

*Before you can  
make a dream come  
true, you must first  
have one.*

Ronald E. McNair

# Messages from McNair

## McNair Scholars Program

### University of North Dakota

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## This issue of "Messages from McNair" will spotlight achievements of McNair Alumni

One of the purposes of our ongoing follow up is to learn what is happening in scholars' lives and have them be a role model for other TRIO participants. Four alumni from the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program participated in the 32nd Annual ASPIRE Conference which was held in Fargo in October. ASPIRE is the regional professional association for TRIO personnel. Congratulations to all the featured alumni and keep up the good work. If you have any interesting stories to share, please email us. Our email addresses are on the back of the newsletter.

Take Care, Patrice

### McNair Alumni ASPIRE Conference Presenters



As well as being an ASPIRE conference presenter, **Wayne Fox**, a UND McNair alum (1997-1999), demonstrated hoopedancing at the opening ceremony. Hoopedancing has been passed on to Wayne through his mother's family. His hoops have taken him all over the world. Through a cultural exchange program, he had the opportunity to travel to Germany, Ireland, Japan, Costa Rica and South Africa over the years to perform and share his culture.

Wayne is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in northwest North Dakota. He is

currently the principal at Cannon Ball Elementary School on the Standing Rock reservation. Wayne was recently selected to participate in the "I Lead" program enabling him to earn his specialist degree and eventually his doctorate from the University of Montana in Bozeman, Montana. He resides in Mandan, North Dakota with his wife, Jennifer and children.

*(see abstract on page 3)*





The ASPIRE conference keynote speaker, **Dr. Leander (Russ) McDonald**, is an alum of both the UND Upward Bound (1978-1981) and McNair Programs (1997-1998) and received his Ph.D. from UND in 2003. When the conference was held, Russ was an Assistant Professor at the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Director for the National Resource Center on Native American Aging. As an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Nation, Russ has been helping Native communities determine their health and social needs for the past 12 years at UND. Russ has been a strong advocate for improving Native elders' health and wellness. He and his colleagues have created a national needs assessment process that has assisted more than 330 tribes, Alaska villages and Hawaiian homesteads in gathering Native elder data for their communities. The communities can use the results for grant-writing, long-term planning and community development.

Russ is known for sharing his Dakota and Arikara culture, language, respect, and contagious humor and laughter with everyone he meets. He has testified before the Senate Committee on Indians Affairs, and presented policy recommendations to the National Congress of American Indians. Russ has been awarded university, regional and national TRIO awards to honor his educational and career success.

Dr. McDonald recently accepted a position as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Cankdeska Cikana Community College (Little Hoop) in Fort Totten, N.D.

**Dr. Carla Arlien** was honored as a regional TRIO Achiever at the ASPIRE conference. Carla was a participant in the Ronald E. McNair Program at the University of North Dakota from 1994-1998. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in May 1998. She was accepted into 8 of the 11 doctoral programs and chose to continue her education at Case Western Reserve



University. Carla completed her Masters Degree in January 2001, and her Ph.D. in May 2004, in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Clinical Geropsychology. She states, "If it was not for the McNair Program I would never have met my dream of earning a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and being a licensed psychologist." Carla is a licensed psychologist in Beaver, Pennsylvania.

**Rich Patterson**, conference presenter, is currently a graduate student at the University of North Dakota. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. Rich was a McNair Scholar from 2005-2007. His goal is to teach at the early childhood or elementary level and eventually be in a position to develop educational policies to improve the current system. He is working towards his Masters Degree and ultimately his Ph.D., which will enable him to teach at the college level or become an educational administrator. Attaining a doctoral degree will allow Rich to become a leader in his profession and an inspiration to others from similar cultural backgrounds. He would like to find ways to create and foster new awareness in children from diverse cultural backgrounds, that will aid them in developing at an early age the skills needed for a strong foundation on which to base their educational experience.



(see abstract next page)

## Abstracts of Ronald E. McNair Alumni ASPIRE Presentations

### *Determining Factors That Affect Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on the Pine Ridge Reservation*

*Wayne Fox, Cannon Ball Elementary School, Cannon Ball, ND*

The purpose of this study was to examine the success rate of students in grades 4 and 8 on standardized test performance on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. A secondary purpose was to determine what factors had a detrimental effect on test scores based on classroom teacher perspective. In general, students on Pine Ridge have not been successful on standardized tests and have not made AYP as determined by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

A classroom teacher survey was developed and included the following factors: knowledge base, mobility, parental support, attendance, behavior, teaching materials/resources, curriculum alignment, teacher expectations, teaching style and teacher turnover rate. The overall results are presented in figures, as well as individual school results from Little Wound, Pine Ridge, American Horse and Rockyford. Eighty four teachers completed the survey.

Overall, knowledge base and teacher expectations were deemed to have the most detrimental effects on test performance and teacher preparation of students to take standardized tests.

### *Where are All the Men? Why Aren't They in Preschools and the Primary Grades?*

*Richard Patterson, McNair Scholar/Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of North Dakota*

Societal attitudes have changed in the last 10-15 years, and men are now expected to be more involved in childrearing activities than in the past. This expectation, however, has not carried over into the teaching profession. Now seems the right time to encourage greater male involvement in early childhood programs. This presentation identified several specific challenges that face men in attempting to become early childhood/elementary educators and addressed why they are not staying in the field, as well as failures in recruiting. As these challenges were explored, some preliminary suggestions were offered to enhance overcoming these obstacles.

## Alumni Update: Ramonica Moore

Ramonica D. M. Moore is currently Marketing and Communications for the Conference Of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO). In this capacity, Ms. Moore is responsible for all communications (e.g. newsletter, press releases) for the organization, as well as the implementation of the organization's marketing strategy. She also serves as program manager for all federal initiatives, e.g. TCRP Ambassador program, FTA Civil Rights Training Workshops and Careers In Transportation for Youth (CITY) internship program.

Prior to joining COMTO, Ms. Moore served as the Special Assistant for the Black Leadership Forum, Inc. (BLF), an alliance and clearinghouse for over 30 Black civil rights and service organizations such as the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO). She completed her bachelor's in Philosophy, Religious Studies, International Studies and Women's Studies. At the Master's level, she studied English,

Africana Studies, Non-profit Management and Community Development.

While in graduate school, Ms. Moore served in various capacities. As an instructor, she taught Composition I, Composition II and co-taught Introduction to the Black Experience. As a graduate teaching assistant, she assisted in courses such as Racism in American Society and Black Women in America. Ms. Moore also served as the coordinator of the African Heritage Studies Association's (AHSA) annual international conference held in Tampa, Florida in 2006, the graduate assistant for the Undergraduate Research Program and faculty advisor for the Black Student Union (BSU).

Ramonica Moore grew up in the world of the military, but calls North Dakota home. She is deeply committed to being a participant in making the world a more just and fair place for all persons. She embraces the African proverb, "If you are not living on the edge...you're taking up too much room."

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