

HONORABLE MENTIONS

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



Paper Faces on Parade

More than 400 guests, exotic masks and fancy dresses created an evening of elegance and mystery at the 13th annual Honors College Ball at the Renaissance Hotel.

The student-run event featured a masquerade theme with many attendees donning masks of feathers and sequins. Chancellor Sylvia Manning even participated in the fun, addressing the group wearing her own green sequined mask. She commended the Honors Ball Committee for continuing the long-standing tradition.



The silent auction raised more than \$3,000 to fund the Honors College Advisory Board Scholarship, a merit- and need-based scholarship, and the Global Medical Relief Program, a student-run group that organizes and distributes medical supplies to disaster sites or third-world countries.



Save the Date

Visit the Honors College Web site at www.hc.uic.edu for details on the 14th Annual Honors College Ball.

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A Break from the Ordinary

Five honors students skipped the beach and participated in UIC's Alternative Spring Break program by volunteering for the Denver Rescue Mission's Champa House and The Crossing—long-term and transitional drug rehabilitation programs for homeless, single mothers and their children.

While in Denver, students helped remodel buildings, worked in a soup kitchen, talked with homeless mothers and taught children how to play games.

Honors student Oisin Kenny wrote, "Seeing young people lost and homeless brought on strong feelings of appreciation for my own life and how fortunate many of us are to have a bed to sleep in."

A student-run program, UIC's Alternative Spring Break immerses students in service-oriented programs around the world.



From the Dean

The Honors College continues to play an important role in campus life at UIC. Our students are engaged with UIC's premier faculty. They are leaders on campus and are committed to life-long civic engagement. We are focused on providing educational opportunities that start in the classroom and extend well beyond the campus.

Developing first-class facilities and programming for our students is a top priority. Our newest project is an honors house—a living and learning community—in Stukel Towers, UIC's newest residence hall scheduled to open in fall 2007.

Undergraduate research is a vital piece of the Honors College community. Hosted by the college, the 2006 Undergraduate Research Symposium showcased independent research by undergraduates whose interests spanned from nitrogen atoms, to using ultrasound-accelerated tissues to restore bones, to using native languages when learning English.

As we reflect on the college's past 24 years, we'd like to re-connect with you. The *Honorable Mentions* newsletter will keep you posted on our activities and accomplishments. Please take our online survey at www.hc.uic.edu or return the enclosed postcard to keep us informed on your interests and suggestions for ways that we can best meet your needs.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lon S. Kaufman
Dean

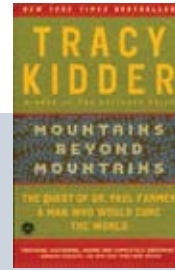
Pulitzer Prize Winner Visits College

The Honors College and the UIC Campus Housing Department hosted nationally known author Tracy Kidder last fall. Kidder's nonfiction best-seller, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, was required reading for the freshman summer reading program in Campus Housing and for all incoming honors freshmen.

The book chronicles the life of Paul Farmer, a Harvard professor, physician, infectious-disease specialist, anthropologist and recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Genius Grant.

The author joined several dozen honors students at a luncheon, showed slides highlighting Farmer's work, and discussed the public health advocate's work in Haiti. Reflecting on the event, honors student Jeff Ording concluded that Kidder was, "a passionate advocate of Haitian rights and a staunch idealist."

The college hopes to partner with the Campus Housing program to bring assigned authors to campus on an annual basis.



Win a Copy of Best-Seller, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*

Take our online survey at www.hc.uic.edu or return the enclosed postcard to enter your name into our drawing. On July 15, 10 randomly-selected respondents will receive a copy of Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Kidder's best-seller, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*.

Honors Students Band Together to Make Music

"When I came here as a freshman, I really wanted to be in an orchestra," recalled Jessica Huang. A junior honors student in biological sciences, Jessica first played the violin at age 4 and studied under Chicago Symphony Orchestra assistant concertmaster Yuan-Qing Yu. "I was in orchestra all four years of high school. It was a big part of my life."

While UIC remains without an orchestra, it now has the Honors College String Ensemble: six violinists and four cellists, all serious amateurs who have performed several times on campus since their first performance last fall.

"I proposed the idea of an Honors College string ensemble to Dean Kaufman, and not only did he support the idea, but he

gave us \$1,000 to start the group," said Huang.

In preparation, Huang put out word that she was looking for string players. Last spring, several students auditioned for the executive board comprised of Huang and a staff adviser. The board has since expanded to include seven more students.

"It is my hope that the group will expand and may become a true orchestra, with woodwinds and brass,"



Clockwise from left: Jessica Sheng, James Jin, Benjamin Bick and Samantha Cabrera are among the group's 10 musicians.

said Huang. She also envisions the group reaching out to area schools to educate students about the benefits of music.



Cellist Jessica Sheng, vice president of the String Ensemble, plays at the Honors College Ball.

Psychology Professor Named Fellow of the Year

Bette Bottoms, an inspiring and sought-after UIC psychology professor, won the Honors College's Faculty Fellow of the Year award. Students Alaine Kalder and Barbara Oudekerk nominated her, saying, "As long as you're willing to work hard, professor Bottoms will work twice as hard to ensure that you are successful."

A fellow since 2005, Bottoms has worked with Honors College students in her research lab since 1992. "It has been a wonderful experience to work with such bright, dedicated students," she says.

Bottoms has won four awards for teaching excellence at UIC. Her research focuses on the interface of psychology and law, especially as it applies to children in the legal system. She also teaches law enforcement agents how to work with child victims.



Professor Bottoms (center) works with Alaine Kalder (left) and Barbara Oudekerk, who nominated her for the award.

Outstanding Students Recognized



Neelima Vidula graduated in May with a bachelor of science in bioengineering. She won UIC's Donald and Leah Riddle Prize, awarded to the outstanding graduating senior.

Also a Goldwater Scholar, Vidula was partially funded by the National Institutes of Health to conduct laboratory research in neuroimmune interactions.

Her adviser, Donald Chambers, professor of biochemistry and molecular genetics, called Vidula "bright, pleasant and enthusiastic—but independent and very motivated."

A National Merit Scholar, Vidula plans to earn both an MD and PhD degree in bioengineering from UIC and pursue a career as a physician and clinical researcher in tissue engineering.



Amit Nathani, a UIC junior planning a double major in biological sciences and philosophy, received a Goldwater Scholarship covering tuition and fees up to \$7,500. Nathani plans to earn MD and PhD degrees and pursue a career researching treatments for neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease.

Last summer, Nathani worked in UIC's Laboratory of Integrative Neuroscience. He investigated the biology of "reversal learning"—a brain function that supports learning by allowing a person to "unlearn" one strategy in favor of another.

Beth Powers, director of UIC's Special Scholarship Programs, called Nathani "intelligent, balanced, mature and driven," and cited service he did in India as "pivotal in cementing his commitment to biomedical research. He wants to be part of this revolution in health-care."



Erika Lizeth Sanchez, a UIC senior who graduated in May, won a Fulbright Student Program Teaching Assistantship—one of only nine the Fulbright Commission of Spain is expected to grant this year.

Sanchez will spend nine months in Spain teaching English. She herself grew up learning English as a second language, and earned her bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in creative writing.

Calling Sanchez "a young woman to watch," Powers said, "Our Fulbright committee admired her creative ideas for teaching poetry and devising interactive lessons to promote the accessibility of the language."

Sanchez plans to earn a PhD, then teach at the college level and write professionally.

New Faculty Fellows Named

The Honors College Faculty Fellows program, established in 1982, enables honors students to build one-on-one relationships with UIC faculty and to enjoy professional guidance during the course of their academic career. These UIC professors joined the current 250 Faculty Fellows as student mentors.

ACCOUNTING
Somnath Das

ENGLISH
Jennifer Ashton
Christina Pugh

NURSING
Martha Harter
Patricia Lewis
Arlene Miller

PSYCHOLOGY
Daniel Cervone

ARCHITECTURE
Christopher Rockey

HISTORY
Richard Fried

**PERFORMING ARTS,
MUSIC**
Caroline Guindon

SPANISH
Matthew Marr

CHEMISTRY
Leslie Fung

MEDICINE
Christopher Fall

Tell us about your favorite Faculty Fellow memory in our online survey at www.hc.uic.edu.

We Want to Hear from You

We are redesigning the Honors College Web site. Please take our online survey at www.hc.uic.edu and tell us how we can improve our site to meet your needs. On July 15, 10 randomly-selected respondents will receive a copy of Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Kidder's best-seller, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*.



Uniting Students . . . from Tel Aviv to Ramallah

UIC's Jewish/Muslim studies initiative—a program aimed at collaboration between the historically estranged religions—prompted several UIC and Honors College students to create the Jewish Arab Muslim Student organization.

In April, JAMS presented the hip-hop play “From Tel Aviv to Ramallah: A Beatbox Journey.” Chronicling the daily lives of young people in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the play was a collaboration between Jewish writer/director Rachel Havrelock, her actor husband and “human beatbox” Yuri Lane, and Muslim video artist Sharif Ezzat.

The play was inspired by the people and sounds encountered by Lane and Havrelock, who is an assistant professor of Jewish studies, during their 1999 trip through Israel and the West Bank.

An amazing feat, Lane performed 15 characters through a cappella vocal percussion, acting and dance, accompanied by photo slides composed by Ezzat.

Honors student and JAMS board member Liat Shetret said that “JAMS provides a venue for students of different backgrounds to come together in a middle ground to be productive and neutral in discussions about conflict in the Middle East.” Honors student Julia Geynisman called JAMS unique: “We aren’t motivated to represent any one point of view to the campus community, but to be a place for discussion.”



“Human beatbox” Yuri Lane’s performance chronicles the daily lives of young people in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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In May, hundreds of students, their families and friends gathered in the UIC Pavilion to celebrate the 2006 Honors College graduating class.