management activities, Mr. Mariner's duties also include administering MLB's \$1.5 billion league-wide credit facility; providing updates at Owners' Meetings on the industry's financial health; overseeing all Club-level financial reporting through the team CFO's; and providing financial reviews on potential ownership applications. Mr. Mariner also serves on several Commissioner-appointed, League-wide committees, including those dealing with Finance and Compensation; Revenue Sharing; Long-range Planning; and Franchise Relocation.

Prior to rejoining Major League Baseball, Mr. Mariner served as Chief Operating Officer and CFO of Charter Schools USA (CSUSA), one of the nation's leading and fastest growing Charter School development and management companies. In this role, he was responsible for overseeing all of CSUSA's day-to-day activities, including curriculum development, education and school operations; marketing and public relations; finance; technology and human resources.

**TONI MORRISON**—Toni Morrison is the Robert F. Goheen Professor Emeritus in the Council of the Humanities at Princeton University.

Ms. Morrison has degrees from Howard and Cornell Universities. She was appointed the Robert F. Goheen Professor at Princeton University spring 1989, a post she held until 2006. Among the universities where she has held teaching posts are Yale, Bard College and Rutgers. The New York State Board of Regents appointed her to the Albert Schweitzer Chair in the Humanities at the State University of New York at Albany in 1984. In 1988 she was the Obert C. Tanner Lecturer at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Professor at Syracuse University. In 1990 she delivered the Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Massey Lectures at Harvard University. In 1994 she held the International Cordorcet Chair at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and Collège de France.

Her eight major novels, *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Tar Baby*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Paradise* and *Love* have received extensive critical acclaim. She received the National Book Critics Award in 1978 for *Song of Solomon* and the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*. Both novels were chosen as the main selections for the Book of the Month Club in 1977 and 1987 respectively. Ms. Morrison co-authored the children's books *Remember*, the *Who's Got Game?* series, *The Book of Mean People* and *The Big Box*. Her books of essays include "Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination;" the edited collection "Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality;" and the co-edited collection "Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O.J. Simpson Case" ■

## Scholars Take on the World

More than 131 Ron Brown Scholars have visited 67 foreign countries through either formal study abroad programs or through personal travel.

### COUNTRIES VISITED

Amsterdam	Estonia	Holland	Malawi	Nigeria
Argentina	Fiji	Hungary	Malaysia	Panama
Austria	Finland	India	Mexico	Peru
Barbados	France	Ireland	Morocco	Philippines
Belize				Puerto Rico
Belgium				Romania
Benin				Russia
Bermuda				Senegal
Botswana				Singapore
Brazil				South Africa
Canada				Spain
Cayman Islands				South Korea
Chile				Sudan
China				Sweden
Costa Rica				Switzerland
Congo				Thailand
Cuba				Togo
Czech Republic				Trinidad & Tobago
Dominican Republic	Germany	Italy	Mozambique	Uganda
Egypt	Ghana	Ivory Coast	Netherlands	Venezuela
England	Greece	Jamaica	New Zealand	Vietnam
	Guyana	Japan	Nicaragua	Zimbabwe



## *I Have Risen; Essays by African- American Youth*

*(continued from page 1)*

people and their inner need to give back. Our hope is that the world will also be inspired by their stories and encouraged by their collective power to create change.”

The anniversary book features the work of three renowned photographers, Andre Lambertson, Joseph Rodriguez and Clarence Williams, whose lenses have long documented social issues both here and abroad. It is edited by Charleston-based journalist Sybil Fix, who has worked extensively on issues of race and education.

This book stands in a wasteland of current tales of woe and failure. It reveals the thoughts of a group of insightful, thoughtful and

powerful black youth. These essays, each with its own distinctive voice, will enrich readers of all ages and colors.

Proceeds from the sale of this book, which may be purchased on-line at [www.ronbrown.org](http://www.ronbrown.org), will go to the RBS Alumni Association and future Ron Brown scholarships. ■

## Answering the Call The Campaign for the Ron Brown Scholar Program

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in their efforts. But there currently are too few Ron Brown Scholars and the challenges our society faces are too great. In order to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of Scholars and Program graduates working to make a

difference today, not decades from now, it is essential to take action. This is the time to expand and enrich the Program, created through the prescience of a single visionary. This is the time for Program alumni and friends to step forward and answer the call for support.

The Ron Brown Scholar Program has launched a comprehensive campaign to raise private funds to expand the Ron Brown scholarships, the Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association and the Council on African American Affairs. The campaign will enhance the resources of the Ron Brown Scholar Program, making it available to more gifted Scholars, establishing the Program’s reputation as the leading initiative of its type in the nation and unleashing the Program’s potential as an instrument of positive change.

Now, more than ever, it is time to invest in the future of our communities by investing in the next generation of African American leaders. ■

# 10th Anniversary Class Selected

**Amanda C. Bass**  
West Chicago, IL  
Amherst College

**Crystal N. Boyd**  
Silver Spring, MD  
New York University

**Salmana Diallo**  
Silver Spring, MD  
University of Pennsylvania

**Cameron W. Drake**  
Harvey, IL  
Stanford University

**Alannah K. Gore**  
Durham, NC  
University of North Carolina  
—Chapel Hill

**Adam D. Haliburton**  
Memphis, TN  
Yale University

**Austin J. Henderson**  
Fort Worth, TX  
Stanford University

**Malcolm X. Hines**  
Mechanicsville, VA  
Washington and Lee University

**Maikha Jean-Baptiste**  
Miami, FL  
Amherst College

**Kory D. Kantenga**  
Ft. Myers, FL  
Georgetown University

**Lisa M. Kelly**  
Sacramento, CA  
Mills College

**Ade A. Sawyer**  
Stone Mountain, GA  
Duke University

**Ronald C. Tisdale**  
Perrysburg, OH  
Stanford University

**Askia T. West**  
Washington, DC  
Stanford University

**Jenine A. Whitter**  
Sylmar, CA  
Harvard University



2006 Ron Brown Scholars take a time-out during Selection Weekend to pose for a group photo.

**Adora I. Mora**  
Columbus, OH  
Harvard University

**Jeffery T. Nelson**  
Chicago, IL  
Washington University  
in St. Louis

**Crystal V. Venning**  
Wappingers Falls, NY  
Yale University

**Bryant L. Watson, III**  
Salt Lake City, UT  
United States Military  
Academy at West Point

**Casandra R. Woodall**  
Lexington, KY  
Harvard University ■

## Save The Date

*Selection Weekend 2007*  
*March 16-18, 2007*  
*The Westin Grand*  
*24th & M Streets*  
*Washington, DC*

## The Final Step

By: Bryant Watson, RBS '06

Saturday morning while working, I received a phone call from my brother. He said, "A Mr. Mallory from the Ron Brown Scholar Program called and he did not say what the call was about, but he wants you to call him." Instantly, my heart sank and I dreaded calling Mr. Mallory. I thought finalists were to be informed Monday and since it was Saturday, I must not be a finalist. Nonetheless, I returned Mr. Mallory's phone call. Instead of offering his condolences, he was asking what airport I could fly out of.

I must admit that was the best day I have ever had while working. I called my brother back to let him know I was a finalist. I was astonished and happy that all of my hard work was paying off. I was at the final step of receiving a scholarship that would negate my financial limitations. Selection Weekend would be held in the nation's capitol, Washington D.C., and I would be the first finalist to arrive.

Arriving at Reagan National Airport with Selection Weekend still ahead of me I felt

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## The Final Step (continued from page 9)

proud. Selection Weekend was the final step to becoming a Ron Brown Scholar. I was proud of making it to that final step. Not only had I made it through step one: fill out application; step two: write essays, etc; I had made it through the steps that cannot be summed up in a few words, the steps where many dreams lay.

During the cab ride to the Westin Grand Hotel, I had the opportunity to speak with Chris Pilaro. He explained to me that he was involved with the RBSP because it is a vehicle for progress. Later that night before any of the other finalist had arrived, that same reason would be conveyed to me by Mr. Mallory. This concept became clear to me as the weekend progressed.

Black and they were slowly but surely erasing the negative stereotypes often associated with African Americans. Already, I was honored to be associated with this incredible group. Through our conversations, I began to see how their passions and talents could be united to bring about great progress. But, I was still uncertain as to how these finalists would be united enough to bring about change.

This uncertainty dissipated when I attended the dinner held at the Renwick Gallery. I met Scholars from all over the United States, including my home state of Utah, that had taken time from their busy schedules to attend the 10th Anniversary celebration of the Ron Brown Scholar Program and the unveiling of

sons that the Ron Brown Scholar Program family stays unified. Like myself, Ron Brown Scholars would not let the relationships they had formed with each other fade away because they saw how incredible these individuals really are. Upon entering the gallery it occurred to me that I was walking into a place full of history. Upon descending the staircase to leave I knew that I was leaving a gallery that was full of the future.

Looking back I realize that while "selection" is an essential element of Selection Weekend, it is not what I remember best. I remember the late night conversations, the hope that I would be a member of a great organization, and the awe at being inducted as a member of the RBSP. The weekend gave me the opportunity to learn what it really means to be a RBS. As many Scholars have done, I merely applied for the Ron Brown Scholarship. I did not apply to become a Ron Brown Scholar simply because I did not know what it meant to be one. Now I know that it means you will be a valued member of an organization that is dedicated to progress and future Scholars. As a RBS, I have become emboldened because I know that I am not alone. I know that past Scholars are heading down the same road that I am and it has reaffirmed one of my most deeply held beliefs that hard work pays. It is a program that will not only afford me the opportunity to learn uninhibited by financial restraint, but it will open doors for me and provide the resources necessary to achieve success. It is a program that, God Willing, will allow me to give back to what it already has given to me. ■

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From every genuine conversation I had with a finalist, I learned that they had a passion and fight within them. From students that managed businesses and charitable organizations to students that traveled incredible distances to attend a school with a strong academic program, I learned that these students had passion. I learned that the future Scholars were intelligent and articulate, strong and sincere, passionate and compassionate. Even more refreshing was that these finalists were

*I Have Risen: Essays by African-American Youth.* Their attendance at the function spoke volumes about the Program impacting on their lives that it compelled them to give back what most Scholars have the least of: time. Then the unveiling of the book came. In its pages I found that the RBSP has a network of passionate individuals dedicated not only to academics, but also to their community, family and faith. It was apparent to me that the very experiences I was now having were the very rea-

### 2006 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

#### Breakdown by State and Country

Total Applications: 7,436

Alabama	193	Kansas	32	New Mexico	8	Virginia	431
Alaska	9	Kentucky	60	New York	624	Washington	38
Arizona	33	Louisiana	136	North Carolina	430	West Virginia	10
Arkansas	68	Maine	6	North Dakota	0	Wisconsin	69
California	316	Maryland	413	Ohio	282	Wyoming	0
Colorado	74	Massachusetts	97	Oklahoma	63		
Connecticut	106	Michigan	277	Oregon	12	District of Columbia	82
Delaware	65	Minnesota	35	Pennsylvania	349		
Florida	492	Mississippi	133	Rhode Island	14	England	2
Georgia	503	Missouri	146	South Carolina	219	Germany	9
Hawaii	5	Montana	0	South Dakota	1	Haiti	1
Idaho	2	Nebraska	16	Tennessee	158	Japan	1
Illinois	383	Nevada	19	Texas	576	Spain	1
Indiana	85	New Hampshire	1	Utah	7	US Virgin Islands	6
Iowa	11	New Jersey	325	Vermont	2		

## Celebrating A Milestone—10 Years in Operation *(continued from page 2)*

and works of art by American artists, was open exclusively to the guests of the Ron Brown Scholar Program.

The guest speaker, retired *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry gave a wonderful speech about perception. Drawing from the controversial TV show “Black White,” Raspberry gave a thought jarring presentation about race. “Black White” is a show where an African American family and a Caucasian family are made-up to look like the other family in order to experience each others racial struggles. He spoke about how it is frustrating when others do not understand our battles. He asked us to consider what exactly our battles were, and to see if they really were that important, or merely a product of our own paranoia. Simply put, he asked us to travel in another’s shoes before we come to any conclusions.

After his phenomenal speech and the

introduction to the new 2006 RBS candidates, Mr. Mallory, through the generosity of the CAP Foundation, made it possible to hand out a copy of *I Have Risen* to every guest.

There was little one could do to prepare themselves for such a monumental piece of work. The book, originally designed with a coffee table book-look in mind, took on a whole other genre. *I Have Risen* is 145 pages filled with inspirational stories, tear-jerking memories and humorous analogies. Each essay, originally written by a Ron Brown Scholar during their senior year in high school, was then accompanied by a corresponding photograph of the author today. The photographs themselves, taken by renowned photographers Joseph Rodriguez, Andre Lambertson and Clarence J. Williams, III tell their own tale. Thus, it is sacrilege to call *I Have Risen* a book. It is a story. Fine. It is life! It is art! Most of all, however, it is voices.

Perhaps that was what tied it all together. The Renwick Gallery, in all of its various types and genres of art, shared the common origin that they were created from Americans. Americans of all walks of life were celebrated for their narratives that they contributed to American culture. Likewise that night, *I Have Risen* and its authors gave birth to their own voices. Stories born of pain, struggle and perseverance were united in one astounding piece of literature and were honored for their refreshing and powerful messages. The words of Mr. William Raspberry reminded us of that truth and thus beauty and reality are only products of perception, and we should not be clouded by our own views.

Thus I raise a toast to voices. Here is to freedom of expression and freedom of speech: God given, RBS blessed.

Happy 10th Anniversary, Ron Brown Scholar Program, and many happy returns... ■

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## Council Focuses Second Documentary on the Educational Impacts of Hurricane

*(continued from page 5)*

students working to improve the New Orleans Public Schools, provided the space for these students to use their energies, talents and passions to stave off grief by taking action. Though they were learning the specifics of the political structure and how to use the media to effect change, these young students clearly understood civic engagement because they bothered to show up and care on a Monday morning during their summer vacation.

Between tales of living with no food or water for days and losing family members in the storm and its aftermath, these students enthusiastically explained to us what they were doing to get more books and clean bathrooms in their schools. Many expressed a deep desire to see people return to New Orleans and rebuild, almost surprised that we would even ask. For them life was already going strong in New Orleans and things would only get better. I could not help but believe that their optimism sprung from their decision to be proactive in effecting community change.

The documentary on Katrina could not be more timely. Our theme about civic engagement, people helping people with community at the center, rings clearly through the story of Katrina. Our communi-

ties need to see how the little things we can do to help one another truly make a difference in the world. It’s an important and compelling story to tell.

The stories are numerous though, and most of them will never be captured on film. As we

the most casual of tones and with a playful smile, our Egyptian driver explained how he fought with snakes and rats as he waited for days on the roof of his house. While I kicked myself for not having a camera to roll, he pointed to the water mark left on the walls of the highway about four feet from the ground. He reminded us that the water had settled for days at that mark after being some three feet higher to begin with. As we sat there trying to take it all in, our new friend chided engagingly, as if the tale of his experience was nothing to marvel at, “So, what do you think of what’s going on in the Middle East right now?” As we sat there dumbfounded by the gravity of issues this man pondered all at once as if they were nothing at all, I reflected on my personal angst about what we witnessed in New Orleans, in pictures and in stories, and I wondered how those kids could laugh and joke and chase each other around in the midst of such a disaster. I credit this to the wonder that is the human spirit. It is a spirit that drives these kids to keep working hard for others even

though they appeared to need so much. I expect our documentary will ignite that spirit in others. ■



*Two siblings, Joshua (12) and Venesha (15) from New Orleans, who evacuated to Houston with their family during Hurricane Katrina were interviewed by the Council for the second documentary.*

settled into our cab to make our flights back home, thinking our emotionally trying work was done, our friendly cab driver reminded us that few went unscathed by the disaster. In



Leah Hodge, RBS '98 and Caleb Franklin, RBS '01 find each other at the Taj Mahal in India.



RBS gather at The Den Restaurant in Harlem, New York during the RBS Family Reunion.



Yale Scholars gather for an evening of fellowship.



Scholars gather for a book signing at Busboys and Poets Books in Washington, DC.

## “Hey! How Was Morocco?” and Other Difficulties of Returning Home *(continued from page 5)*

countries and war-torn regions. I said they shouldn't believe everything they see on television.

I learned how to gracefully respond to the question: What's wrong with your president? I refused to let anyone in my presence think that America is of one opinion, one set of ethics, one culture, one race, one religion. I am just one person and America is an entire nation full of differences, contradictions, controversy, right and wrong. Just like Morocco.

I was an eager and open-minded, if not a typical, study abroad student. I studied, traveled, bought souvenirs, made friends, made a home... but by far the severest examination will be my departure and return to the home I had before knowing this place. It will be seeing if Morocco melts into a picture-perfect image in my head: of tourist brochure-worthy beaches, palm trees, exotic Berber carpets,

and mint tea-drinking nomads of the Sahara. Or, if I succeed, Morocco will remain for me a real place, with real people, with all the contradictions and hypocrisies and cultural confusions that exist in my own country and in my own identity.

I refuse to let my study abroad experience be exoticized, iconized or isolated. I am a person who takes full advantage of her opportunities, and wrings them dry for any drop of significance, purpose and wisdom for tomorrow. Insha'allah, Morocco will never be neatly packaged in my mind, nor will it ever run completely dry of lessons for the way I study, what I study, where I travel, what I value, and how I awake each morning in the United States of "Amreekyah."

It can never be summed up like some camping trip or visit to the zoo: "it was good..."

It is what it is. ■

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