

TRiO McNAIR SCHOLARS

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL

at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

TRiO

RONALD E. McNAIR
POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Spring 2013 • Volume 1

*"Whether or not you reach your goals
in life depends entirely on how well
you prepare for them and how badly
you want them.*

You're eagles!

Stretch your wings and fly to the sky."

-Dr. Ronald Erwin McNair



DR. RONALD ERWIN McNAIR, the second African American to fly in space, was born October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina to Carl and Pearl McNair. He attended North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, where, in 1971, he graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. degree in physics. In 1976, at the age of 26, he earned his Ph.D. degree in physics from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ronald E. McNair was nationally recognized for his work in the field of laser physics. In 1978, he was one of 35 applicants selected from a pool of ten thousand for NASA's space shuttle program and assigned as a mission specialist aboard the 1984 flight of the shuttle Challenger.

In addition to his academic achievements, he was the recipient of three honorary doctorates and numerous fellowships and commendations. He was also a sixth degree black belt in karate and an accomplished jazz saxophonist. He was married to Cheryl Moore and had two children, Reginald Ervin and Joy Cheray.

On the morning of January 28, 1986, McNair and his six crew members died in an explosion aboard the space shuttle Challenger. In his memory, members of Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program to encourage low income, first generation college students to enroll in graduate studies. This program is dedicated to the high standard of achievement that Ronald E. McNair's life represented.

The National McNair Scholar Pledge ©

I _____ will strive to honor and respect the legacy set forth by

Dr. Ronald E. McNair and former McNair scholars

I will work earnestly toward the realization of my educational goals

I will embrace the challenge of attaining baccalaureate and post baccalaureate education
through hard work, perseverance, and persistence.

I will strive to overcome any obstacles, barriers and limitations
that might hinder, derail, or prevent my educational attainment.

I will endeavor to achieve excellence

By conceiving of and believing in excellence in my personal, professional and academic
endeavors.

I will observe high ethical, moral and academic standards.

I understand that I must be trustworthy, honorable and noble

Respect myself, my peers, and the people who contribute to my personal and academic success

I will graciously extend myself and service to the uplifting of future TRiO students
and promising scholars

I will be a part of the solution and not the problem;

I am a McNair Scholar and I believe in the words of Dr. McNair:

“Whether or not [I] reach [my] goals in life depends entirely on how well [I] prepare for them
and how badly [I] want them.”

With this pledge, I hereby accept the responsibilities and privileges of induction into the Ronald
E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program.

*Conceived and Authored by
Wallace Southerland III, Ph.D., Former Associate Director,
McNair Program at the University of Maryland, College Park and
Cheryl Bailey Gittens, Director
McNair Scholars Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
with contributions by members of the national McNair Scholars community*

The Office of Minority Student Affairs History

The Office of Minority Student Affairs exists as a result of campus leadership, local community support and the activism of local community leaders and African-American law students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the late 1960s. After the success of the Project 500 initiative in 1968 - which was created to increase campus enrollment by 500 minority students - Latina/o, Caucasian, Asian-American and low-income and first-generation students of all backgrounds also began matriculating through the project. With the increasing numbers came the need for a permanent campus program to increase retention and graduation rates of a diverse student population and provide services for the enrichment and development of underrepresented students at the campus. The 1960s leaders' vision of a diverse student population and persistence in seeing that they are supported resulted in what is now known as the Office of Minority Student Affairs, or OMSA.

Currently, OMSA coordinates more than a dozen programs and services to ensure the academic success of students who have been admitted to Illinois through the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) or the President's Award Program (PAP), as well as underrepresented students, and those who are economically disadvantaged and/or first-generation college students.

Mission: A Social and Just Imperative

Promoting educational access, opportunity, and success for historically-underrepresented students is a social and just imperative. OMSA is one of the longest-running and most comprehensive support units on the campus and in the United States. Under new leadership, OMSA is ready to serve and ready to lead efforts in support of student excellence and success.

On behalf of the campus and the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Minority Student Affairs:

provides services to students to assist with personal and academic achievement and serves as an advocate for students. OMSA serves underrepresented students, those admitted to the University through the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) and the President's Award Program (PAP), first-generation and economically-disadvantaged students, and any student who is accepted through OMSA's affiliates program.