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HONOREAD

Winter 2011-2012

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR



This has been a busy and productive year for the University Honors Program highlighted, of course, by accomplishments of our outstanding students. The mission of the Honors Program is to provide intrinsically motivated and intellectually talented students with opportunities to transform themselves and the world around them. And it is a pleasure to watch our students fulfill that mission. You will read about a few of them in this edition of the newsletter and others are featured in our e-newsletter sent quarterly.

We are very proud that our student body president **Libby Johnson** is a member of the Honors Program, as was her immediate predecessor, **Michael Wade Smith**, who is currently in New Jersey with Teach for America. **Emily Lamb** was awarded this year's Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership Awards (Ex.C.E.L.) during Homecoming. Emily, who along with fellow Honors student **Kellen Bolt**, is co-director of the Center for Community Outreach, is one of many outstanding students in the Honors Program who lead community service efforts on campus, in the Lawrence community and beyond.

Our students continually amaze me with their commitment to society and to their intellectual pursuits. **Jason Charney's** innovative approach to music is a prime example. Who would have thought even a few years ago that the iPhone would be a musical instrument?

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James K. Hitt Awards for Outstanding Undergraduate Research announced

Three new annual research awards await University Honors Program students beginning this spring. Named in honor of the late James K. Hitt, KU's Registrar Emeritus and former administrator, the funded recognition awards will be presented in three categories at the Honors Program Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Hitt, who graduated from KU in 1934 with his bachelor's degree in mathematics and 1936 with his master's in mathematics, was a Summerfield scholar, which was a precursor to the University Honors Program. He worked at KU from 1940 until his retirement in 1977 as University Registrar, Director of Admissions, head of the Summerfield Scholar selection committee, Associate Director of Institutional

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KU University Relations

Honors student **Emily Lamb** hugs **Tammara Durham**, interim vice provost for student affairs, upon learning that Lamb is this year's winner of the Ex.C.E.L. (Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership) Award. Lamb was announced as the winner at halftime of the KU-Texas Tech Homecoming football game at Memorial Stadium. To the left of Lamb is Honors student **Greg Loving**, also an Ex.C.E.L. nominee. Lamb, an American Studies major, is the director of the Center for Community Outreach. She is the Outreach Co-Chair for the Big Event and a senior advisory board member for the Board of Class Officers. Lamb looks forward to continuing to work with nonprofits in various capacities once she graduates.

Jason, like many of our Honors students, has been able to pursue innovative projects such as this because of financial support provided by the Honors Program.

My main goal as KU begins its new capital campaign Far Above is to pursue additional funds so that the majority of our students will be able to have some type of transformational experience, be that an internship, a research experience, a study abroad or some creative intellectual pursuit that hasn't even been considered yet.

Our students continue to be recognized on campus for their outstanding performance in the classroom, scholarly activity and campus leadership. Of the dozen undergraduate women featured on the KU Women of Distinction calendar this year, 11 are in the Honors Program.

A new gift to the Honors Program will allow more students to be recognized for their accomplishments. A gift from **Alan Hitt** and **Nancy Hitt Clark** and her husband **David**, in honor of their father **James Hitt**, has allowed us to establish three new student awards. Dr. Hitt had a distinguished career at KU, most notably as University Registrar. Their gift to provide awards for outstanding work presented at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium is a fitting tribute to this Summerfield Scholar and influential KU administrator.

I hope you will enjoy the information about the University Honors Program in this newsletter. If you are aware of talented students in your area, please send us their contact information. We are always on the lookout for the next generation of Honors students. Also, we are grateful for your support, especially in these difficult economic times. Our ability to provide high quality programs and opportunities for our students depends on the generosity of our alumni and friends. On behalf of all the wonderful students we have the pleasure of working with every day, I send my heartfelt thanks.

We welcome your e-mails at honors@ku.edu.

Have a new e-mail address? Let us know so we can keep in touch.



James K. Hitt

Research and Planning, and special assistant to the chancellor.

Among his many accomplishments at KU, he began the University's transition to computerized student records and registration. During his time at KU, and even after his retirement, Hitt was widely known on campus for his

influential ideas and innovation.

Hitt's son, Alan Hitt, KU '67, and daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. David A. Clark (David, KU '67, '73), (Nancy Hitt Clark, KU '69), established the awards in honor of their late father.

"One of my hopes in having these awards is to keep the memory of our father alive," Hitt says. "He really did a lot more than most registrars and directors of admissions. He taught a section of Western Civ every year and he was the head of the Summerfield committee. That made him a lot more a part of the University."

Clark says that KU meant so much to her father, both as his alma mater and his career.

"We really want to do this because people around KU may not remember him now," she says. "By creating these awards and telling about his life, people will realize who he was and what he did."

Hitt and Clark are impressed by the programs and level of scholarship advanced by the contemporary University Honors Program.

"In his experience as head of the Summerfield committee, he set up regular dinners of scholars and faculty. At the dinners, the scholars would talk about what research they were working on. We feel that the Honors Program represents that going on today," Hitt says.

Clark says that her father would not have been able to attend KU were it not for the Summerfield scholarship, so she wants to offer opportunities to reward other scholars at KU.

"I think he built the Summerfield program to have a nurturing and mentoring, yet demanding atmosphere like they have in the Honors Program now," Clark says.

As KU graduates themselves, Hitt and Clark understand their father's fondness for KU.

"KU was everything in our household. We talked about KU business and matters at our dinner table," Clark says. "After he retired, he followed everything that was going on and had his opinions."

Hitt says his father had strong feelings about KU's position as a state school.

"As director of admissions, he traveled all over Kansas to every little high school to tell them about KU," he says. "He always believed that KU was the school in Kansas everyone wanted to go to." 🌻

C. Bryan Young helps Honors students set sail

Associate Professor of Engineering C. Bryan Young occupies a unique space in the University Honors Program – and not just his Honors Faculty Fellow office in Nunemaker Center. Young is one of few Honors alumni teaching Honors courses, and he is also the son of a former Honors Program director, J. Michael Young.

"The fact that I'm an alumnus of the program motivates me to continue to be a part of the program," Young says. "The experiences I had in the program as a student, I want to make sure the current Honors Program students have and will continue to have those."

Young, a 1995 KU graduate, taught his first Honors tutorial in the fall of 2000 and has become increasingly involved in Honors. In addition to being a faculty fellow and advising Honors students, he has served on the standards committee, taught the Honors Commons course, and he continues to teach Honors freshmen seminars.

This semester, his seminar is called "Change for the Better?" and examines the role of technology in the development of society. He admits it is the toughest course preparation he has done in a while.

"It is so different from engineering, because I am teaching a discussion-based class," Young says. "It can also be really intimidating because these are really smart students. You can't just wing it."

He says that he tells his students he had the Honors Program experience at KU as well.

"I try to make a connection with the Honors students at a personal level and let them know that I was in the program and kinda sorta remember what they're going through," he says.

Young says that the Honors classes he took were "a breath of fresh air" from his engineering classes and that the students pushed one another to do better. He remembers his University Scholars seminar with David Katzman as a particularly stimulating experience.

"All of the students were so exceptionally bright, I felt very humbled being in there, knowing what other people had already accomplished," he says.

Right after his graduation, his father, then-Honors Program director J. Michael Young passed away after a battle with cancer. Although working and teaching in a different field from his father, he says he still feels a connection with what Mike Young did for Honors.

"The longer I'm here, the more people I meet who interacted with him as a



Honors Faculty Fellow C. Bryan Young with a kayak he built.

Roura Young

J. MICHAEL YOUNG OPPORTUNITY FUND



KU University Relations

Named for a former director of the University Honors Program, the **J. Michael Young Opportunity Fund** provides grants up to \$500 to undergraduates in the College of

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Two distinguished alumnae return to teach and guide Honors students

Two very accomplished and distinguished KU alumnae have chosen to spend their retirements teaching in the University Honors Program.

Kala Stroup and Mary Emily Kitterman both had impressive careers as university administrators and professors and now are teaching and advising regularly in the Honors Program.

Stroup teaches two Honors courses at KU, both about the nonprofit industry: “Why Volunteering Matters: Nonprofits Change the World” and a senior Honors capstone called “Citizen Philanthropy: Introduction to the Nonprofit World.” This fall is her third semester with the Honors Program.

Kitterman teaches freshman seminars focusing on women in literature and writing. Her first course was about the connections between place and identity in novels, and this year she is teaching “Gender, Race and Class in the American Short Story.” This is her third year teaching at KU in the Honors Program.

Both women are native Kansans, Stroup from Great Bend, and Kitterman from Kansas City, Kan., and say they felt drawn back to KU after so many years away.

“I could have done headhunting,” Stroup says of her retirement. “But I wanted to share my knowledge of the nonprofit and philanthropy worlds with students. I also wanted to use my connections to connect students.”

Kitterman also thinks teaching is one of the best uses of her time.

“KU gave me the foundation to do all the things I was able to do, so I wanted to contribute something to KU,” Kitterman says. “Teaching is really exciting because you see people’s ideas developing. I have a great group of students – that’s what teaching is all about.”

Stroup was a Watkins Scholar at KU and worked at KU for 18 years in several positions, including dean of women, assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and assistant to the chancellor. She became vice president for academic affairs and provost at Emporia State University, the president of Murray State University and the president of Southeast Missouri State. Stroup also served as Missouri’s commissioner of higher education for eight years under Governor Mel Carnahan and for eight years led a large national nonprofit, American Humanics, now called the



Mary Emily Kitterman (right), with her fall 2010 freshman Honors seminar, in front of Willa Cather’s childhood home in Red Cloud, Neb. Left to right: **Angela Duca**, Cather tour guide, **Kate Ruoff**, **Mugabi Byenka**, **Natalie Walker**, **Nicole Jones**, **Kenneth Ritchey**, **Allegra Baxter**, **Miles Simpson**, **Kitterman**.

Honors Program Staff



Former Chancellor Robert Hemenway and Kala Stroup

Nonprofit Leadership Alliance.

Kitterman was a Watkins Scholar at KU and lived in Watkins Scholarship Hall. She taught 11th grade American literature and then decided she wanted to teach at the college level. After receiving her doctorate, she taught at Richmond University and Randolph Macon College in Virginia before becoming dean of the faculty at Stephens College in Columbia, Mo., and most recently was the vice president for academic affairs at Cottey College in Nevada, Mo.

Stroup and Kitterman agree that, despite reputations to the contrary, today’s college

students are as accomplished and ambitious as ever.

“This generation has volunteered more and done more of that in high school than previous generations,” Stroup says. “You don’t have difficulty selling Honors students [to potential employers].”

“My students are very hard working, very serious about their work. I think they’re ambitious and focused and very nice people,” Kitterman says. “When I was living at Watkins as a student at KU, that was the attitude there as well.”

When Stroup isn’t teaching, she spends a lot of time writing recommendations for students. She has two children and four grandchildren and still serves on a lot of nonprofit boards of directors.

Kitterman is using her retirement to rekindle her love for music, practicing her cello and piano on a regular basis, as well as spending time working in her yard.

They both embody the spirit of giving back that always has been integral in the Honors Program. 🌟

KU University Relations

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colleague and as a student. It’s definitely an inspiration and a motivation to continue to give back to the program,” Young says.

Young still helps administer one of his father’s many legacies, the J. Michael Young Opportunity Fund, which provides grants to Honors students to attend conferences or conduct research away from KU (see related box on this page for more information).

In his spare time, Young spends time with his wife, Roura, a 1994 Honors Program alumna, and his three children: Cal, 16, Ellie, 13, and Angela, 9. He enjoys building small sailboats and sailing on Lone Star Lake. 🌟

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Liberal Arts and Sciences to attend academic and professional conferences or to conduct research away from the KU campus. The fund relies on private donations.

Recent recipients of this grant have attended the 2009 China-U.S. Relations Conference in Beijing, presented research findings at the Midwestern Psychological Association Conference, and traveled to Boston to participate in the MIT Energy Conference.

Paretsky Book Awards



Contributions to the **Paretsky Award** and the **J. Michael Young Opportunity Fund** can be made by going to www.honors.ku.edu and clicking on “Give to the Honors Program.”

This year’s **David Paretsky Honors Program Book Award** recipients are (left to right): **Nadine Rowen**, **Joseph Weaver**, **Jakeb Maryott** and **Shelby Webb**. This fund, established by noted author Sara Paretsky in honor of her father David Paretsky, a long-time professor of microbiology at KU, helps to cover fall textbook expenses for deserving students.



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Honors Program Advisory Board endows scholarship

The Honors Program Advisory Board, which comprises alumni and friends of the University Honors Program, has created a \$30,000 endowment to assist students with research efforts, study abroad, and other uses as deemed appropriate by the Program Director.

100% of the Advisory Board members support the University Honors Program financially. In an era of state and federal budget cuts for higher education, the Board members felt that it was important to take the lead to show alumni and other potential donors that private support is essential for continued improvement to the Honors Program.

Honors Program Advisory Board

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Additional contributions to the scholarship are welcome. Go to www.honors.ku.edu and click on "Give to the Honors Program"

MEET LIBBY JOHNSON



Libby Johnson

Libby Johnson came to KU hoping to gain many opportunities and experiences. Now, as Student Body President, she has found she also wants to leave a legacy.

Johnson is a senior in the University Honors Program from Lawrence, majoring in human biology and psychology. She had initially planned to go to college far from home.

"I realized KU could offer me a lot of the things I wanted in a university," she says. "The Honors Program offers you more than just great classes; it offers you a community, so I wanted to participate in that. I had no idea what that meant, how it would really shape me."

Johnson says that she loved her Honors courses so much that she completed her Honors requirements in record time. She has enjoyed spending time in Nunemaker Center with other Honors students and faculty.

"They are small classes with students who are engaged in learning and discussion. There is so much variety and so many things to explore," she says.

Her freshman year, she discovered her other passion at KU and the only thing that she liked as much as the Honors Program: student government. She was elected to freshman senate and was a student senator up until her election as Student Body President.

"There were things I wanted to see happen on campus, and being president was a way I could do that and leave something here," she says. "It teaches you things you couldn't learn in a

classroom."

Johnson is working with the University to help students transition to college more easily, by offering more personal support to students with community building and working with faculty to help struggling students.

She also hopes to create closer connections between students and the city of Lawrence, something important to her because she grew up in Lawrence. She has obtained a student position on the government affairs committee of the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and is connecting KU's Center for Community Outreach with local events and organizations.

Johnson has collaborated on psychology research with Honors Faculty Fellow Michael Vitevitch and is doing research in the department of psychology's honors program. Johnson will graduate in August 2012 and is applying for a wide range of opportunities post-graduation: the Peace Corps, Teach for America and other international programs. She would like to broaden her horizons in one of the aforementioned programs before eventually going to graduate school for neuroscience.

Regardless of where she goes and what she does, she already knows the impact that Honors has had on her.

"I can't even express how grateful I am for the people I've met through the Honors Program. I think I will stay in touch with some of my advisers for the rest of my life, they've been so influential," she says. ☀

HONORS STUDENT JASON CHARNEY

Being a music major in the University Honors Program is a difficult task, but senior Jason Charney has found a nice harmony.

Although at times he struggles to find the time to balance his music obligations with his Honors coursework, ultimately



Honors student Jason Charney performs his original composition, "Compass," at the Apple store in Chicago this fall.

the Honors Program led him to his first big break.

Charney, from Overland Park, received an Undergraduate Research Award this past summer to attend New Music on the Point, a festival in Vermont for composers and performers. He performed two of his compositions and – drumroll, please – received his first commission for a work.

Charney's unconventional compositions make use of iPhone technology, so his first commissioned work is debuting at the Apple store in Chicago this fall. A clarinetist will perform Charney's work, "Compass," while Charney changes and enhances the clarinet's sound by moving an iPhone programmed with Charney's pioneering software.

"Technology is an area that music is heading toward. There are so many cool things you can do with merging traditional music and electronic music," he says. "We're starting to develop a system where students can manipulate devices in various ways to get different sounds."

Not only does Charney have a public performance of his work, but he also asked the clarinetist to perform at his senior recital.

"All of this was a direct result of this research award from Honors, so I am thankful for that," he says.

Charney appreciates the interdisciplinary aspects of the Honors Program – something he doesn't see when ensconced in music studies and requirements.

"I love the small class sizes. It was a

good use of my time I was spending outside my major. Being able to interact with other Honors students and see what kinds of research they're doing – there's so much we can learn from each other," he says.

Although his major and Honors coursework have been stressful at times, Charney says that his freshman Honors tutorial, about the ecology of information, struck a chord with him to formulate a thesis.

"It got me interested in information in the abstract and what we look for as far as the depth of information present," he says. "I started converging that with music notation, and it led me to my thesis for my theory degree."

He is considering a career in academia, so he has enjoyed interacting directly with KU faculty through Honors.

"To see professors work outside of the music school, it's given me a broader view of academia and other fields," he says.

Charney plans to attend graduate school for his master's in composition, possibly also pursuing a doctorate, with the idea of both teaching and composing. ☀

To help create transformative experiences for students like Jason Charney and Libby Johnson, go to www.honors.ku.edu and click on "Give to the Honors Program."

The University of Kansas
University Honors Program
1506 Engel Road
Lawrence, KS 66045-3845

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HONOREAD

Director:

Kathleen McCluskey-Fawcett

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Sandra Wick, Mark Daly, Chris Wiles

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Nicole Roberts and Jen Jedlicka

Editor: Emily Mulligan

Designer: Christine Mercer Kraft

Honors Phone: 785-864-4225

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*The leaders of the future
thank you.*

