

Do You Know the History of Honors Education at UIC?

The University of Illinois was a pioneer in recognizing the importance of providing academic and social support for the needs of high-achieving students. In 1958, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois created an All-University Honors Program. Students selected were named Edmund J. James Scholars, after the fifth president of the University of Illinois. Freshman applicants recommended by their high school principals who scored a 28 or higher on the ACT were invited to enroll as James Scholars.

After the new Circle Campus opened in 1965, the All-University Honors Program was dissolved, and Dr. Arthur Pickett, Professor of Biology, was appointed as the first Director of the University of Illinois-Circle Honors Program, which occupied half of the seventh floor of Chicago Circle Center. Besides offering specialized advising and honors courses, new campus-wide responsibilities were assigned to the office: designation of the Valedictorian and Salutatorian, compilation of the Book of Academic Honors, and administration of the Excellence in Teaching awards made by the senior class.

In 1967 a James Scholar Student Advisory Board was established, consisting of students who submitted recommendations to the Honors Program and helped with orienta-

See **History** inside



(left to right) Alumni Jim Roth and Tony Kiefer, both 1983 graduates, chat with Dean Lon Kaufman at the anniversary reception. They proudly represented the first graduating class from the Honors College.



Alumni Dhruv Panchal (HON, CBA 2003) and his date Josette Yaplito (CBA 2003) share a moment at the 15th Annual Honors College Ball.

Honors College Donor Honor Roll- Fiscal Year 2008

The following individuals and sponsors have made gifts to the Honors College in fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007-May 15, 2008). Thanks to their support, the Honors College is able to offer enhanced student programming, scholarships and financial support for students engaged in research, study abroad and other academic endeavors.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Alumni News

JOANNA (BRYLEWSKA) DUFFIN, Class of 2003

Graduated from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 2006 and was admitted to the Illinois Bar in May 2007. She is married to Douglas I. Duffin.

JASON FLORIN, Class of 2001

Earned his master's degree in Addictions Studies from Governor's State University in 2005 and is currently the Clinical Coordinator of a men's residential substance abuse facility.

DONNA MAKOWSKI, Class of 1976, James Scholar

Was elected for a three year term as Chairwoman of the Board of Directors for Seton Academy in South Holland, IL.

JOSEPH MORGAN, Class of 2005

Completed two years as a Teach for American Corps Member and serves as Special Education Instructional Facilitator at his school. He completed his master's degree in education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2007, where he is now pursuing his doctoral degree.

ROBERT ROGINSKI, Class of 1987

Is currently living in Lafayette, IN where he is a senior applications scientist for Eigenvector Research. From 2003-2006, he was principal research scientist for Eli Lilly & Co.; from 1999-2003, he served as process analytical engineer for Pfizer/Pharmacia/Searle.

LOWELL M. SEIDA, Class of 1977, James Scholar

Is author of the only full-length biography of William Buckingham Curtis, founder of the US Olympic Committee. He is currently a candidate for the US House of Representatives in the 7th district of Illinois.

JOSEPHINE VOLPE, Class of 1998

Was a recipient of the Chancellor's Academic Professional Excellence Award at UIC in November 2007. She was selected by a committee of her peers for her outstanding service to UIC students and the campus community.

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

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Gary Ogurkiewicz (James Scholar, LAS 1974) and his wife Paula enjoy the anniversary reception.

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2008

HONORABLE MENTIONS

The Newsletter for Alumni and Friends of UIC's Honors College

The 25th Anniversary Celebration: Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future

Twenty-five years ago, the concept of an Honors College was an innovative departure from what was happening on most college campuses. However, thanks to the visionary ideas of early administrators, it became a reality at UIC.

Recognizing the founders of the Honors College, along with the faculty who directed the James Scholar program was the highlight of the Honors College's 25th anniversary celebration held on April 18. Honorees included Interim Chancellor Eric Gislason, Richard M. Johnson, former vice chancellor for academic affairs, Michael Schrage, who represented his father, the late director of the Honors Program Samuel Schrage, and former deans Howard Kerr and Lansine Kaba. First dean of the college Susanna Pflaum Grannis and John Curtis Johnson, a member of the first Honors College council, though not in attendance, were honored as well.

Members of the Honors College Alumni Association greeted the 200 guests in attendance, many of whom were James Scholars or Honors College alumni. For those who had not been back to campus in several years, visiting the new UIC Forum events center and seeing the new South Campus development were evidence of the progress being made every day at UIC.

At the conclusion of the evening, Dean Lon Kaufman announced a \$25,000 gift from Michael and Elliot Schrage, sons of the late Samuel Schrage, to begin a new interactive



Alumni Jeff Kochikaran (HON, LAS 2002), Joyce Chen (HON, LAS 2003), Kunjali Pachya (HON, LAS 2004) and student Lisa Zhang pose during the 25th Anniversary reception.



Former Dean Lansine Kaba entertains current students (left to right) Nilay Shah, Oluseyi Akintorin and Anand Sandesara with tales from the Honors College in the 90's.

See **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION** inside

Not on the list?

Now is a great time to become a supporter of the college with your gift to the annual fund. Simply log on to our online giving page at www.uic.edu/honors/alumni/giving.shtml and make your gift today!



A Message from The Dean

A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum—the new UIC Forum—a 25th anniversary for the UIC Honors College.

It was a special event for me as several of the faculty and administrators who had the foresight to create the college including Eric Gislason (yes our very own Chancellor!) and many of my predecessors—the deans who built the college—were in attendance. In a very special program they recounted the history of the Honors College, including the attempts to eliminate Honors at UIC, the process by which the college was created, and the newly revealed whisper 27 years ago from Chancellor Stanley Ikenberry to Dick Johnson that started the whole process and the development of the college we know today.

A major surprise for me was how many of the James Scholars attended. It was the James Scholars program, a legacy from our days as part of the Urbana campus, which gave rise to the UIC Honors College.

The event marked a great point for the college to start looking to the future as well. The new academic year will bring the implementation of the new senior ‘capstone’ program—a research based project now required for graduation from the college, and a host of new classes and opportunities for our students.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our 50th!

Sincerely,

Lon S. Kaufman
Dean

Student Documentary Film Featured on WTTW

Pavan Babu was once an impassive commuter on the Chicago Transit Authority, wearily making his way from his Skokie home to campus and back.

Then he was changed by the artistry of the myriad subway performers he encountered during his daily trip. Curious, he struck up conversations with many of the musicians who play, sing or rap in Chicago’s subways.

“All of these little stories were enough for me to say, hey, this would make an excellent documentary,” says the 22 year old. And so apparently, they have.

“Sound Underground,” the 15-minute debut project of the young producer/editor, was selected to premiere on WTTW-TV’s “Image Union.”

The Chicago Public Television show receives hundreds of films each year, and rarely are student productions among the 40 or so chosen for broadcast, says “Image Union” series producer Eddie Griffin.

“They were able to make shooting in the subway look beautiful, which gives the setting a sense of character,” Griffin says. “They really portrayed the musicians in a respectful manner, while creating a sense of emotion with the viewer.”

“Sound Underground,” which aired for the first time in January, meshes the CTA aesthetic- the jumble of trains, signs and commuters- with the performers’ music and stories.

“In 15 minutes,” Babu says, “you can go into the mind of each performer, learn about their histories, their present goals, and where they want to go in the future.”

He hopes the film will dispel viewers’ preconceived notions about subway performer culture. “There is certainly a kinship amongst the performers. They respect each other. It’s accepted socially that they work in this social network and agree upon who will perform at what time. That was special to me to see that,” he says.

“I spent the first two to three months just talking to people, building relationships, because gaining trust and loyalty from these performers was key for us to rely on a specific performer to be there at a specific time,” says Babu.

“They had to understand that we were together on this.”

Filmmaking has been an interest of Babu’s since high school at Niles North in Skokie. Mostly self-taught, he developed a strong technical background by reading filmmaking books. He became a certified public access producer through an instructional program offered by Comcast and later worked as a production intern at WTTW.

At UIC, Babu enrolled in film study classes that helped him sharpen his view on angles and shot values. The English major says there are similarities between writing an essay and editing a documentary film.

“Either as a writer or editor, one creates a series of claims and formulates a thesis that ties everything together,” he says.

Babu is now collaborating on two freelance projects for WTTW. He graduated this May, and was selected as the student speaker for the Honors College Convocation. He will be pursuing a career in production, but he’s open to various formats and possibilities.

“Television, game shows, documentaries, short films, music videos, it doesn’t matter to me. I’d like to diversify myself because it gives me the ability to do different things.

You can view Babu’s film in its entirety at www.bapufilms.com



Pavan Babu delivers the student address during the 2008 Honors College Convocation, held on May 7 at the new UIC Forum conference facility.

Bragging Rights: Honors Students Win Prestigious National Awards

The Honors College is thrilled to announce that the following students have been named recipients of national fellowships during the 2007-2008 academic year:

Fulbright Fellowship - sends students abroad for 10 months to study, conduct research or teach English.

- **JESSICA HARPER**, spring 2008 graduate in biological sciences, will be conducting stem cell research at the Biomedical Sciences Research Centre- Alexander Fleming in Bari, Greece
- **LEIGH HELLMAN**, spring 2008 graduate in English, will be teaching English to high school students in Korea

Goldwater Scholarship - awarded to students committed to research careers in math, science or engineering.

- **AARTI SHARMA**, a junior studying chemistry, received funding for her undergraduate research project.

Merage Scholarship for the American Dream - awarded to seniors who are immigrants to the U.S., and supports an internship, graduate study or other means of pursuing professional goals.

- **OISIN KENNY**, a spring 2008 graduate in economics, will receive support for his internship at Chicago Climate Exchange and future work in corporate sustainability. Kenny was also named 2008 Riddle Prize winner as the outstanding graduating senior of 2008.

National Security Education Program Boren Scholarship - awarded to students studying abroad in countries or regions critical to U.S. national security.

- **EUGENE LIEBENSON** will spend the upcoming year studying the Hebrew language and Middle East politics and diplomacy at the Rothberg International School of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel.

Udall Scholarship - awarded to students committed to careers related to the environment.

- **DIMA ALFAWAKHIRI**, a senior studying chemical engineering, will use her funding to continue her studies and research at the Energy Resource Center.

Project ESTEEM Wins Motorola ‘Innovation Generation’ Grant

A \$12,000 grant from the Motorola Foundation ‘Innovation Generation’ program this past fall will enable the innovative student-run program Project ESTEEM to expand services to additional children in Chicago.

Project ESTEEM (Enrichment of Science Through Exposure to Experimental Models) began in 2000 as an idea of then Honors College student Gaurav Gaiha, who wanted to combine his interest in science with his desire to help children that he had met as a volunteer in the foster-care system. His idea: use fun scientific experiments as a way to help children appreciate science, while building their self-esteem through a mentoring relationship with a college student.

Since that first year, over 50 Honors College students have been involved in teaching science and experimental models to grade school students in the foster care system in Chicago.

“Project ESTEEM not only succeeds in making children excited about science, but also gives them a role model and someone closer to their age to ask questions of about college and careers, said Honors College student and volunteer Anisa Isap. “I absolutely adored meeting and working with the children.”

Student volunteers with Project ESTEEM can also enhance their experience by enrolling in the companion course offered in partnership with the College of Education. This course teaches students about how to teach science concepts to students, and helps them develop lesson plans and teaching strategies.

Support from the Motorola Foundation ensures that Project ESTEEM can continue fully funded through the 2010-2011 academic year.



Oisín Kenny won the Merage Scholarship for the American Dream which will support his future work in corporate sustainability.



Dima Alfawakhiri won a Udall Scholarship to support her studies and work at the Energy Resource Center at UIC.

HISTORY continued from fold over flap

tion activities. The group also sponsored social events and began an Honors Program newsletter.

The 1970s in honors were characterized by dwindling resources, resulting in fewer course offerings for James Scholars. In an effort to reallocate resources, the campus administration announced plans to close the University Honors Program office and decentralize the James Scholars program to the colleges. An outcry from program director Sam Schrage, honors students, the Faculty Senate, and the Student Trustee resulted in the



(left to right) Professor Emeritus Dick Johnson, Michael Schrage, former Dean Howard Kerr, Interim Chancellor Eric Gislason, Dean Lon Kaufman and Honors College Alumni Association President Aaron Poe pose before the 25th Anniversary cake.

restitution of funding and cancellation of plans to close the campus-wide office. In 1982, the Honors Council developed a proposal to convert the Campus Honors Program into an Honors College. Honors freshmen were required to enroll in a year-long interdisciplinary core sequence, and each honors student was given a faculty advisor. Upper class students were required to complete an honors project each term. The proposal emphasized, “Above all, it is hoped that the Honors College will enhance the intellectual environment for all students and faculty.” The proposal was approved by the Board of Trustees that year. Susanna Pflaum, Professor of Education, was appointed as the first dean of the college. The new Honors College was given half of the second floor of Science and Engineering Offices as its new home.

The Honors College flourished under the leadership of Dean Howard Kerr’s in the late 80’s and 90’s, and student enrollment continued to grow. Dean Kerr implemented the Undergraduate Research Assistant program, in which students worked with faculty engaged in research across the disciplines.

Dean Kerr announced his retirement in 1995, and Lansine Kaba, Professor of African-American Studies and History, became the new dean in 1996. That same year, the campus announced a new initiative, the Guaranteed Professional Program Admissions (GPPA), resulting in the largest freshman class in Honors College history. The campus renovated the first floor of Burnham Hall in 1997 to accommodate the growth in the Honors College, which had reached 1,350 students. Dean Kaba stepped down from the deanship in 2001, and Executive Associate Dean Janet Madia was named Interim Dean. A search for a new dean resulted in the appointment of Lon Kaufman, Professor of Biological Sciences, in 2003. Under his guidance, the college has seen the introduction of interviews for all applicants, an increased grade point average requirement of 3.4/4.0 and the launch of the senior capstone project.



View photos and read alumni memories from the 25th Anniversary celebration at www.uic.edu/honors/25

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION continued from page 1

learning seminar in honor of their father. The program will be launched in spring 2009, with the goal of attracting the UIC campus community to a half-day forum focused on cutting edge topics at the intersection of science and current affairs.

Dean Kaufman closed his remarks for the evening with his vision of the future of the Honors College, “The future of the college harks back to the beginning. The concept that an Honors College would enhance the intellectual environment for all students and faculty at UIC is still central. We have broadened that concept to include the entire UIC community, be they faculty, students, alumni or the neighborhood we have built here on the near west side of Chicago. I believe this is our future, and I invite this community here tonight to participate fully in it.”

It’s not too late for you to participate in the 25th Anniversary celebration. Please send your photos, memories or other memorabilia to the Honors College as we prepare an archive of Honors history at UIC. Submissions can be mailed to:

hcalumni@uic.edu

Honors College Memories
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STAY UP TO DATE!

Send your address, business information and personal updates to stay in touch with the Honors College and UIC. Simply send your information to hcalumni@uic.edu or visit www.uic.edu/honors/alumni and click on update your info.



BRILLIANT FUTURES AT THE UIC HONORS COLLEGE

Brilliant Futures: The Campaign for the University of Illinois at Chicago plays an integral part in continuing the Honors College mission of supporting the innovative work of students and faculty. Private funding from alumni and friends like you enhances student programming, provides scholarships, supports Honors College Fellows and creates new facilities for student activities.

Because we are a small community of students and faculty, you have the ability to make a significant and immediate impact through your contribution to the campaign. We hope you’ll join us in inspiring brilliant minds toward brilliant futures.

For more information on how you can participate in the campaign for Brilliant Futures, please visit the campaign Web site at www.brilliantfutures.uic.edu or contact Kate Knicker at the Honors College at kknicker@uic.edu or (312) 413-4764.