

the  
**HONORREAD**

Winter 2010-2011

A newsletter for alumni, students and friends of the University of Kansas Honors Program

**FROM THE DIRECTOR**



At this time of year, it is traditional to give thanks for the gifts life has brought us. I am so grateful to be able to spend my days surrounded by bright, motivated and energetic young people. The students in KU's Honors Program never cease to amaze and move me with their ideas as well as their ideals, and their commitment to making a difference in the world. The staff and faculty are dedicated to creating an environment in which these individuals can be nurtured and thrive. Our goal is to provide a set of transformational experiences that are tailored to each student's unique interests and talents. For some, working closely with a faculty member on research is that transformative experience. For others, it's spending a semester abroad or engaging in significant service to the community. And for many, it's all of these things and more. It is a great pleasure to watch these students transform from tentative first-year students to supremely confident and competent seniors and know the University Honors Program played a significant role in that transformation.

There are many other things to be grateful for including our new class of first-year students. Our 270 new University Honors students were welcomed to Lawrence this year with a spectacular fall. And they are a spectacular class, with an average ACT of 32 and high school GPA of 3.9. But we aren't just interested in the numbers, we are looking for students who have

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Emily Mulligan

**Megan McDonald and Steve Hawley** talk following his Alumni Lecture

## Honors alum and astronaut Hawley shares Space Shuttle experiences

Steven Hawley, University Honors Program alumnus and KU professor of physics and astronomy, was the featured speaker for the Honors Program's alumni lecture at KU's Homecoming this fall. He shared his extraterrestrial perspectives about space exploration and NASA's Space Shuttle program in his talk, entitled, "The Technical, Scientific and Cultural Legacy of the Space Shuttle."

Hawley, a native Kansan who was born in Ottawa and grew up in Salina, graduated from KU in 1973 with honors. He received his Ph.D. in astronomy from

*continued on page 2*

chosen challenging and rigorous classes in high school, served their communities, excelled outside the classroom and can critically reflect on their ideas and experiences. We are very pleased that so many talented students have chosen KU's Honors Program to pursue their educations. We offer them all the advantages of an elite liberal arts school coupled with all the opportunities of a major research university. The Honors Program always is on the lookout for the next generation of talented students, so please send us the names and contact information of students you think we should know about. We are talking with prospective students as early as 7th grade, so it's never too early to send them our way.

The Honors Program has been getting wonderful support from the Honors Advisory Board, ably chaired by Jennifer Ford-Reedy (c'95) and Ben Palen (c'75). As part of Homecoming Weekend the board hosted our alumni lecture by Honors alumnus Dr. Steve Hawley, featured in this issue. The Board has been a great help to the program and their leadership is especially important as the University begins to plan for our next capital campaign. I very much appreciate their commitment to the Honors Program and our students. As you can see from Ben's letter on page 5, they have made a very generous gift to the program that will allow us to help more students over the coming years. In these hard economic times we have more students who need financial assistance especially for those special experiences such as research, internships, study abroad and professional travel. You will see stories of three of our students who were able to do extraordinary things with funding from the program. We are grateful to all the alumni and friends of the program who give generously each year to support KU's most talented students.

I hope you will enjoy the information about the University Honors Program in this newsletter. We are grateful for your support. On behalf of all the wonderful students I have the pleasure of working with every day, I send my heartfelt thanks.



## *Hawley* continued from page 1

the University of California-Santa Cruz and went on to become an astronaut for NASA for 30 years. He flew on the maiden voyage of the Space Shuttle Discovery, spent 32 days in space and orbited the Earth 400 times. Hawley was part of the crew who launched the Hubble Space Telescope in 1990.

Since 2008, Hawley has taught at KU and has shared his experiences as a scientist and astronaut with the next generation, as the era of the Space Shuttle draws to a close. He served on the editorial board of a book about the legacy of the Space Shuttle program, *Wings in Orbit*, which is forthcoming in 2011.

Hawley was asked during his talk what it felt like to be in space.

"I considered it a privilege to be entrusted with that job," he said. "When I was up there, I was so focused on the job at hand, I actually felt guilty if I stopped and looked out the window."

As he spoke at Homecoming, the Space Shuttle Discovery was preparing for its November launch.

"Discovery is on the launch pad for its last mission," Hawley said. "I find that surprisingly emotional because I was on it the first time it flew," he told the group of current students, faculty and alumni.

Hawley outlined many of the legacies of the Space Shuttle program, drawing from personal anecdotes, scientific and engineering knowledge to illustrate his ideas.

Megan McDonald, 2004 KU alumna, traveled from Palo Alto, Calif., where she is pursuing her Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, to hear Hawley speak.

"It helps people in terms of excitement to have someone at KU who has done something so amazing," she said. When asked if she would like to go into space, McDonald replied, "If somebody asked, I would say 'yes' instantly." 🌟



**Steven Hawley**

Emily Mulligan

# Spring Lecture Series tackles unique evolution topics

The 2011 University Honors Program Lecture Series at the Commons kicked off this fall with a hip-hop beat. Rap artist and lecturer Baba Brinkman brought his original scientific raps to Spooner Hall in October, to kick off the lecture series, whose theme is “Evolution in Human Affairs.”

The University Lecture Series at The Commons is sponsored by the University of Kansas Honors Program in association with The Commons, a partnership among the Biodiversity Institute, the Hall Center for the Humanities, and the Spencer Museum of Art. The Commons fosters the exploration of nature and culture across the sciences, arts and humanities. All lectures take place in Spooner Hall. 🌻



Rap artist and lecturer **Baba Brinkman** treated a capacity crowd in Spooner Hall to his unique rap performances of evolutionary scientific research according to Charles Darwin. The performance, called “The Rap Guide to Evolution” served as the kickoff for the 2011 University Honors Program Lecture Series at the Commons. The theme for this year’s lecture series is “Evolution in Human Affairs.”

Sandra Wick

## THE 2010 UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM LECTURE SERIES AT THE COMMONS

### February 17

Shaun Nichols, Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona  
 “Biology and Culture in the Evolution of Morality”

### March 28

Debbie Hawhee, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, University of Illinois  
 “An Episode in Evolution and Human Affairs: Kenneth Burke and Gesture-Speech Theory”

### April 20

David Barash, Professor of Psychology, University of Washington  
 “Payback: Why We Retaliate, Seek Revenge and Redirect Aggression... and What We Can Do About It”

Patricia Hawley, associate professor of psychology, will teach the Commons course for Honors students in the spring, entitled “Evolution and Human Affairs.”

The University Honors Program Lecture Series at The Commons is designed to enhance the Evolution Commons Course. Lectures will take place at 7:30 p.m. in Spooner Hall and are open to the public. Please consider joining us for this series!

## Honors faculty profile: James Carothers



KU University Relations

English Professor James Carothers has been teaching in the Honors Program for more than 30 years. Although there are countless alumni who will say they

**James Carothers** benefited from his classes and advising, Carothers advocates that the learning flows two ways.

“I’m learning from it too,” he says. “I find that the Honors format gives me a chance to try some new things in class and helps me try to keep things fresh.”

Professor Carothers’ English 105 and English 205 courses have taken many forms over the years, from having students define what makes a good short story, to Shakespeare, to even involving students in his humanities research of annotating William Faulkner’s short stories.

One year, after having served on the Truman Scholarship interview committee and seeing that students knew very little about Harry Truman, Professor Carothers taught a course about presidents Truman and Eisenhower.

“I find the students very receptive to new methods of writing and research. It seems to me they respond favorably to assignments that ask them to extend themselves,” Professor Carothers says. “I have learned a lot about the students and what they know and don’t know.”

Professor Carothers likes what the Honors Program courses and research opportunities do for students, pushing them outside of their comfort zone.

“Part of the challenge of Honors is that you’ll go beyond the obvious and beyond the minimum,” he says. “People discover through the Honors Program that there are lots of possibilities out there.” 🌻

# Honors program boasts Goldwater scholars

Last spring, sophomore Kevin Song was awarded KU's 48th Goldwater scholarship, and junior Katherine Harry received honorable mention in the competition.

The Goldwater scholarship recognizes sophomore- and junior-level students with outstanding academic records, significant research experience and high potential for careers in mathematics, the natural sciences or engineering. Winners receive up to \$7,500 to cover undergraduate tuition, fees, room and board.

Both chemical engineering majors, Song and Harry are grateful to the Honors Program for bringing the Goldwater competition to their attention and for assistance through all phases of the application process.

"The Honors faculty really helped me a lot," Song says. "I think that's the primary reason why I won. I was paired with five different professors in different disciplines, and they all gave me insights about what should be on my application."

Both Song and Harry learned about the Goldwater competition from a weekly e-mail the Honors Program distributes during the school year.



**Kevin Song**



**Katherine Harry**

"The Honors Program publicized it well—every week for months," Harry says. "And then, several professors specifically asked if I would apply. That's part of how the Honors Program works: to let you know about opportunities."

Song was surprised to win, because sophomores rarely are chosen. He is already looking toward other opportunities.

"The Honors Program definitely provides you a lot of information about scholarships you can win in the future. The Honors faculty are now helping me apply for graduate fellowships," Song says.

Harry, now a senior, is in the throes

of applying to four graduate schools and hopes to continue the research in materials science she has done at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology the past couple of summers.

Song said he is impressed with the education he has received at KU, and particularly in the Honors Program. He is confident it will help him as he pursues a medical degree and doctoral degree in structural biology in the future.

"Overall, I have had a really good class experience through the Honors Program," Song says. "There are a lot of professors really willing to help you out. The classes are very studious, so the professors are also very motivated. It is neat to be in that environment so you can learn better."

Harry says she has benefited from the Honors Program in her academic career similarly.

"The opportunity to take classes with the actual professors – that makes it worthwhile," she says. "I would encourage people to use the resources available to them from the Honors Program. People are more than willing to help you." 🌟

## Paretsky Book Awards presented

Four University Honors Program students received some financial assistance for their books this fall. The David Paretsky Honors Program Book Awards for \$500 were presented to Brittany Limones, Emily Frese, Ted Christensen and Jill Wenderott.

The Paretsky fund, established by noted author Sara Paretsky in honor of her father, Professor David Paretsky, a long-time professor of microbiology at KU, helps to cover fall textbook

expenses for deserving students. The Honors Program presented two additional awards this fall, because of the generosity of alumni Jack and Carolyn Salmon, who met as undergraduates through Professor Paretsky. 🌟



Honors Program Staff

Four students received David Paretsky Honors Program Book Awards this fall. Left to right: **Brittany Limones, Emily Frese, Ted Christensen and Jill Wenderott.**

Contributions to the Paretsky Award can be made by going to [www.kuendowment.org/depts/honors/paretsky](http://www.kuendowment.org/depts/honors/paretsky) and clicking on "Give"

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### **Membership**

Laura Koenigs (C'78, M'82),

Longmeadow, MA

Sarah Warner (C'03),

Lenexa, KS

Lumen Mulligan (C'95),

Lawrence, KS

Richard Jensen (C'71),

South Bend, IN

Jeff Stowell (C'97, L'01),

Denver, CO

Aroop Pal (C'98, M'02),

Lenexa, KS

Jim Orr,

Professor of Molecular Biosciences

Del Shankel,

Chancellor Emeritus

Mary Klayder (C'72, D'75, G'82, PhD'09),

University Honors Lecturer

David Lambertson,

School of Business

Stephanie Jian,

Student

### **Ex officio**

Kathleen McCluskey-Fawcett (G'73,

PhD'77)

Dear Honors Program Alums,

These are challenging times for universities across the country, and KU is no exception. With increasing costs for higher education, and state budget constraints, there is concern at all levels about maintaining the educational quality for which KU is known. For the Honors Program, which does not have significant funding sources such as endowments and grants from alumni, the situation is of great importance.

With this in mind, the Honors Program Advisory Board, which comprises alumni, faculty, staff and student members, has decided to take a step which we hope will spur you and others to support the program that has meant so much to so many of us.

Board members have committed to establishing an endowed fund with an initial amount of \$30,000. At this level, \$1,500 would be available to Honors every year to help students with such things as travel abroad, research efforts, and general scholarship help.

We sometimes find inspiration in unexpected places, and at times which we cannot predict. For me, part of the inspiration for this effort came from a recent business trip to Africa. On the way back home from Zimbabwe, I had a day in Johannesburg, and ended up at Nelson Mandela's former home, now a museum. One letter displayed there struck me in a profound way. It said, "you will come to a better understanding of the meaning of life when you plant a tree under which you will never sit." Those powerful words speak directly to the essence of giving, whether money or time, to help others.

I hope you will consider "planting some trees" for Honors Program students today and tomorrow. Please think about what the Honors Program has meant to you during your lifetime, and think about the words found in a letter on a wall of a house in Johannesburg, South Africa. Perhaps they will have the same kind of impact on you as they had on me.

If you would like to contribute to the Honors Program, please call or email Jenna Goodman at the KU Endowment Association. Her phone number is 785-832-7417 and her email address is [jgoodman@kuendowment.org](mailto:jgoodman@kuendowment.org). Also, please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to hear more about the Program, and the Board's efforts to help it continue to be a shining star at KU.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.



*Honors Program Advisory Board Co-chairs*

Ben Palen, Jr. (C'75), Denver, CO

Jennifer Ford-Reedy (C'95), St. Paul, MN

# University Scholars marks 30th anniversary

To support the University Scholars Program, go to our website at [www.kuendowment.org/depts/honors/heller](http://www.kuendowment.org/depts/honors/heller) and click on "Give" or contact Jenna Goodman at [jgoodman@kuendowment.org](mailto:jgoodman@kuendowment.org)

This year is the 30th anniversary of the University Scholars program. Six hundred students have benefitted from participating in this prestigious academic program in the University Honors Program.

Founded by The Hon. Deanell Reece Tacha (now a federal appeals court judge) when she was vice chancellor for academic affairs at KU and Professor Francis Heller, the goal of the University Scholars is to match sophomores with high-level faculty for mentoring and to provide them a group seminar experience, taught over the years by 30 of KU's most outstanding faculty members.

"I saw a real need for us to take our most promising sophomores and put them with the most distinguished faculty as mentors," Tacha said. "It is modeled after the White House Fellows program, where there is a new person paired with a senior person for nurturing, modeling, interaction, teaching and learning."

Acceptance into the program is very competitive. To apply, students must have a minimum 3.8 GPA, strong letters of recommendation and a compelling essay. Forty students are interviewed by faculty teams to select the final 20. Participants in the program often go on to win national scholarships and fellowships, as well as excel in their chosen field.

"The University Scholars program speaks volumes about the commitment of the University to its undergraduates. It directs resources toward those people who look to have all the potential in the world," Tacha said. "I am pleased that the University has continued to nurture the program. I can't believe it's been 30 years."

Scholars receive a small scholarship for five semesters, which is funded by the University and several alumni and friends of the program. While students are very appreciative of the financial support, the aspect they find invaluable is the mentoring relationship, which is sustained through graduation, and often well-beyond. A survey of May 2010 graduates indicated that being a University Scholar was the single most significant experience they had in the Honors Program.

A banquet for the new group of scholars who were chosen October 10 will be held at the start of the spring semester. Judge Tacha, as well as former University Scholars professors, will be in attendance. This year's seminar is on Modernity, being taught by John Gronbeck-Tedesco, professor of theatre and former director of the Honors Program. 🌟



Honors Program Staff

## MEET JULIA BARNARD

Julia Barnard is using her time and studies at KU to work toward social justice. An Honors Program junior majoring in history, Barnard's summer work with author Jonathan Kozol inspired her to pursue different types of research with her degree. Kozol has written a number of influential books, including *Savage Inequalities*, a work that brought national attention to the plight of children in inner city schools.



Sandra Wick

Julia Barnard

Barnard received a development grant from the Honors Program to pay her living expenses while she worked for Kozol in Cambridge, Mass. She credits the Honors Program for creating a place at KU where she can thrive.

"A lot of my friends told me the Honors Program makes KU feel smaller, and I've found that's true," Barnard says. "The other students are so cool, and not just in an academic way – they're your support for everything. The Honors Program is not competitive, it's like a little flower bed. I'm in class with people who are just as interested as I am."

Barnard read and copy edited two of Kozol's unpublished manuscripts. She also fact-checked the manuscripts, something she learned about in her Honors history course and referred back to while on the job. Barnard also spent time researching contemporary human rights violations in New York City's tenements for Kozol.

"It was a cool and empowering process for me, because I got to see his work in such an early process and learn from it," she says.

Barnard plans to go to graduate school for history so she can research and write about topics in social change and social justice, similar to Kozol's work. 🌟



**Stephanie Jian with Indian schoolchildren in Hyderabad, India.**

## MEET STEPHANIE JIAN

**K**U was admittedly the last place Stephanie Jian wanted to go to college. When the financial burden of paying for out-of-state tuition was more than her family could handle, she didn't have a choice. Now a junior at KU in the Honors Program, Jian couldn't be happier.

"To be blunt, I came here not entirely glad to be here. It took about a semester, and the Honors Program made me realize I was going to have professors who actually wanted to know me," she says.

When Jian says that the classes, advising and students in the Honors Program are equal to other top universities, she knows. Many of Jian's friends left the state to go to college, some attending Ivy League schools.

"The experience you have in the KU Honors Program rivals what you'll get at any top university in the country," she says. "There are a lot of resources here, plus there is individual attention that you may not get at other schools. It's not just about classes; it's about them helping you create the whole college experience."

Jian, a cognitive psychology and pre-optometry major, studied in Hyderabad, India, this past summer, thanks to a development grant from the Honors Program. While there, she researched primary school dropout rates in

government-run Indian schools.

"I wanted something really exciting and different," she says. "I wanted to have a chance to immerse myself in something, to have a break from what I have going on during the regular school year. Being in India was a completely overwhelming sensory experience every minute I was there."

Jian is making plans to apply to optometry schools and hopes to do a residency in pediatric optometry as well. 🌟



**Greg Loving**

## MEET GREG LOVING

**I**f it weren't for the Honors Program, Greg Loving would not be attending KU. In fact, he says, he would have left the state of Kansas for his education. With all his university-wide accomplishments and plans to apply for national scholarships, if Loving weren't at KU, it would be Kansas' and KU's loss.

"The Honors Program was a big part of the whole college selection process for me," Loving says. "It's like a small liberal arts school with highly

academically talented students within KU, with all the resources of a big university."

Loving, a McPherson junior, came to KU planning to major in civil engineering. While at KU, he has become interested in a career in energy, so he decided to add economics to his academic mix.

"At a lot of small liberal arts schools, I wouldn't be able to do engineering – and I definitely wouldn't be able to do a double major," Loving says. "The Honors Program allowed me to do that, and [engineering professor and Honors alumnus] Bryan Young set it up for me."

In the spring of his sophomore year, Loving was awarded a J. Michael Young Opportunity Award for research in his chosen field. The award was established in honor of J. Michael Young (father of Bryan Young), former professor of philosophy and director of the Honors Program from 1990 to 1995. Loving used the funding to attend a national energy conference for industry, government and academics at M.I.T.

The conference sparked Loving to come back to KU and launch the KU Energy Club. Club members already are planning a conference and academic symposium for this coming spring, modeled after the conference Loving attended at M.I.T.

Loving's future plans depend partly on his success at obtaining a national scholarship. He attended "London Review" with Professor Mary Klayder and looked at Oxford and Cambridge while he was there; he would like to continue his research abroad. Additionally, he plans to obtain his MBA and find his career path in energy. 🌟

**Julia, Stephanie and Greg's opportunities were made possible by awards from the Honors Program. To help other talented students have these transformational experiences please go to our website at [www.kuendowment.org/depts/honors](http://www.kuendowment.org/depts/honors) and click on "Give".**

# the HONOREAD

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# What the UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM provides for students:



Small Honors classes  
taught by leading KU faculty

Priority registration in all classes

One-on-one academic advising

Funding for research, creative works  
and scholarly endeavors

A vibrant learning environment in  
Nunemaker Center

You can make a transformative difference in  
the lives of KU's Honors students and help  
keep our program one of the best in the nation.

To learn more, contact Jenna Goodman at  
jgoodman@kuendowment.org or call  
785 832 7417.

*The leaders of the future  
thank you.*