

College Scholars Newsletter

Fall-Winter 2014

40th Anniversary Celebration



Reunion Panel: Alex Houck, Jonas T. Holdeman III, Kelsey Roy, Richard Toussaint, Jon Rader, Clinton Elmore

2013-2014 was the 40th anniversary of College Scholars, a year of celebration highlighted by the first ever reunion on Saturday, March 1. We celebrated the year in several ways. First, we set a goal of raising an unprecedented \$10,000 for the College Scholars Excellence Fund and we exceeded that goal. Second, we compiled a 40th Anniversary History which is available from Van-Griner Publishing. Finally, we organized the reunion consisting of an afternoon panel discussion on the past, present, and future of College Scholars followed by a gala dinner at Holly's Corner which featured a keynote address by Ellen Godbey Carson ('76), one of the original thirteen Scholars.

In her keynote address, Ellen Carson, introduced the Japanese saying, "Okage sama de", meaning, "I am what I am because of you." She ended with a challenge to her fellow alumni.

"I will always have a tender place in my heart for the College Scholars program. I have loved the freedom College Scholars provides. We can meet new people, go new places, plan our own schedule, experience different study settings and pursue our own dreams. I hope each of us commits today to contribute in concrete and meaningful ways to the Scholars program. With our help, College Scholars can be even more successful.

We are what we are only because of those who came before us and supported us. We have a duty, from all we have been given, to do our utmost to leave the world a better place. Whatever your passion is, Go for Broke, and pursue it with gratitude for those who helped you be who you are. Okage sama de."

Two current Scholars, R. J. Vogt and Hanna Lustig, have written a report on the reunion which is available on our website (<http://scholars.utk.edu/reunion.php>), along with a slide show of photographs by another current scholar, Richard Prince.



Above: College Scholars Recruiting Table (John McAmis, Summer Awad, Kolt Free)

Below: Dinner at the Director's House

Notes from the Director

It was three years ago that I became the Director of College Scholars. My predecessor, Dr. Chris Craig, told me that I now had the best job in all of higher education. Although I was looking forward to working with the Scholars, I didn't really believe the superlative. I now know that he spoke the truth. No one else has the joy of working with such talented, motivated and creative students.

Now forty years old, College Scholars is the premier undergraduate honors program at the University of Tennessee. I regularly say that College Scholars are the most interesting students at UT. Each year, Scholars do amazing things both in and out of the classroom. This academic year has seen three outstanding theatrical productions by seniors Brock Ward, Ethan Roeder and Kolt Free, a photography exhibition by senior Sarah O'Leary and an insightful series of columns on homelessness in Knoxville in the Daily Beacon by senior R. J. Vogt. Two seniors, David Morse and Kenna Rewcastle, are finalists for a Fulbright Fellowship. Two juniors, Summer Awad and Alana Stein, have been nominated for the Truman Scholarship. And we still have several months left in the year.

Along with the new Alumni Advisory Board we are developing a strategic plan to ensure that College Scholars maintains its excellence. A key part of that plan is to strengthen our connection to alumni. In this internet age we are working to build our presence on social media: Facebook and LinkedIn. You can find a link to our Facebook page on the College Scholars website, scholars.utk.edu. It currently has 163 "likes". We post photos and news of the program regularly. You can also join our closed LinkedIn group that includes about 160 alumni and current students. Send us an e-mail to receive an invitation. There are plans to develop a searchable on-line alumni directory. Other parts of the plan include raising the profile of College Scholars, both on and off campus, building a stronger community among the current students, and, of course, fund raising.

I have been trying to send out news of the program more frequently by e-mail. If you have not provided us with your e-mail address, please send it to scholars@utk.edu so we can add you to the distribution list.

Ensuring the Future of College Scholars

There are several ways to contribute financially to College Scholars. Annual donations go into the College Scholars Excellence Fund, which is primarily used to support student projects. For example, in 2014-2015, three College Scholars senior projects include theatrical productions which are being supported, at least in part, by the Excellence Fund. Excellence Funds are also being used to support research in nanotechnology

and for a photographic exhibition on Hispanic culture in East Tennessee. The easiest way to donate to the Excellence Fund is to visit our website, scholars.utk.edu, and click on the "Give to College Scholars" link near the bottom of the page. College Scholars alumni and friends have established several endowments over the years which are primarily used for student scholarships. As the cost of college

increases, the need for scholarship funds also increases. There are other program needs and dreams that can benefit from the support of an endowment. For example, we would like to establish an endowment to support the annual visit of a distinguished interdisciplinary scholar who would interact with the Scholars and also deliver a public lecture.

If you have the means, consider establishing a new endowment, or contributing to an existing one. There are several ways to do this including an estate gift. For more information on how to establish an endowment, please contact Michelle Geller, Director of Development – UTK College of Arts and Sciences at 9850 974-3816 or mgeller@utfi.org.



Alana Stein in Spain



Summer Awad (second from left) in Jordan

College Scholars around the world

In the spring of 2014 **Alana Stein** studied in Málaga, Spain as a part of her program in Food Security with Sociopolitical and Chemical Emphases. While there, she had the unique opportunity to take courses with local students that covered topics such as social work, immigration, quality of life, urban environment, and human development. Her experience was unique due to the timing of the trip because she was able to see how citizens reacted to these issues during a time of economic crisis. As she described her experience, “Each of these issues was quite prevalent in our lives as we lived in a country with an unemployment rate of 24%. The rate was even more exacerbated in the south of Spain where I was studying. Therefore, I was able to observe how a developed country worked to improve financial problems and provide support for its citizens. Since Spain has similar infrastructure to the United States, their situation is more akin to hunger issues in the United States than those in many developing countries. My experience abroad allowed me to learn a different perspective of combating social issues than I have experienced in an American classroom while also learning a second language.”

Summer Awad wrote about her summer 2014 experience. “My senior project is to write a play about the lives of Palestinians under occupation. With the help of the Summer Undergraduate Research Internship funding, I spent the month of June in Amman, Jordan, conducting interviews with people who identify as Palestinian, including refugees living in two of the thirteen camps there. All in all, I conducted and translated 20 interviews and had many more informal discussions on the topic of Palestine. I improved my Arabic, particularly my Palestinian dialect, tremendously, and I completed a close reading of the most respected textbook on the topic.”

Andrew Curtis spent the summer in Europe -- This summer, I had the opportunity to study video editing and Italian Cinema in Rome through a third-party program, International Studies Abroad (ISA). I'd like to argue that my experience abroad was one of the greatest and most influential experiences of my life.



Andrew Curtis on the far left on Capri with fellow students

I had classes everyday at AUR, which were very interesting, as they were very related to my field. After classes, my friends and I would take the bus back to our apartments. Each night, we would go to one another's apartment to have dinner, which we took turns fixing. My specialty was hamburgers with barbecue, homemade French fries, and southern sweet tea (a favorite among my friends). Other nights, we would take Tram 8 to the other side of the Tiber River to go to Campo de Fiori, a popular spot for young travelers, with many restaurants and bars. We would stay out late into the night and then take one of the night buses back to our apartment. During that month, we took weekend trips to Capri (a gorgeous island off the Amalfi Coast, which had the clearest water I've ever seen), Sorrento & Naples, the ruins of Pompeii, Florence, and Tuscany (where we had a fantastic wine tasting). One of my roommates and I also took a last-minute weekend trip to Geneva, Switzerland, which was so gorgeous. After the program, I visited Venice, Thessaloniki and Athens, London, Barcelona and Madrid. My experiences abroad have struck me with wanderlust - a strong desire to wander and travel the globe.



2014 Graduates: Clinton Elmore, Jeffrey Kovac, Elizabeth Spratt, Jacob Clark, Brianna Rader, Dustin Le, Kristin Ballenger, Mark Remec, Melissa Lee, Desta Bume, Ellen Ford, Alex Houck, Devan Pope, Emma Hicks, Olivia Jones, Erin Grimson, Abigail McKamey, Elizabeth Conner, Taylor Odle

2014 Graduates

Eighteen College Scholars graduated in spring and summer of 2014. Their senior projects included an original film, a photographic exhibition, a holocaust education exhibition, scientific investigations in biophysics and neuroscience, as well as scholarly work in the social sciences.

Kristin Ballenger - Teaching second or third grade at a charter school in Phoenix through Teach for America while pursuing the masters in elementary education at Arizona State University.
Desta Bume – Ph.D. student in chemistry, Johns Hopkins University.
Jacob Clark – Masters student in business analytics at

UT
Elizabeth Conner - Masters student in Public Health at UT and recipient of the University of Tennessee J. Wallace & Katie Dean Graduate Fellowship.
Clinton Elmore – Masters student in journalism and electronic Media at UT.
Ellen Ford – Research Technician at Stanford University School of Medicine.
Erin Grimson – Anthropologie stylist and free-lance photographer, Knoxville
<http://www.eringrimson.com>
Emma Hicks - Post-graduate internship program in DC through the National Student Leadership Forum.
Alex Houck - Fulbright Scholar in Madrid, Spain,

assisting in molecular neurobiological research, analyzing proteins in the brains of mice to learn more about Alzheimer's disease. He also will take intensive Spanish courses and volunteer at a university teaching hospital.
Olivia Jones - Masters student in Middle Eastern Studies, University of Exeter.
Dustin Le - Pursuing the M.D. at UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.
Melissa Lee – Ph.D. student in neurobiology and behavior, Columbia University.
Abigail McKamey – Teaching in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, helping to start the Nashville Academy of Computer Science charter school and pursuing a masters degree in education from David Lipscomb

University.
Taylor Odle – Graduate student in higher education, Vanderbilt University.
Devan Pope – Stewardship Coordinator, Nashville Symphony.
Brianna Rader – M.S. student in global health sciences, University of California, San Francisco.
Mark Remec-Pavlin – Ph.D. student in biophysics, University of California, Berkeley.
Elisabeth Spratt - Continuing a collaborative research project with the Animal Science and Nutrition departments at UT.

College Scholars at Home and Abroad

Second-year student **Alina Clay** spent eight weeks this summer at the Kathryn Davis School of Russian in Middlebury, Vermont, where she took the language pledge and spoke only Russian for the duration of the program. After auditing first-year Russian at UT, she placed into third-level Russian at Middlebury and at the end of the program, tested with "Intermediate high" proficiency in the language. Not only did she immerse herself in the language, but she also learned more about Russian culture through participating in the school's Russian choir, which practiced several times a week and ultimately put on a traditional folk concert. Alina also regularly attended lectures by noteworthy Russian literary scholars and journalists, as well as watched classic movies, prepared traditional food and even participated in Russian karaoke night. She had the opportunity to often speak with professors and other students who either lived in Russia or often traveled there, all of whom offered her advice about where best to travel in regards to her academic interests. This immersion program gave Alina valuable linguistic and cultural experience, as if she were in Russia. Indeed, though the language pledge was dissolved on the last night of the program, Alina refused to revert to English until she had arrived back home.

In the spring of 2014, after receiving the Joseph B.



Alina Clay (on left) in Russian costume at Middlebury

Kennedy Scholarship from the College Scholars Program, **Jack Little** returned to China and studied at the University of Nottingham in Ningbo, China. In a smaller city just south of Shanghai, Jack completed an intensive Chinese Language course and studied American, Chinese, and Russian foreign policy. After the semester was completed, Jack spent several weeks hostel hopping across China before returning to the Knoxville.

In the summer of 2014, Jack began working for a local foundation and NGO that seeks to alleviate children at risk issues in South East Asia and Haiti. Working a one year internship, he has traveled with organization staff to Thailand and the Philippines. While there, he participated in stakeholder and exploratory interviews with local grassroots organizations, international anti-trafficking initiatives, and government agencies. He is currently working with the director of the foundation on a research based inquiry into issues facing children in rural Appalachia.

Dylan Haywood traveled to Savannah, Georgia this past

July to conduct the first of many interviews for her Senior Project. Her Senior Project (as of now) will analyze the effectiveness of Restorative Justice processes and will include interviews from various lawyers, Restorative Justice activists and other scholars in this field. In Savannah she interviewed Robert Bush, a Senior Staff Attorney at Georgia Legal Services Program. Robert Bush is a long-time equal rights lawyer and activist for HIV/AIDS patients, an active supporter of LGBTQ campaigns, and other social justice programs. Through Georgia Legal he has been able to serve impoverished communities, help marginalized populations find housing, and fight for fair treatment of the underrepresented. Dylan talked to him mostly about his opinions on Restorative Justice practices and problems within the Retributive Justice system that we currently have in the United States. She also took photographs of Robert, which she plan to do for all of my interviews, to be displayed in her presentation of her Senior Project.

Literary Journalism at *Esquire* – R. J. Vogt

This summer, I worked as one of two print editorial interns for *Esquire Magazine*. For the September issue, I transcribed the cover interview with Guardians of the Galaxy's Chris Pratt and researched much of the front of book maintenance, pop culture and style guides. For the October issue, I had a chance to interview inspiring mentors for the Mentor Project, writing three short feature profiles and receiving a credit for reporting; transcription work gave me a unique perspective on the lives of men such as Robert Redford, Carmelo Anthony and Marco Rubio. For the November issue, I received a byline for my interview with The Walking Dead's Danai Gurira in the monthly "Funny Joke from a Beautiful Woman" feature. I also served for a short time as an interim administrative assistant to *Esquire's* special projects editor, Lisa Hintelmann.

The experience gave me a chance to meet one on one with such writers as Tom Junod and Tyler Cabot, the men I aspire to emulate someday in my own work. Editor in Chief David Granger, a UT alum, also met with me for lunch on one of my last days, offering his singular insight into the media business. Because *Esquire* almost exclusively hires former interns for entry-level openings, I have high hopes of returning someday; because people rarely leave a publication such as *Esquire*, I have low hopes of returning anytime soon.

Internship at the Roosevelt Institute – Hayley Brundige

This summer I worked as the communications intern for the Roosevelt Institute in New York City. As a Summer Academy Fellow for Roosevelt, I had daily duties with the communications team (working with their website, social media and distributing the white papers written by their senior fellows) but I also worked with a group of four other Summer Academy Fellows on a policy piece, in what Roosevelt calls a Team Based Challenge.

Our piece focused on the inclusion of English Language Learners in the city's charter schools, specifically looking at the South Bronx. Roosevelt puts a huge emphasis on solving hyper-local problems through policy, so that was our task with the policy piece. At the end of the summer, we presented our pieces at a policy expo in front of judges that included two staffers from the Center for Social Inclusion, a budget analyst at the city's Office of Management and Budget, and Brittny Saunders, the deputy counsel to New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. They analyzed our policy pieces and gave us advice on how to better approach the problems we researched.

Throughout the summer, we also had several workshops on leadership, public speaking, community organizing, etc. It was a full-time job, plus some, but it was definitely worth it! I learned a lot about policy and made many connections with people that I still talk to today. Also, I learned how to get an apartment in Brooklyn, pay rent and get around on the subway system, which is really a job in itself.



Roosevelt Summer Academy with Hayley Brundige (fourth from left in the front row).

Alumni Notes

After receiving the doctorate in special education from UT in 2014, **Don McMahon** ('99) is now an assistant professor of special education at Washington State University in Pullman, WA.

Alex Perkins ('06) has just started a tenure-track position at Notre Dame University (Department of Biological Sciences and Eck Institute for Global Health). He earned the Ph.D. in population biology from the University of California, Davis, in 2011, followed by three years of postdoctoral research also at Davis.

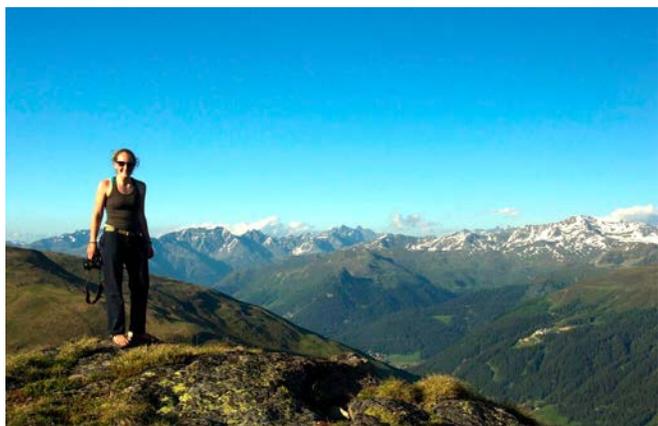
Clinton Elmore ('14), a graduate student in journalism and electronic media at UT,

participated in the Medal of Honor project and the Medal of Honor documentary this past fall.

Lisa Coffman's ('85) latest book of poetry, *Less Obvious Gods*, was published by Iris Press (Oak Ridge, TN) in 2013.

In the Low Houses, **Heather Dobbins's** ('97) first book of poetry has recently been published by Alabaster Leaves Publishing.

Dennis E. Perkins ('89) is the Academy Director at the Knoxville Children's Theater.



Kenna Rewcastle in Switzerland



Kenna Rewcastle in the Arctic

Environmental Science of the Arctic – Kenna Rewcastle

With help from the College Scholars Program in the form of the Alvin Nielsen Scholarship, I was able to spend four months in Copenhagen, Denmark, participating in a program of study focused on “Environmental Science of the Arctic”. As part of this program, my class traveled to Northern Denmark where we drilled a sediment core from a semi-coastal bog and analyzed this lake sediment for information on sea level changes at the end of the last glacial period as ice sheets retreated from the Scandinavian region. We also traveled to Iceland to investigate the influence of climate change on the development of human settlement in Iceland and Greenland. Glacier dynamics with global warming and climate change, geothermal energy, and volcanic activity were also studied in depth as part of this study tour.

Following the semester, I was an intern at the Center for Macroecology, Evolution, and Climate at Copenhagen University where I worked with Dr. Aimée Classen to complete literature reviews and assisted her in gathering metadata for proposed sites in a climate change study. I then traveled to Davos, Switzerland, where I helped establish a project that will investigate the impact of climate change on carbon flux in mountain ecosystems. After my two weeks in Switzerland, I traveled to Abisko, Sweden, a very small village in Northern Sweden (within the Arctic Circle) to establish the same climate change study. I then travelled south to Arjeplog, Sweden, to work with David Wardle, one of the most productive ecologists in the world, in maintaining his 20 year experiment on a series of lake islands where he and his colleagues are investigating the effects of ecosystem retrogression (the slowing of ecosystem processes) in the absence of disturbance

I consider my 7 months abroad to be pivotal in my undergraduate education. I gained experience establishing and maintaining sophisticated, large scale ecological studies, had the opportunity to interact with world-renowned scientists, and was immersed in not only the culture of the places I visited, but in the cultural idiosyncrasies apparent in the way different cultures do science around the world. As a result, I have applied for a Fulbright Fellowship to work with a collaborator that I met in Sweden and have narrowed down my interests within the realm of ecosystem ecology to pursue in graduate school and beyond.

College Scholars Seminar

The College Scholars Seminar continues to meet Wednesday afternoons at 4:40 PM. Here are some of the speakers that the students have heard this year.

Nichole Fazio-Veigel (Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships): “Writing a Personal Statement”

Joshua Inwood (Geography): “The Geography of Peace”

Ben Lee (English): “The Lunch Poems of John O’Hara”

Harriet Bowden (Modern Foreign Languages and Literature): “Second Language Acquisition”

Rob Heller (Journalism and Electronic Media): “Photographing Holocaust Survivors”

Alex Miller (Haslam College of Business): “Not-for-Profit Institutions”

Amber Roessner (Journalism and Electronic Media): “Inventing Baseball Heros”

Paul Harrill (School of Art and College Scholars Alumnus): “Making Films”

Heather Dobbins (Poet and College Scholars Alumna): “Poetry Across the Disciplines”

In the fall, selected juniors give presentation about proposed projects and in the spring seniors talk about the projects they are completing.

Sometimes, we just have fun such as “Applied Newtonian Mechanic” – Bowling at Down Under in the University Center.

Big Orange. Big Ideas.

College Scholars

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scholars.utk.edu

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The new College Scholars office in the Alumni Memorial Building, the old Alumni Gym. We are decorating the walls with art that represents the history of the program. Donations of art from alumni are welcome.

The newly formed College Scholars Alumni Advisory Board had its first meeting on Friday, December 5, 2014, in Knoxville. Members of the board include:

Kevin Jones ('95) – Chair
Cynthia Coe ('83)
David Corban ('76)
Clinton Elmore ('14)
Suresh Karne ('88)
Angela Kennedy ('85)
Erin Schwie Langston ('00)
John Rader ('08)

Profiles, photos, and contact information for the board members can be found on the program website

<http://scholars.utk.edu/board.php>