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McNair Scholars Journal 2017

VOLUME 21



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A Message from the McNair Scholars Program

With great pleasure, we present the 2017 Grand Valley State University McNair Scholars Journal. This journal is the culmination of the collaborative scholarship undertaken by our student scholars and their faculty mentors through our Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. Their contributions to this journal represent the persistence and creativity of the students and the faculty mentors who exemplify GVSU's dedication to undergraduate scholarship and transformative learning.

We congratulate each of the McNair Scholars whose research and scholarship is presented in this journal. This work represents your intellectual efforts, your persistence, and your limitless potential as future scholars. We are grateful for the faculty mentors who have worked so closely with our McNair Scholars to encourage their intellectual curiosity and foster their goals and dreams. This work also represents your dedication to your student's success.

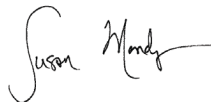
We would like to extend our appreciation to our colleagues who support and embrace the McNair Scholars Program; it is their dedication and hard work that makes this program possible.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we announce this will be the last GVSU McNair Scholars Journal for the foreseeable future. Grand Valley was not awarded funding from the United States Department of Education to support our long standing program. In the meantime, we will continually strive to provide equitable support for our students and prepare them for success in graduate school in the tradition of the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program.

Sincerely,



Robert Smart, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Research Administration
Executive Director of the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence



Susan Mendoza, Ph.D.
Director of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship
Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship



Dolli Lutes, M.A., M.S.W.
Director of McNair Scholars Program



“Before you can make a dream come true, you must first have one.” –Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.

Ronald Erwin McNair was born October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina, to Carl and Pearl McNair. He attended North Carolina A&T State University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.S. degree in physics in 1971. McNair then enrolled in the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1976, at the age of 26, he earned his Ph.D. in physics.

McNair soon became a recognized expert in laser physics while working as a staff physicist with Hughes Research Laboratory. He was selected by NASA for the space shuttle program in 1978 and was a mission specialist aboard the 1984 flight of the USS Challenger space shuttle.

After his death in the USS Challenger space shuttle accident in January 1986, members of Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program. The goal is to encourage low-income, first generation students, as well as students who are traditionally underrepresented in graduate schools, to expand their opportunities by pursuing graduate studies.



Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.

Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program

The Purpose

The McNair Scholars Program is designed to prepare highly talented undergraduates to pursue doctoral degrees and to increase the number of individuals (from the target groups) on college and university faculties.

Who are McNair Scholars?

The McNair Scholars are highly talented undergraduate students who are from families with no previous college graduate, low-income background or groups underrepresented at the graduate level for doctoral studies. The program accepts students from all disciplines.

Program Services

The McNair Scholars are matched with faculty research mentors. They receive academic counseling, mentoring, advising, and GRE preparation. In addition to the above services, the McNair Scholars have opportunities to attend research seminars, conduct research, and present their findings orally or written via poster presentations. In the first semester of their senior year, the scholars receive assistance with the graduate school application process.

Funding

The Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program is a TRiO Program funded through the United States Department of Education and Grand Valley State University.