



Minority Scholars Award
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2010 Recipients



Crystal Brown
Temple University School of Medicine

Crystal Brown, a first year medical student at Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, became inspired to help underserved populations during an undergraduate educational visit to Nicaragua. As community service chair of the Student National Medical Association at Temple, she initiated a new program called “Barbershop Blood Pressures,” which will bring health screenings directly to the community via the barbershop. Brown also mentors pre-med students and serves as a Temple tour guide and student interviewer. Additionally, she serves as a teaching assistant for an elementary school program with emphasis on introducing the sciences to inner city youth. Research is also an area of interest, and this past summer she investigated methods to alleviate the symptoms of infant respiratory distress syndrome in premature neonates. Brown exemplifies the spirit of this award by “represent[ing] one of the seeds already helping in the elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities in the U.S.” states Raul DeLa Cadena, MD, Assistant Dean, Temple University.



Vanessa Cardenas
University of Michigan Medical School

Vanessa Cardenas, just began her third year of medical school at the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In 2000, she escaped Colombia to seek political asylum in the United States, where she helped to support her family financially, learned a new language, and financed her college education. Cardenas believes these challenges enriched her as a person and made her determined to help those in need. Serving as the president of the Latin American Native American Student Association at Michigan, Cardenas has coordinated several health fairs for the Hispanic community in Ann Arbor. The Quito Project, a program to provide preventative health, education and social programs in Quito, Ecuador, has provided her with a global perspective on health care. Additionally, Cardenas has conducted research on the effectiveness of the health education workshops administered by the Quito Project. Lourdes Velez, MD, Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan states that “she has displayed genuine enthusiasm and commitment to the community and I have been impressed by her sensitivity, work ethic and compassion.”



Vanessa Correa
University of California, Riverside/University of California, Los Angeles PRIME

Vanessa Correa, a second year medical student at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) School of Medicine became inspired to become a physician through watching her parents endure life and overcome death due to health problems. Correa began her career as a nurse, which allowed for her to care for her parents and finance her bachelor’s degree while preparing for a medical degree. At UCR, she became engaged in the Student Run Health Clinic as the Social Service Director, providing patient care and referrals to a homeless population, as well as raising funds for the clinic. This experience motivated her to also pursue a Masters in Public Health. Correa also tutors minority high school students and is the Latino Medical Student Association representative. Ameae Walker, professor at the UCR-UCLA Thomas Haider Medical Program states that she “is an exceptional student with incredible energy who demonstrates leadership and an unwavering commitment to enrich the lives of the disadvantaged.”



Victor Cueto
Drexel University College of Medicine

Victor Cueto, a second year medical student at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was inspired to become a physician after encountering an excellent doctor in the medically underserved area in which he grew up. Since starting medical school, Cueto has been actively involved with student groups and projects that serve the community and work to increase diversity and address minority health issues including leadership in the Latino Medical Student Association, development of bilingual community health presentations for a Latino neighborhood in Philadelphia, promotion of an urban youth tutoring program, and coordination of relief efforts for Haiti and Chile. Cueto also received a Masters of Science in Biomedical Sciences from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, where he conducted a pilot study researching the effectiveness of motivational interviewing on encouraging healthy lifestyle changes in overweight or obese African American women from an underserved area. “He possesses excellent interpersonal skills and interacts well with all members of the small group as well as the faculty. His previous experiences . . . demonstrate his commitment to minority health and education” says Susan Coffey Zern, MD, Associate Dean of Medicine, Drexel University.



Angela Echiverri
University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine

Angela Echiverri, a second year medical student at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) School of Medicine, developed her spirit of advocacy from witnessing her parents’ sacrifices, while her spirit of social justice developed from living in the Latino barrios of Glendale and the African American community of Inglewood. Echiverri decided to devote this spirit to a career in medicine and public health. Prior to medical school, she volunteered at the Venice Family Clinic, the largest free clinic in the nation, and she worked in a statewide effort to increase diversity in the health professions. She earned a Master’s in Public Health and conducted research at the Charles Drew University Research Center, and was selected to participate in UCSF’s Program in Medical Education for the Urban Underserved, devoted to increasing the number of physicians in underserved areas. “She uses her knowledge and skills to ensure social justice, not to further her own personal success. She is a wonderful team player, and it is clear that faculty and peers both like and respect her” states Elisabeth Wilson, MD, MPH, Program Director, Program in Medical Education for the Urban Underserved



Lissette Jimenez
University of Washington School of Medicine

Lissette Jimenez, a second year medical student at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, Washington, comes from a small, rural farm community in Eastern Washington State. Her parents emigrated from Mexico and worked jobs that required difficult manual labor. From a very early age, she was exposed to health care by serving as translator for her parents, who frequented medical facilities due to their ailing health. Jimenez enrolled in the Hispanic Health Pathway at University of Washington, a program that trains students how to provide comprehensive and equitable health care for Latino communities. She mentors minority students, volunteers at the Casa Latina Clinic and is active in the Latino Medical Student Association. She has also conducted a variety of research projects, most recently evaluating the knowledge of HIV and risky sexual conduct among HIV-positive migrant workers. Jimenez recently testified to the Washington State Legislature about how important low-interest rate loans and scholarships are to increasing the diversity in the health profession workforce. Raye Maestas, MD, Associate Professor at the University of Washington says that Jimenez is “humble yet assertive, especially in advocating for her patients. Her voice is gentle, informed, honest and clear.”

Jimenez received the Minority Scholars Award supported by the **Ronald M. Davis, MD Memorial Scholarship Fund**. In 2009, the National Business Group on Health added annual support to the Minority Scholars Award program in honor of Ronald M. Davis, MD, Past-President of the AMA. This specific scholarship is granted to a minority medical student who has an interest in becoming a primary care physician.



Cianna Leatherwood

Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California

Cianna Leatherwood, a second year medical student at Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, California, began her extensive experience with underserved minority populations when she volunteered as a medic for the Berkeley Free Clinic, where she was stunned to see the large percentage of minorities that comprised the majority of homeless and uninsured clientele. She pursued this interest in minority health by working as a research assistant at the Los Angeles County-USC Hospital, investigating the effectiveness of a tool designed to increase medication awareness and compliance among non-English speaking and low health literacy patients. This exposure to such disproportionate levels of health status sparked Leatherwood to pursue a career in medicine. Leatherwood was selected as a visiting researcher for the Harvard Catalyst Summer Research Internship, and she is a fellow of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship and her project involves providing health education to homeless youth in the Hollywood area. Althea Alexander, Assistant Dean, Keck USC states that Leatherwood “is an enthusiast, intelligent, personable, academically powerful young woman.”



Erica Loudon, PhD

Wayne State University School of Medicine

Erica Loudon, a first year medical student at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, Michigan, has a strong history of volunteerism prior to enrolling in medical school. In St. Louis, she established the National Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship, a non-profit organization which seeks to help youth through education and experiential programs to improve their life skills, become productive leaders in their community, and make positive contributions to the economy. Since her enrollment in medical school, Loudon has volunteered at the student-run free clinic, elementary and middle school outreach programs, the Student National Medical Association, the Pediatrics Interest Group, and Amigos Medico, an organization dedicated to meeting the needs of the underserved Latino community. She has a passion for becoming a physician scientist and has worked on research projects in diabetes and obesity. Kertia Black, MD, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Wayne State University states “she is a modest, self-effacing young woman whose hard work and achievements speak louder than any mere words could ever do.”



Laddy Maisonet

University of Kansas School of Medicine

Laddy Maisonet, a second year medical student at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Kansas City, Kansas, left her native Puerto Rico to attend art and design school, where she learned English, received her degree in illustration, and worked as a greeting card designer for Hallmark. It was after the diagnosis of cancer in both eyes of her daughter that she observed firsthand the great need for more culturally and linguistically skilled physicians. As the mother of three children, she now pursues her calling in oncology. She has maintained her cultural, community, and artistic connections through dancing in the Panamanian Folklore Dance Group for the past 15 years and by volunteering for Celebrating Healthy Families Focus, which works to bridge the gap in bicultural health relations between the U.S. and Mexico. Patricia Thomas, MD, Associate Dean, University of Kansas describes Maisonet as “the real deal, not only because of her personal commitment to the underserved, her strong academic achievement and her real need for debt relief...but also because she is a most deserving human being.”



Kerry-Ann Stewart, PhD
Stanford University School of Medicine

Growing up in a poor rural community in Jamaica, Kerry-Ann Stewart, a second year medical student at Stanford University School of Medicine, knew she wanted to pursue a career in medicine but realized her chances were slim to go down that path. Her siblings had not even considered going to college and she knew her parents could not afford it. Two years after graduating high school, she received a full academic scholarship to become the first person in her family to attend college. Stewart hopes to become

neurosurgeon, and she has excelled in her neuroscience research, published manuscripts, and has presented at regional and national meetings. Additionally, she volunteers at two student-run free clinics and coordinated the annual Stanford Minority Medical Alliance Conference that attracted over 500 underserved minority students interested in a medical career. Oscar Salvatierra, MD, Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, Stanford University describes Stewart as “a role model of social responsibility with a parallel career commitment, in addition to her neurosurgery aspirations, to do her part to eliminate inequities in health care delivery.”



Bushra Taha
Harvard Medical School

Bushra Taha, a second year medical student at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts, experienced a daunting arrival in New York after her father, a Sudanese diplomat, sought refuge in the United States. The family had no resources and worked hard to build a life in the U.S. Taha pursued her interest in science during her undergraduate experience at Harvard, working in the neurobiology laboratory on a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Scholarship. After Harvard, she moved to South Africa

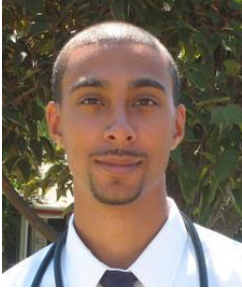
where she managed an AIDS program in rural KwaZulu Natal. There, Taha managed a comprehensive care program, helped with data collection for research, handled case management, and coordinated outreach events. At Harvard Medical School, she has developed a new curriculum for the Health Policy course, conducted research examining innovative new models of primary care provision, and made recommendations to improve delivery of care in the internal medicine practices at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Gordon Stewler, MD, Professor of Medicine, Harvard University, states that Taha is “a young woman destined for leadership in the reform of health care delivery and the achievement of equitable access to care.”



Micah Treuer
University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth

Micah Treuer, a second year medical student at the University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth in Duluth, Minnesota, was planning on pursuing a doctorate in English. A Fulbright Scholar, he took a job teaching at-risk youth in an alternative high school. As he was preparing for the GRE, Treuer began to doubt that literature was his calling – he had always wanted to pursue a career in medicine. Since matriculating into medical school, Treuer remains involved with his reservation in a number of ways, participating in

traditional ceremonies and activities. He has returned to his home community to educate students on brain health and encourage them through his own story as a medical student. Treuer has also recently started to work with the American Cancer Society to bring culturally competent prevention education to American Indian communities. “Micah Treuer is humble, articulate, brilliant, inexhaustible, and pulsates with determination to improve the health, lives and communities that he serves,” states Kathleen Watson, MD, Associate Dean for Students, University of Minnesota.



Omar Washington

University of California, Davis School of Medicine

Omar Washington, a second year medical student at the University of California, Davis School of Medicine in Sacramento, California, learned from his parents the importance and responsibility of sharing. Oftentimes in the inner city neighborhood where he grew up, his family would struggle but would always open their home to others in need. These lessons have shaped him and prompted him to help others through medicine. While in medical school, Washington has become involved in the Student National Medical Association, serving as chapter President and regional Mentorship Chair, and working tirelessly to encourage undergraduate students to pursue a career in medicine. He has done significant outreach in the community, targeting African American youth by using sporting events as an opportunity to promote students academic interests. Washington served as co-director of the student-run free clinic, the Imani Clinic, and his leadership offered a smooth transition when the clinic had to relocate due to budget cuts. Alan Koike, MD, Health Sciences Clinical Professor, UC Davis, states that Washington...”has the impressive combination of superior intellect, excellent clinical skills and impeccable personal characteristics.”