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# LOCAL SERVICE, GLOBAL CHANGE



Ron Brown Scholars gather on the steps of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia during the 2008 Triennial Leadership Conference in Charlottesville, Virginia.

“**W**hen Ron Brown Scholars get together, great things happen.” These are the words of Marquise McGraw, a 2002 Ron Brown Scholar, speaking about the

2008 Triennial Leadership Conference hosted by the Ron Brown Scholar Program, the nation’s leading scholarship program for African American youth.

Every three years, the Ron Brown Scholar Program invites the Ron Brown Scholars, now totaling 241 current college students and alumni of the Program, to the conference to help each of them chart a course towards continued excellence in leadership and public service.

Sponsored by CAP Charitable Foundation and Verizon Business, this four-day leadership conference brought together leaders in business, media and public policy to meet with Ron Brown Scholars and discuss how to help propel African American youth nationwide into global leadership positions. The theme of the leadership conference focused on Local Service,

Global Change, and addressed how community service at the grassroots level can create a measurable impact on a global scale in fields as diverse as education, public policy and government, business, healthcare and urban renewal.

This year, more than 150 Ron Brown Scholars and other friends of the Program descended upon Charlottesville, Virginia to hear and interact with speakers Tom Werner, chairman of the World Series Champion Boston Red Sox and creator of “The Cosby Show”; Diana Dougan, former U.S. ambassador; Wendy Kopp, president of Teach For America; and Marva Smalls, executive vice president for public affairs for Nickelodeon. “This is an opportunity for people who have really had hard-scrabble backgrounds to get a leg up,” said Werner. “These are the African American leaders of the next generation.”

Anthony Pilaro, founder of the Ron Brown Scholar Program and chairman of the CAP Charitable Foundation, welcomed participants to the conference and spoke

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*Message From the Executive Director*



**How You Can Help!**

Thank you and the 2,000 others like you — donors, parents, mentors, advocates and board members — who support our important work. I am asking you today to extend your generosity again by making a gift.

You'll be in good company. Through the new Ron Brown Scholar Fund, as of October 31 of this year we have received donations of \$142,000 — surpassing the record \$113,865 raised in all of 2007.

To realize our vision of advancing young African Americans, we must continue to bolster our operating and endowment funds. Can we count on you today to fill out the enclosed pledge card, or to make a gift at [www.ron-brown.org](http://www.ron-brown.org)?

If you are considering estate planning that will support the Ron Brown Scholar Program in perpetuity, I would be delighted to speak with you about tailoring your gift.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Michael A. Mallory*

President, CAP Charitable Foundation (USA)  
Executive Director, Ron Brown Scholar Program

*P.S. Don't forget, if your employer matches your gift, even more young African Americans will benefit.*

**First Ever  
RBSP Mentor of the Year  
Announced**

The Ron Brown Scholar Program is pleased to announce the selection of Mrs. Donna Cross of Kathleen Senior High School in Lakeland, Florida as the first annual recipient of the Ron Brown Scholar Program's Mentor-of-the-Year award. Mrs. Cross was selected from over 5,000 high school counselors nationally.

Announcing the award, RBSP Executive Director Michael Mallory said, "A close-working relationship with a mentor can help a student get the very most

out of his or her courses, experiences and educational opportunities while at college." The Ron Brown Scholar Program recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond the regular duties as defined by their position to help students in their academic concerns. In response to this, the Ron Brown Scholar Program established a yearly award that focuses upon an individual selected by staff and students as being among the very best of those dedicated to helping students succeed through academic advising. A mentor may serve as a guide, counselor or advisor.



Desiree Montgomery (2008 Scholar) shown above with Donna Cross during an assembly.

Annually, the RBSP receives 5,000 to 7,000 applications for up to 20 scholarships. The applications closely resemble applications to college and the majority include an appraisal of the candidate by his or her guidance counselor.

Mrs. Cross recently played a vital role in guiding Ms. Desiree Montgomery (RBS '08) through the college application and scholarship process. "If there is one thing I will remember most about her after I graduate, it is the tremendous devotion that she has exhibited towards all her students" said Ms. Montgomery. "Throughout the school year, her office is always open for students to do research, work on applications, and receive personalized attention and mentoring. In essence, Mrs. Cross's diligence, strength, and selflessness are inspiring. She personifies the Ron Brown philosophy by constantly motivating her students to rise above their circumstances and working at the grassroots level to impact the lives of others."

**Criteria**

The official duties of Ron Brown Scholar Program Mentor-of-the-Year may be as counselor, academic advisor, guide, or as any person(s) responsible for the duties commonly associated with the role of mentor. The Ron Brown Scholar Program recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond the regular duties as defined by their position to help students in their academic concerns.

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## Reflections on the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series

By: Ihotu Ali, RBS '03 and Brennan Johnson, RBS '01

The Constituency for Africa (CFA) partnered with the Washington Office of the African Union and the Africa Region of the World Bank to present this year's Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series. The purpose of the 2008 RHB Series was: (1) to educate, inform and engage the American public on critical challenges, issues and concerns facing Africa; (2) to help link Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and their staff to African challenges, issues and concerns; and (3) to promote a pro-active and sustainable U.S.-Africa foreign policy agenda.



Carmelle Norice (RBS 1997) is shown above with Constituency for Africa President Melvin Foote.

The CFA held a Ronald H. Brown Legacy Breakfast on September 23, 2008, to celebrate the life of Ronald H. Brown and to acknowledge his significant efforts toward forging a relationship between the U.S. and Africa. Both Ron Brown Scholar Program staff and Scholars attended the Legacy Breakfast: Mr. Mallory, Karla Hardy (RBS 2001), Brennan Johnson (RBS 2001), Marco Ellis (RBS 1997), and Ihotu Ali (RBS 2003) were in atten-

dance. Ihotu Ali (RBS 2003) participated in the week's events and reflects on her experience:

We began with libations. A woman spoke a Yoruba prayer and poured sacrificial water onto the earth. We invoked the names of ancestors and leaders who had passed—we called forth their spirits into the small Howard University room with the word "Ashe." We called forth Marcus

*"Ron Brown opened the doors of recognition on the importance of a U.S.-Africa relationship, highlighting trade and investment opportunities, traveling to Africa and supporting organizations seeking to educate, advocate and build ties with Africa. . . ."*

Garvey, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jomo Kenyatta, generations of freedom fighters, survivors of civil wars, and families that crossed the oceans to give their children a better life. I called forth Nigerian relatives that passed before I could travel back home to meet them.

Thus began the Confederation for Africa (CFA) Ronald H. Brown Series. The week-long conference was held recently in Washington, DC with the aim of joining students and professionals of the African Diaspora in a Pan-African spirit and in dedication to economic and human development in Africa. Partner organizations such as the African Union, World Bank Group, Africare, Pfizer, Inc., the African American Unity Caucus, Black Professionals in International Affairs, and the Ron Brown Scholar Program supported CFA in hosting the annual event in conjunction with the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.

According to CFA, "Ron Brown opened the doors of recognition on the importance of a U.S.-Africa relationship, highlighting trade and investment opportunities, traveling to Africa and supporting organizations seeking to educate, advocate and build ties with Africa. Both Americans and Africans owe a deep debt of gratitude for his visionary efforts." Throughout the week, Black Diaspora professionals from all fields—from economics to medicine to education and culture—attended events across the District. We students and young professionals joined them as part of a CFA effort to establish mentorships and sustain a strong cadre of Black professionals in African affairs.

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## Ron Brown Scholar Program Announces First Ever Mentor of the Year *(Continued from Page 2)*

The selection process will evaluate nominations on the evidence of qualities and practices that distinguish the nominee. Such evidence may include:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Availability to advisees, faculty, staff or family
- Frequency of contact with advisee
- Appropriate referral activity
- Use and dissemination of appropriate information sources
- Evidence of student success rate
- Caring, helpful attitude toward advisees, faculty, staff or family
- Meeting advisees in informal settings
- Participation in and support of intrusive advising to build strong relationships with advisees
- Monitoring of student progress toward academic and career goals
- Mastery of institutional regulations, policies, and procedures
- Ability to engage in, promote, and support developmental advising ■

## Virginia Governor Names Evans to JMU Board

In August, Governor Timothy Kaine of Virginia named RBSP's Associate Director Vanessa Evans to the Board of Visitors of James Madison University. In Virginia, boards of visitors govern rather than advise universities. JMU was recently ranked by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best "Public Universities — Masters" and the sole Southern entry on the magazine's "Schools to Watch" list. RBSP volunteer Steve Rubin asked Evans about her appointment.

**SR:** Do you mind if we tape this?

**Evans:** Not at all. [Minutes later] I think all our recorders are out of batteries. Want us to get some?

**SR:** No, that's okay, Vanessa. You went to JMU as a student; has it changed much?

**Evans:** In some ways, yes, going from a school of just under 10,000 students to one with more than 17,000, and doubling, maybe tripling its physical plant. But in essential ways, no: it's still the sort of progressive place I remember, still has a marvelous culture of caring about its students — it's the same school, just a lot larger.

**SR:** How long were you there?

**Evans:** Four years as an undergraduate and two and a half as a graduate student, the graduate years overlapping more than five years as a junior administrator.

**SR:** After that?

**Evans:** After that I went to the College of William and Mary as a senior assistant dean in admissions and diversity recruitment. William and Mary was a really fine school; going there was a sort of promotion for me and I welcomed the professional challenges. But then the Ron Brown position opened up and it was just too perfect for me not to pursue it. I seem to recall us taking a walk the day I interviewed.

**SR:** That was just a walk, Vanessa. What's your worst memory of JMU?

**Evans:** Honestly, I don't have any. [Long pause] Oh, all right: going down eight flights of stairs in my dormitory, Eagle Hall, during winter fire alarm drills. And trudging back up all eight flights. [Another long pause:] Honestly: my JMU memories are good memories.

**SR:** What's your best memory of those good memories?

**Evans:** The people. JMU had a truly welcoming environment; you sensed instantly that the faculty and even your fellow students cared about you and your development, really cared. We



all knew that; it wasn't just something warm and fuzzy dreamt up by PR people somewhere. That memory is part of why I've stayed close to the school ever since, why I served five years as president of the Alumni Association's Black Alumni Chapter, supporting current black students and helping ensure that everyone's voice gets heard on campus. As an aside, and off the point, that the Ron Brown staff obviously cared about every single Scholar, past and current, that they wanted to be and stay in touch with all of them—is part of what made the job here so attractive to me.

**SR:** Granted, it's an honor to be named to the Board of Visitors. But what do you hope to accomplish as a member?

**Evans:** I'm not sure I have a ready answer to that. My appointment came just as two members of my immediate family were dying, and it's only now in early October that I've begun to process what the appointment means to me personally and professionally, and what I may actually be able to contribute to the JMU community. And here you are interviewing me just a couple of days after a sixty-mile walk to raise money for cancer research, and expecting me to be lucid. [Slight pause] Steve, I'm sure my experience as a JMU student, employee, and very active alumna will help me be helpful, as will my years here at the RBSP. Which doesn't mean I'll not be looking for ways JMU can become even better. One thing I quickly found out is that all Board members serve on two committees; I was relieved to be assigned work with Development & Education and Student Life, areas to which I can bring some professional expertise — and not to be on the Audit Committee; maybe JMU should be equally relieved at that.

**SR:** Any fears?

**Evans:** Probably, though I can't pinpoint them for you. I think I'm the youngest member of the Board. [Pause] Whenever even confident people assume new roles there's likely to be at least a little uncertainty on their part about how effective they'll actually be. I want to be *very* effective. ■

## 2008 Community Service Foundation Grants

By: Brennan Johnson, RBS '01

At the heart of the Ron Brown Scholar Program lies an unshakable commitment to service. The Ron Brown Scholar Program launched its Community Service Foundation (CSF) in April of 2008 with the intent to help Ron Brown Scholars continue serving their communities through innovative service projects. Thanks to a gift from the CAP Charitable Foundation, the CSF will award small grants to Ron Brown Scholar applicants who submit proposals of service projects that demonstrate visionary solutions to problems of social importance.

### 2008 Award Recipients

**Sparlha Swa** (RBS 1997) was awarded \$1,000.00 for her project entitled "Project Vote." The goal of this project is to support the empowerment of young, black residents of Brooklyn to participate in the voting process. The CSF funding will support the development of a compilation CD of local Brooklyn artists and a concert that will facilitate voter registration among the target group.

**May Lugemwa** (RBS 2000) and **Aaliyah Williams** (RBS 1998) were awarded \$6,604.50 for their project entitled "The Cure." The CSF funding will be used to produce a national public service announcement to inspire and energize American citizens, communities and leaders to work toward affordable, quality healthcare and financial stability for all Americans.

**Folake Dosu** (RBS 2007) and **Jamel Seagraves** (RBS 2007) were awarded \$4,085.00 for their project entitled "The Birthday Party Project." The CSF funding will be used to organize birthday parties for underprivileged refugee children living in the Bay Area that will not only celebrate the human spirit, but also promote awareness of the refugee population and encourage community activism in addressing refugee-related issues.

**Mike Woodward** (RBS 2004) and **Neveen Mahmoud** (RBS 2007) were awarded \$5,000.00 for their project

entitled "Project Skill Build." The CSF funding will be used in partnership with Habitat for Humanity to send skilled builders and construction workers to New Orleans, Louisiana, to help with rebuilding efforts after the destruction of this area by Hurricane Katrina. The project will connect communities through service and expedite reconstruction by using skilled volunteers.

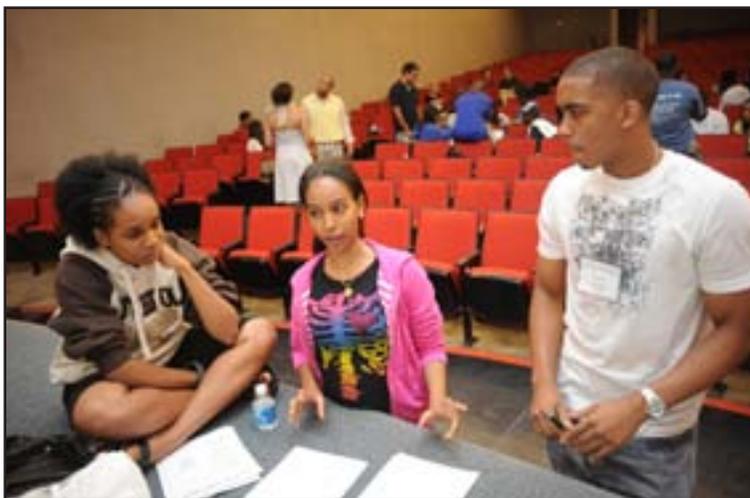
**Total Funding Awarded** (as of October 31): \$16,689.50

### Pending Applications

**Crystal Venning** (RBS 2006) has submitted a proposal for her project entitled "The Write Stuff: College Edition." This program seeks to help high school students at the Academy of Mount Saint Ursula in Bronx, New York, with the college application writing process.

**Shirley Delaleu** (RBS 1998) submitted a proposal for her project: "Mental Health Awareness in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia." This program seeks to raise awareness of mental health and illness in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and to educate community health workers about dealing with mental health. The project aims to impact the population served by the Worldwide Orphans Foundation.

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Scholars and alumni gather to discuss RBS service learning initiatives during the 2008 leadership conference.

## Making a Difference

By: Aliya Sanders, RBS '03

For the past year, I've been working with **mothers2mothers**, a multinational non-governmental organization based in South Africa, which focuses on providing education and support for pregnant women and new mothers living with HIV. **m2m** does this by employing HIV-positive mothers and teaching them to become peer educators and professional members of the healthcare team, thereby building a sustainable capacity within communities to fight HIV/AIDS and empowering women to take control of their lives.

My decision to move abroad immediately after graduating from Princeton was an easy one. I knew that the opportunity to do meaningful work in a different country would not come by every day, and I was excited to build on the knowledge and experiences that I had gained during my undergraduate years, as well as gain a new perspective on the world by being outside of my comfort zone for a significant period of time. My interest in public health began during my internship with the Institute of Human Virology, which the Ron Brown Scholarship Program organized and supported, and continued throughout my undergraduate years, culminating in a Princeton in Africa Fellowship to work with **m2m** for a year. I've recently started my second year as a staff member.

My specific role within the organization is to help develop the curriculum



Aliya Sanders graduated from Princeton University in 2007 with degrees in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

and simple to understand, but at the same time encompasses all of the key information that they need to know in order to properly support HIV-positive mothers and mothers-to-be in clinics and hospitals.

duce the rate of HIV transmission from mother-to-child, and that a practical and sustainable community-based effort can fill in gaps in the healthcare system.

After I complete my second year with **m2m**, I plan to enroll in graduate school for a dual degree in human rights law and international health. One of the major reasons why HIV has spread so quickly is that vulnerable groups, including women, children, the poor, and marginalized people, are unable to protect their rights for access to treatment, prevention measures, education and support. While legislation often exists to protect the right to health, discrimination and stigma persist, leading to a fear of disclosure and unwillingness to access much-needed treatment. I believe that focusing on the interface of law and public health will lead to much-needed systems of treatment and support, and government accountability for when people are inhibited from accessing treatment and care.

Although focusing on human rights law is different from what I currently do, I believe that my experience with **m2m** has been invaluable and has allowed me to uncover the areas of public health that I find most interesting. Working abroad has helped me see firsthand what the problems on the ground really are, and helped to create a career path that I would not have imagined just a year ago when I graduated from college. Anyone who is willing to dive into the unknown will only benefit from uncovering the things that inspire them the most.

For more information, please visit [www.m2m.org](http://www.m2m.org). ■

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While legislation often exists to protect the right to health, discrimination and stigma persist, leading to a fear of disclosure and unwillingness to access much-needed treatment.

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for both training the women who are hired by **m2m**, as well as teaching clients in clinics and hospitals about how to take care of themselves and their children so that they live longer and healthier lives. The work that I do is particularly challenging because of the level of education that many women in resource-limited settings have, and the need to teach information that is focused

While the day-to-day work is demanding, I find this job to be incredibly rewarding, especially when a new mother who is HIV-positive has the courage and support to disclose her status to her family, and the tools to take control of her life and continue to live for herself and her child. Being able to witness the success of peer education and support has shown me that it is possible to re-

## Scholar Spotlight: Sparlha Swaby, RBS '97

By: Maria Velazquez, RBS '00

The first thing you should know about Sparlha is that she's a songstress who's going places. Fast. This incredibly talented, dynamic, and effervescent singer/songwriter has had tracks licensed by the hit show *Girlfriends*, scored the music to a Sundance Film Festival Selection, and has reached the international markets. On top of these many accomplishments, Sparlha is also planning on returning to school in the near future.

Sparlha describes singing in Talisman, one of Stanford's most exclusive a cappella groups, as having had a formative influence on her present career. "Talisman taught me so much about voice, group leadership, and a little bit about the business of music. We had an intense rehearsal schedule—two to three times a week. We also performed every other week, earning money to record and travel." Sparlha also integrated her academic path into her musical career. "My major—anthropology with a focus in spiritual ecology—grounded me in the content of much of music: the spiritual path, quest, and evolution of humanity. I studied and explored religious and

**Take your time. Consider well what you are here to do. When you don't know, don't act. Wait. Listen to yourself—spend time in self-reflection. Trust yourself enough to rely on your own inner wisdom to guide you to the right choices for you.**

spiritual texts from the East and the West, fortifying my core value that the most important work we are here to do is the work of healing and evolving ourselves on all levels: spiritually, socially, politically, ecologically. Service to others is a critical part of that work."



Performing at the Paramount Theater in Charlottesville during the 2008 conference, Sparlha Swa (shown above) shares her soulful sound with Scholars and friends.

Sparlha's emphasis on the holistic permeates her career, and is one facet of her soulful sound.

This charming diva-in-the-making is incredibly busy, but offers this major piece of advice to this year's entering class: "Take your time. Consider well what you are here to do. When you don't know, don't act. Wait. Listen to yourself—spend time in self-reflection. Trust yourself enough to rely on your own inner wisdom to guide you to the right choices for you. Don't live out your parent's dreams, or society's dream for you. Follow your own. You will find greater fulfillment, and be of greater service when you are solidly walking your own path."

This balance can be hard to achieve.

Sparlha says, "For the past 4 years I've had the great privilege and challenge of being a full-time musician, which meant all the joy and freedom of having no time constraints on touring, recording and creating music . . . which also meant . . . all the hustling and instability of requiring your music to support you financially." She notes that starting to working part-time has been good experience for her. "It's been a nice change of pace to have the music be just about the music, and not my main source of income."

Sparlha was recently accepted into the California Institute of Integral Studies to pursue a Masters in Psychology. ■

## RBS... What Are V

**Shelia Adams** (2001) is two months into her first year at Columbia Law and is involved with a Tenants' Rights Project.

**Danielle Allen** (2005) is busy working on her thesis, putting together law school applications, and deciding what to do during her year off.

**Bianca K. Asibu** (1997) just moved to Virginia.

**Tamika Bailey Smith** (RBS 2002) is the proud mom of beautiful baby girl Bailey Simone Smith who is now 10 weeks old. She is in her third year clerkships at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine and is enjoying her new apartment in beautiful Evanston with her husband, daughter, and mother-in-law.

**Jasmine Browne** (2007) is trying to create programs to inspire youth to go to college in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics as the current Pre-College Initiative Chair of her school's NSBE chapter.

**Dr. Yolanda Covington-Ward** (1997) University of Michigan, Ann Arbor - officially handed in all of the revisions for her Dissertation, after defending in early October. She now has her PhD in Anthropology, and you can call her Dr. Covington-Ward! She will be starting a tenure-track job in the Department of Africana Studies at the University of Pittsburgh in August, 2009.

**Lowell Caulder** (2005) is graduating from UPenn in May and heading to Wall Street.

**Brandon Cook** (2003) is two months into his grad program in Art History at the University of Wisconsin - Madison and doing well.

**Jade Craig** (2002) is completing his third year with Teach For America. He teaches kindergarten in the Mississippi Delta, in west central MS. He just got his LSAT score back and is applying to law schools and plans to start next fall.

**Morgan Dooley** (1999) is applying for anesthesia residency currently and preparing to graduate from Johns Hopkins Medical School in a few months. Yea!

**Folake Dosu** (2007) is studying human biology, working on establishing The Birthday Party Project in the Bay

Area, and developing a research proposal to study the integration of the Iraqi refugee population in Madrid (or possibly the Palestinian refugee population in Brazil) next summer. Wish her luck.

**Vanessa Evans** (RBS Staff) just completed the Breast Cancer 3-Day and walked 60 miles to raise awareness of the disease!

**Maleka Donaldson Gramling** (1998) is teaching kindergarten in Los Angeles.

**Kyla Dotson** (1999) is preparing for Election Day. The U.S. Embassy is hosting a major event for Nepali VIPs, others in the diplomatic community and Americans residing in Nepal.

**Dora Duru** (2008) is continuing her work to combat genocide in Sudan through STAND, the Student-Led Division of the Genocide Intervention Network.

**Caleb Franklin** (2001) is urging all RBS 2001 to make a donation to the RBSAA.

**Travis Gayles** (1997) is preparing to hit the interview trail for residency in pediatrics/neonatal medicine.

**Raymond Grissom** (2008) is in Bavaria, Germany serving as a Youth Ambassador. He is taking German and Spanish courses to fulfill language requirements for his upcoming year at Yale. He is also perfecting his third foreign language. In the upcoming months, he will begin chemistry and physics classes while taking Biomedicine Engineering basics courses.

**Karla Hardy** (2001) is working hard in her second year of law school at the University of Virginia, organizing events as President of Women of Color, editing students' legal writing as a Dillard Fellow, and studying a lot in preparation for her summer work at Hogan & Hartson in Washington, D.C.

**Leah Hodge** (1998) is... loving her job managing services for 415 older adults and preparing for her first Chicago winter.

**Alvin Hough** (2002) is less than seven weeks from a Master's degree!

# We Up to NOW??

**Margaret Ivey** (2007) is crazy busy with rehearsals for Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage. This marks her acting debut at USC, as well as the first time in several years that her school has done a play written by, directed by, about and starring African-Americans! If any of y'all are in the Los Angeles area, please come see the show! It runs October 29 through November 2.

**Lisa Kelly** (2006) is still working too hard at Mills but in two more years she'll have her B.A., Masters and credentials in education/teaching!

**Maikha Jean-Baptiste** (2006) is studying, working and dancing. She just joined the Ballroom dance team at her school.

**Miles Johnson** (2004) is in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, finally meeting the rest of his Orkut coworkers in person!

**Maris Jones** (2001) is in her last year of medical school and interviewing for a general surgery residency.

**Kory Kantenga** (2006) is studying abroad at Oxford University in England.

**Jacquelin King** (2002) is half-way through the first semester of a Sociology and Social Policy PhD at Princeton.

**Sarah Labrie** (2003) is working in the story department at the Endeavor talent agency, reading feature scripts. She's also taking writing courses at the UCLA extension school and looking to break into freelance journalism in the coming year.

**Jessica Larche** (2003) is working in Jackson, MS as a Reporter for the FOX affiliate there. Here's a link to the station's Web site "<http://www.fox40now.com/>" \t "\_blank" <http://www.fox40now.com>. It is a start-up station. They will be launching their newscast in January, but have been up and running with the web site since June. Take a look and let her know what you think (and of course, send any story ideas her way).

**May Lugemwa** (2000) had her latest movie project win 1st place, Industry Judge's Award at the AARP-UCLA Stolen Dreams film competition. It will be featured as part of a nationwide initiative aimed at securing affordable

health care and assuring financial security, as part of the "Divided We Fail" Initiative. It's a short (3-5min movie): \t "\_blank" <http://www.stolendreams.com/entry/the-cure/> You can read about it in the news: **LA Times** \t "\_blank" [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/booster\\_shots/2008/10/aspiring-filmma.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/booster_shots/2008/10/aspiring-filmma.html)

**Chris Lyle** (2008) is trying to come to a solution of this ongoing phenomenon that plagues most college students: The lack of enough hours in a day.

**Mike Mallory** (RBS Staff) is attempting to master Argentine tango!

**Jonathan Marable** (2004) is now teaching high school in the Marshall Islands.

**Jeremy McGee** (2005) is currently working on a start-up with two of his friends, looking for incubation funding. The URL is: [beatingcollegeadmissions.com](http://beatingcollegeadmissions.com).

**Julian D. Miller** (2003) is applying to law school while working two jobs. In addition to his work with the MS Delta Initiative, he is now doing community development work for the Delta Health Center in Mound Bayou, MS. He is also actively converting oxygen into carbon dioxide.

**Ijah Mondesire-Crump** (2002) is in his second year of medical school and looking for clinical research in surgical oncology.

**Khalia Mounsey** (2001) started a new job as a Program Analyst with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a rather new government agency focused on reducing poverty abroad. They are waiting to see if an Obama Administration will continue their agency as is or move them under the State Department or USAID."

**Jeff Nelson** (2006) was interviewed by the Associated Press following Obama's victory. He's not sure if the story made it to TV or any other new outlets. Watch on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwfTCM19E1A>

**Brandon Nicholson** (2001) is taking his oral qualifying exams in December at Berkeley.

**Crystal Paul** (2004) has been in Guatemala for 4 months  
(Continued on Page 16)

## Friends of Ron Brown Scholars

By: Brennan Johnson, RBS '01

In this issue, we are excited to highlight Gavin McFarland as our Outstanding FORBS. FORBS are Friends of Ron Brown Scholars who are dedicated to the success of both the Program and its Scholars. We have selected Mr. McFarland as our Outstanding FORBS not only due to his professional successes, but also because of his continuous commitment to the Program.

Gavin McFarland is a Managing Director at JL McGregor & Company where he is responsible for Capital Management and new business development. JL McGregor & Company is an exclusively China-focused, China-based independent research firm. The company's primary research, data, and analysis help global investors develop robust China investment strategies.

Before joining the JL McGregor, Mr. McFarland was a Financial Advisor at UBS Financial Services working in the Private Wealth Management office that is dedicated to managing and advising the investment assets of high net worth individuals, foundations and institutions. Prior to joining UBS, Mr. McFarland was an advisor to a single family office where he focused on estate planning and wealth transfer techniques. He also has experience developing internet software and heading up MyFolder.com, an internet company that managed emails, documents and online data. In 2001, Mr. McFarland attended the Middlebury Language School for Mandarin Studies and moved to Beijing where he continued his language studies at the Taipei Language Institute. He is proficient in Mandarin. Mr. McFarland is an Associate Trustee



Gavin McFarland (shown above) serves as both a Selection Committee and Steering Committee member for the Ron Brown Scholar Program.

continues to seek ways to be involved with the Program and the Scholars. When asked what he considered to be the most valuable part of being involved with the Ron Brown Scholar Program, Mr. McFarland answered, "The relationships that have come from the RBSP community have by far had the

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of the Children's Aid Society and holds a BA in English from the University of Virginia.

Mr. McFarland was introduced to RBSP through his life-long relationship with the Pilaro family. His involvement started by attending the Selection Weekend Friday evening dinners. He is now entering his third year as a member of the Selection Committee and mentoring two of our 2008 Scholars. He is a member of the Steering Committee and

most valuable impact on my life. From being in the presence of Mike Mallory's steady and giving hand, to mentoring the youngest Scholar seeking advice, RBSP has affected me greatly. Being part of an organization that defines itself in the continued improvement of all is truly unique. "The Value of ONE. The Power of ALL."

We thank Gavin McFarland for being an Outstanding FORBS. ■

## RBSnet: *Connecting Scholars Online and Offline*

**R**BSnet (<http://rbsnet.ning.com>) is a social and professional networking site where the Scholars, staff and friends of the Ron Brown Scholar Program can learn more about each other, share ideas and build relationships. It is hosted on a free, turn-key platform, which includes customizable member profiles, events, forums, groups, photos, videos, blogs and chat functionality.

The idea for a RBSP-specific online community was sparked by the business affinity group meeting at the August 2008 leadership conference in Charlottesville, VA. During the one-hour session, led by moderator and FORBS Calvin LaRoche, Scholars discussed their expertise and ways that they could assist other RBS as well as identified specific areas where they needed help. Finding the conversation to be enlightening, the group



Alumni meet during the conference to discuss Association business and how best to stay connected to one another.

decided that it was necessary to create a platform where Scholars could discover each other's talents, skills and needs, readily communicate and make valuable connections. Ideas ranged from starting an email listserv to developing a Facebook application to building a private online network. Kara Lee '00 agreed to spearhead efforts along with help and guidance from RBSAA president emeritus, Leah Hodge '98. To continue the momentum, Samere Reid '04 also recorded and emailed meeting minutes to participants following the conference, which contained each Scholar's preferred email address, current status, challenges and strengths and produced three additional volunteers: Jason Young '00, Marc Knight '98 and Michael McDaniels '04.

As the purpose of RBSnet is to strengthen ties among Scholars, it is fitting that the process of developing the site has been a collaborative effort among six Scholars [including five of the alumni named above and RBSAA executive director, Brennan Johnson '01]. This project-based initiative has provided an opportunity for a diverse group of Scholars to interact and work together to achieve a common goal. By sharing tasks such as generating ideas

for the site design and launch, populating various sections with content, creating a separate Google group and linking it to RBSnet, and inviting and approving Scholars to join, the development phase has been both an efficient and enjoyable process. We hope that RBSnet will mobilize other teams of Scholars in a similar fashion to support the efforts of the RBSP and RBSAA.

William Chichester '01 will then assist in rolling out RBSnet to all Scholars by December 1st, 2008. After one month of use, we will evaluate site's effectiveness, make any necessary adjustments and invite FORBS, steering committee members and advisory board members to create profiles.

Once you have joined RBSnet, we would love to hear your thoughts on the

Presently, the RBSP office, RBSAA board members and 2007-2008 RBS Class Representatives have been invited to join RBSnet. Their feedback has been solicited in order to make preliminary tweaks. Next, the site will be rolled out to Mr. LaRoche and the business affinity group meeting participants for additional comments and suggestions. Mike Mallory, Vanessa Evans and RBSAA president

**We are also seeking experienced website designers and programmers who will volunteer their time to revamp the overall look and feel of the site, devise a way to integrate it with [www.ronbrown.org](http://www.ronbrown.org) and enhance the search functionality.**

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## RBSnet: *Connecting Scholars Online and Offline* (Continued from Page 11)

site and suggestions for ways in which we can improve it. Please post your comments directly in the “RBSnet Feedback” forum discussion. We also strongly encourage you to upload a main profile photo, complete your profile, add each other as friends, join groups, start a blog, participate in forums and post events, photos and videos. This will help to make it more engaging. We are also seeking experienced website designers and programmers who will volunteer their time to revamp the overall look and feel of the site, devise a way to integrate it with [www.ronbrown.org](http://www.ronbrown.org), and enhance the search functionality.

There are several benefits to becoming part of RBSnet. Not only will you be able to keep up-to-date on RBSP/RBSAA news and events, but you can also discover who within our growing network of Scholars and friends you can make the strongest connection. By browsing profiles, reading and responding to forum posts, joining groups categorized by interest and affiliation, you can align yourself with individuals who have similar goals and objectives as well as bond with those who have experience in

different industries and fields. For Scholars who use other web 2.0 sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn and are weary about joining another network, we have done our best to make this a unique community. We have tried not to duplicate content by including profile questions that ask about your passions, mentorship interests, most memorable experiences from RBSP-related events, what you can offer others and what you need from others. Furthermore, on RBSnet, you can share information that you may not be comfortable disclosing with those outside of the RBS family, including your personal email address and phone number, short-term and long-term goals and ideas for potential business ventures.

Remember, RBSnet will only be an effective tool to increase communication among Scholars and FORBS with your active participation. The first step you can take is sending your full name and primary email address to [RBSnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:RBSnetwork@gmail.com) to ensure that you receive your invitation to join. We look forward to connecting with you. ■

## Reflections on the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series

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As a recent graduate establishing a career in African affairs, I found the experience exhilarating. The sheer number of events was overwhelming, each with notable speakers such as His Excellency Jakaya Kiwete, President of the Republic of Tanzania, Dr. Julius Garvey, globally-acclaimed musician and activist Angelique Kidjo, and representatives from the Nigerian Finance Ministry, African Union, and United States Congress. Yet by the end of the week, any star-struck awe I had felt was replaced with a deep feeling for African culture and fellowship. I met fellow participants from across the U.S., from France, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, as well as from African countries. We discussed the deep issues dividing us—economics, immigration laws, and stereotypes—as well as celebrated the common culture and history that we believed could unify the Diaspora.

I felt a common vision with this group that is rare in this field of work. We didn't want to “help” Africa as if it were our burden, nor blindly conform it to our ideals of “the good life.” Yes, our intentions were altruistic, but they were also grounded in the same sisterhood and brotherhood that binds a family, a community, or a nation. After four years of college courses of studying Africa's ills and sluggish development; I found this conference a lesson in celebrating the success of those before us and laying the foundations for that progress to continue. I am proud to play my role in the Diaspora as a working professional who keeps her eyes open to opportunities to touch Africa and bring up the “next generation.” I realize that —Marcus Garvey to Kwame Nkrumah to Martin Luther King, Jr.—the path was carefully laid for me. I will continue to carry the torch. ■

## Ron Brown Scholar Program

### *Important Dates*

**January 9, 2009**

**Final Application Deadline**

**March 20-22, 2009**

**Selection Weekend, Washington, DC  
Renaissance M Street Hotel**

**August 2009**

**RBSAA Family Reunion  
New York, NY**

## LOCAL SERVICE, GLOBAL CHANGE

*(Continued from Page 1)*

positively of the future lying ahead for Ron Brown Scholars. He observed that the Program and the conference are “about seeking out and cultivating America’s next black leaders. The conference is a unique opportunity created to bring young people together to demonstrate that through unity and cooperation any social challenge can be overcome.”

One important goal of the conference was to strengthen the network between Scholars and the speakers and friends of the Program. Terri Dean, former senior vice president of global communications at Verizon Business and chairman of the Ron Brown Scholar Program Advisory Board, came here because she is intent on shaping these leaders, whom she calls “her kids” into the “next generation of leaders.” “We must never forget that innovation and progress always start locally. The conference fosters an important dialogue among the world’s next generation of leaders, who will confront the growing challenges of our global community.”

Connecting with each other serves an important purpose in fostering a lifelong commitment between the Scholars. Katori Hall, a 1999 Ron Brown Scholar, said that having the opportunity to network with the other Scholars inspired her to “try to be whatever and whoever you want to

be because you are surrounded by your peers who are doing the same thing.” Amanda Reid, one of the newest Ron Brown Scholars, found something valuable in other Scholars, “some of the brightest young people in America, not just African Americans, but just amazing young people.”

It was not only their peers who were inspirational. Many of the Scholars pointed to the keynote address by The Honorable Judge John Charles Thomas, a former member of the

Supreme Court of Virginia and the first African American attorney in the South to become a partner in a major, predomi-



Scholars pose with Tom Werner, Chairman of the Boston Red Sox outside of the Paramount Theater.

*... The conference is a unique opportunity created to bring young people together to demonstrate that through unity and cooperation any social challenge can be overcome.”*



A. Damian Williams, RBS 1998 engages Scholars and Alumni about his clerkship with Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens during a conference breakout session.

nantly white law firm. He spoke of his generation’s struggle and clearly touched many of the Scholars’ young hearts and minds.

Brennan Johnson, a 2001 Ron Brown Scholar, was moved by the Judge’s emotional speech that left many present in tears. She noted that he set the tone for the conference, reminding them to exercise the opportunities their freedom affords.

Marquise McGraw added, “After hearing him speak I knew that the fight for change in America now rested on our shoulders, that this group of young African American men and women would make history in our individual and collective endeavors.”

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## On the Eve of History

By: Amanda Bass, RBS '06  
Obama Organizing Fellow, Macon GA

Working on the Obama campaign here in Macon, GA has taken me on an emotional roller coaster to say the least. We are currently placing all of our efforts into voter registration and volunteer recruitment due to the alarmingly high percentage of individuals, specifically African Americans, who are not registered to vote. There are over half a million unregistered blacks in Georgia alone and we're working hard to get as many of them registered as possible. There is something very haunting about being here in the south; before coming here I was not aware of the extent to which voter registration laws here in Georgia, specifically where I am working in Bibb County, make it difficult for blacks and for poor people to vote.



Amanda Bass currently attends Amherst College and was recently featured as one of CNN's Young People Who Rock.

In 2002, a republican legislature mandated that individuals submit copies of their IDs with their voter registration forms. The process whereby one procures an ID is cumbersome and the Georgia Election Code enumerates a number of prerequisites that remain intentionally convoluted and ambiguous. The legislature justified this law's enactment by alleging that they would fund a city bus that would drive around to local communities where people could procure IDs with little to no hassle. As one can probably imagine, since 2002 no one has seen this bus. And yet, here in GA when one applies for a hunting license they are automatically registered to vote. In fact, one must opt out of voting when they apply for a hunting, fishing, or trapping license; it remains obvious to me which demographic this caters to.

Prior to arriving here in Georgia I failed to understand why election year after election year this state remains red; now I get it. Since 2000, the laws and the procedures surrounding voter registration have successfully suppressed both the black and the poor vote. This entire process

resembles all-too closely the poll taxes and the literacy tests that historically denied blacks a place in the democratic process and that were meant to discourage many of us from realizing the importance of the ballot.

But there are many of us here, as there were back then, who are resolved not to let de jure racism prevent us from registering as many voters as we can. Many people I have encountered here have been so supportive and have donated portable copying machines which we now carry with us everywhere we do voter registration. We intend to look into Polaroid cameras, portable printers, and really anything that will allow us to reach as many people as we need to reach in order to make a difference here.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change that you want to see in the world." I am being stretched in many ways and am reminded daily of why I am in school. It feels incredible to be part of a movement that is so much greater than myself; I am living history. While there are some days when I want only to crawl under a rock and pretend that somehow the many problems that continue to afflict so many of America's blacks and poor citizens as a result of slavery's bastard children, Racism and Jim Crow, will simply disappear with time, this experience motivates me to work even harder towards the social, political, and psychological uplift of our race. ■



Amanda Bass is shown here with 2007 RBS Dorian Dargan performing a tribute to President-Elect Barack Obama during the 2008 conference talent showcase.

## LOCAL SERVICE, GLOBAL CHANGE *(Continued from Page 13)*

The conference had a special night of celebration with electrifying performances by two Ron Brown Scholars, playwright Katori Hall and R&B singer/songwriter Sparlha Swa. The evening contributed much to the conference's overall success. Scholars came away with the knowledge and power to continue on their trajectory of making an impact in their communities and in our world. Ron Brown Scholars are not just well on their way to becoming leaders, they are demonstrating how they are already leaders. ■



Terri Dean, RBS Advisory Board Chair (shown front row, second from left) poses with Scholars whom she engaged in conversation following her session at the conference.

### RBS Publishes First Book



CHRISTOPHER KHAN

#### Description

Have you ever had a sudden moment of clarity? A flash of insight about your path in life? A stark realization of how the world works? Ever write it down? I did. On little sticky notes. But I've been losing them along the way. The notes within this book are a collection of all those thoughts ...thoughts that are undoubtedly shadows of ones which have crossed your own mind. Publisher: ck1 Publishing (September 4, 2008)

## Ron Brown Scholar Alumni Association Update

### RBSAA Board

We are taking nominations for the 2009 RBSAA Board. We are looking to fill the following roles:

- Vice President - Chair of Scholar Events Committee - help organize 2009 Family Reunion and regional activities
- Treasurer - Chair of Scholar Fundraising Committee - execute fundraising campaign, work with Scholar Reps to solicit donations
- Secretary - Chair of Scholar Communications Committee - develop e-newsletter and RBSnet
- Historian - record Scholar events, help with e-newsletter, work with Scholar Reps to keep updates on Scholar activities

### Scholar Giving

Alumni (1997-2004) total: 133 of 161 Alumni have given = 82.6%

Undergraduate (2005-2008) total: 48 of 80 Undergraduates have given = 60%

TOTAL SCHOLARS: 183 of 241 Scholars have given to date = 75.9%

For Scholars who have not already done so, please consider setting up a recurring payment plan with your bank:

1. **Log** into your bank's website
2. **Click** on the "Bill Pay" option on your institution's website, if available
3. **Schedule** the monthly \$10 deduction from your checking account
4. **Designate** the payee as: *The Ron Brown Scholar Fund, 1160 Pepsi Place, Suite 206, Charlottesville, VA 22901.*

### 2009 Family Reunion

We are currently working to secure a date and location for the 2009 Family Reunion. We plan to secure a date by December 15th, so keep an eye out for more information.

## RBS...What Are We Up to NOW??

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volunteering with the Bomberos Voluntarios (volunteer paramedics/firefighters) and in local clinics while studying medical Spanish and completing a research project on pre-hospital care in Guatemala.

**Geraldine Pierre** (2004) is just trying to stay focused at Chapel Hill and get through final exams! She went to UVA for the day on November 1, and was able to hang out with Will, Brennan, and Karla....good times. Ku McMahan (RBS 1999) is really looking out for her down in North Carolina, which has been amazing and very, very helpful.

**Kelly Raymond** (RBS Staff) just finished the Marine Corps Marathon . . . that's right . . . she ran 26 miles!

**Errol Saunders** (2002) is still teaching at Hopkins School and Assistant Directing at Breakthrough New Haven and LOVING IT! He is also one meeting away from getting to teach New Haven History as a senior elective next year.

**Ade Sawyer** (2006) is perpetually studying.

**Anthony St. Louis** (1997) is trying to master the business side of things at an engineering consulting company and spending a lot of time in Florida and Atlanta.

**Sparlha Swa** (1997) is recovering from the Fela! musical and is excited about it possibly going to Broadway in the spring—Sparlha's New Album "Live from NYC" available at <http://www.sparlhaswa.com>

**Maria Velazquez** (2000) will be teaching her first full college course, "Diversity in America." It's online.

**Bryant Watson** (2006) will study abroad in Morocco in Spring 2009.

**Alan Wesson** (2007) is having a hard time getting out of bed: it's so cold out!

**Aaliyah Williams** (1998) is wishing she spoke Spanish for the new film she is producing, Gordita.

**David Williams** (2003) is buying a plane ticket to Salvador da Bahia, Brazil for Carnival in February and trying to figure out other warm places to visit before he heads back to Cambridge to start law school next Fall.

**Alexandra Wood** (2003) is currently working for McMaster-Carr Supply Co, where she manages a team of 11 associates in one of the sales operations departments.

**Koryse Woodrooffe** (2001) has decided to become a pediatrician and is in the middle of the residency application process.

**Jamaal Young** (1999) is writing a weekly political column for the New York Press.

The RBS Alumni Team of **Kara Lee, Amanda Johnson, William Chichester, Jason Young, Brennan Johnson, Donielle Buie, Julian Miller, Maria Velazquez, Jordan Brewer, Stefon Burns, Ellen Yiadom, Leah Hodge, Marc Knight, Michael McDaniels** and **Travis Gayles** is working on something pretty special as a follow-up to the conference.

**Stay tuned in to the next edition for further updates....**■

## 2008 Community Service Foundation Grants

*(Continued from Page 4)*

**Brandon Nicholson** (RBS 2001) submitted a proposal for the Lorenzo Alexander ACES Foundation—"Life Skills and Tutoring/College Bound Initiative." This project seeks to inspire Oakland youth (6th -12th grade) to pursue higher education, initiate promising careers, maintain strong family units, and give back to their communities.

**Danielle Andrews-Lovell** (RBS 2002) submitted a proposal for her project: "Supporting Our Sisters" (SOS). Her project will organize and execute a kick-off charity event to recruit members for SOS, a group organized to support the efforts of breast cancer survivor organizations and to increase the number of young men and women involved in spreading awareness about breast cancer.■

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