

*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 E. McNair*

Painting by Juliana Quay '20



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald\\_McNair](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_McNair)

The Ronald E. McNair PostBaccalaureate Achievement Program is a federally funded TRIO Program that prepares outstanding first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented undergraduates to be successful in doctoral programs.

Winthrop's McNair Scholars Program includes, but is not limited to, a paid summer research experience, faculty mentoring, workshops, GRE and graduate school application preparation, graduate financial aid assistance, and travel to present research and explore graduate program.

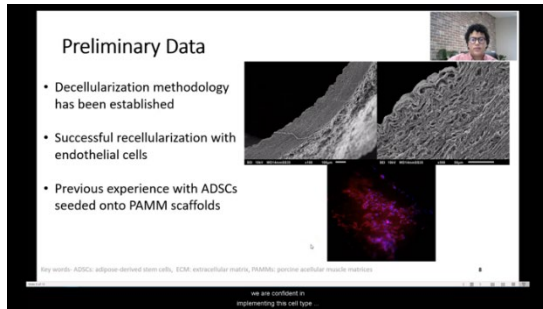
Learn more at [www.winthrop.edu/mcnair](http://www.winthrop.edu/mcnair) and <http://www.mcnairscholars.com>.



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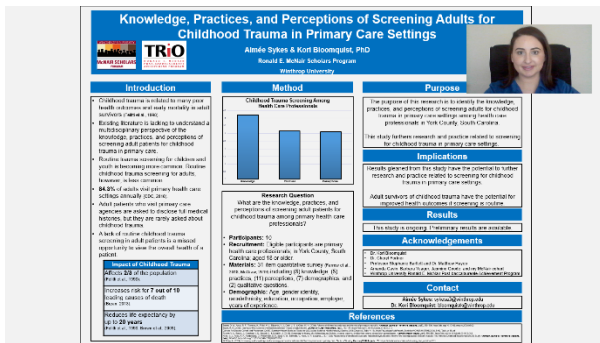
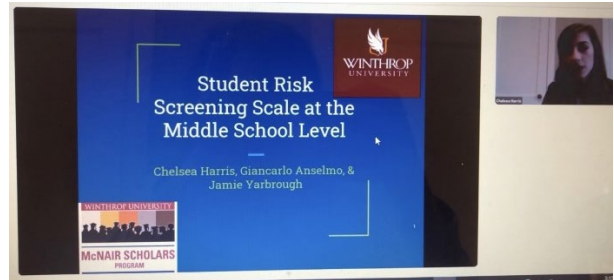
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# McNair Scholars Research Presentations during Pandemic



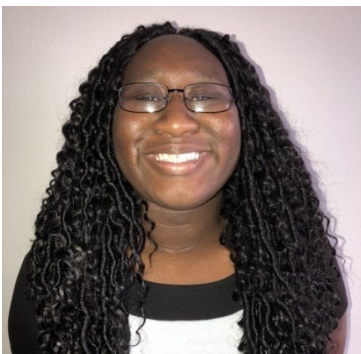
McNair Scholar Carlos Escoto-Diaz presented his research virtually at the Winthrop McNair Summer Research Symposium, the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS), and SOURCE.

McNair Scholar Chelsea Harris presented her research virtually at the Winthrop McNair Summer Research Symposium and as the primary presenter at the National Association of School Psychology meeting, with her mentor Dr. Giancarlo Anselmo.



Here, McNair Scholar Aimee Sykes presents her research poster virtually at the Winthrop McNair Summer Research Symposium.

McNair Scholar Kai Griffin presented his research at the Winthrop McNair Summer Research Symposium, SOURCE, and his proposals have been accepted to present at this year's National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) as well as the College Art Association 109<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.



McNair Scholar Katrina Gainey presented her research at Winthrop McNair Summer Research Symposium, the 2021 SC Chapter of the National Association of Social Work Annual Conference, with her Mentor, Dr. Anthony Hill. Also, on October 30, 2020, Katrina served as the moderator for the “Combating Injustice in COVID-19: Real Stories, Real Struggles, Real People” event and as a panelist for an event called, “Being a Black Student On and Off Campus, that took place November 4, 2020.

# *Congratulations McNair Graduates*

Congratulations to our latest graduates, Alexis Garrick and Keonna Jordan. Alexis Garrick received a B.S. in Sports Management and Keonna Jordan received a B.A. in Psychology. Each scholar received the McNair honor cord and the Winthrop McNair logo pin to wear at graduation.



McNair Scholar Alexis Garrick, Program Director Dr. Cheryl Fortner, and McNair Alum Ashley Garrick.



Program Director Dr. Cheryl Fortner and McNair Scholar Keonna Jordan.

## **CONGRATULATIONS, MCNAIR SCHOLARS!**

The McNair Family is very proud of you all and we are honored to be a part of this special moment in your lives.

### **May 2021 Graduates**



Kiera Alexander  
Kalin “McKenzie” Bennett  
Yashuri Del Rosario Rodriguez  
Titus Echols  
Katrina Gainey  
Chelsea Harris

Gabrielle McGee  
Iyegbekosa “Egbe” Omoigui  
McCayla Partain  
Taylor Sandifer  
Victoria Sulak  
Aimee Sykes



# Points of Pride



On November 15, 2020, Dr. Muri Mata Howle graduated with her PhD in Educational Leadership from Clemson University. Dr. Howle is the sixth Winthrop McNair Scholar to earn their PhD! She was part of the 2010-11 McNair cohort and her mentor was Dr. Joseph Prus. We are so proud of you Muri and we wish you the best of luck on your future endeavors!

In 2020, Dr. Keisha Carden earned her PhD in Clinical Psychology with a subspecialty in Geropsychology from the University of Alabama. Dr. Carden is the eighth Winthrop McNair Scholar to earn their PhD! She was part of the 2013-14 McNair cohort and her mentor was Dr. Merry Sleigh. We are so proud of you Keisha and we wish you the best of luck on your future endeavors!



Jordan Lewis  
Population Biology, Ecology,  
and Evolution

Jordan Lewis was recently inducted into the 2021 cohort of the Emory Bouchet Graduate Honor Society. The Bouchet Graduate Honor Society acknowledges outstanding scholarly achievement and promotes diversity and excellence in doctoral education and the professoriate. If you would like to learn more, here is the link to the program site: <https://gs.emory.edu/diversity/programming/emory-bouchet-graduate-honor-society/index.html>. We are so proud of you Jordan and we wish you the best of luck in continuing to pursue your PhD!

Our current McNair Graduate Associate, Jasmine Goode, will be graduating May, 6, 2021 with a Master of Education in Counseling and Development – Clinical Mental Health. We would like to announce that Jasmine received a full time job offer at a group private practice located in North Carolina a semester before earning her master's degree. Jasmine, we are incredibly proud of you and so grateful for your support of two cohorts of Winthrop McNair Scholars. Barb and I are going to miss you A LOT and we wish you the absolute best.



# Advice from Alums

Recent McNair alumni provide Words of Wisdom to our current Scholars as they prepare for graduate school.



## McNair Alumni, Sierra Davis

*Pursuing a Master's degree in International Studies at the University of San Francisco*

“Give yourself grace. There have been so many moments in the past few months where I was doing a lot better than I thought I was. Looking back on it, I could have saved myself a lot of anxiety by being kinder to myself and reminding myself that I’m human.”



## McNair Alumni, Kalea Young-Gibson

*Pursuing a Master's degree in Public Affairs at the Ohio State University*

“If you’re moving for school, move in early and give yourself a couple of weeks at LEAST to get adjusted to your new city. Go ahead and find your coffee shops, grocery stores, whatever it is that you need before classes start because in grad school there is no such thing as a syllabus week.



## McNair Alumni, Juliana Quay

*Pursuing a PhD in the Quantitative and Chemical Biology program at Vanderbilt University*

“**Take time for self-care.** Sometimes grad school can make you feel like you don’t have time or don’t deserve to take time for self-care, but I can promise you that you 100% deserve it. If you don’t take the time, you will burn out. Trust me, I know from experience. **Separate yourself from your work.** This kind of goes along with #1, but it is especially important if you work from home full-time. Your mental health will go downhill quickly if you are constantly in a work mindset. Make sure you have areas within your home that are specifically for fun/rest. Try to avoid doing your work on your couch or bed. **Learn how to say no.** This was really hard for me, but it’s important to know how to set boundaries in grad school, especially during a time like this. Sometimes your professors/PIs will have unrealistic expectations of you (because they are also trying to figure out to function during a pandemic), and you must be able to set boundaries and let them know what you are and are not capable of. Don’t become a “yes man” and stretch yourself too thin – you will burn out (again, I know from experience). **Don’t be afraid to ask for what you need.** This kind of goes along with #3. Your professors/PIs don’t know you, so they don’t know your learning style or what you might need to succeed...So don’t be afraid to ask! **Attend virtual social events (but not too many).** COVID has prevented us from having happy hours and lab/class get-togethers that would usually happen during the first year of grad school. This means that it will be a little bit harder for you to meet people and feel connected, especially if you work from home. COVID has definitely made me want to keep to myself more and not attend any virtual social events, but I promise you it will make you feel better. **Take advantage of resources.** You’ve probably also heard this a lot, but please do it! I never took advantage of counseling or support services at Winthrop, and I think my time there would have been easier if I had. **Just do your best and remember that your struggles do not define you.** Be kind to yourself. If you are doing your best, that’s all that matters. It isn’t the end of the world if something goes wrong, and it definitely does not define you.”

# Spotlight



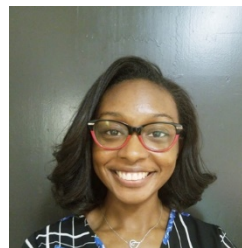
**Alumni James White II will pursue his Exercise Science PhD with a concentration in Health Aspects of Physical Activity at the University of South Carolina. James accepted a position as a Graduate Research Assistant in the Arnold Childhood Obesity Initiative and an offer to join the Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program.**



**McNair Scholar Lydia Rodriguez (Mentor Dr. Merry Sleight) earned the Pansy E. Jacobs Jackson National Student Research Competition Award, one of just 5 research awards for undergrad and grad presenters at the NAAAs and Affiliates conference.**



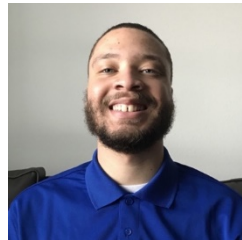
**McNair Scholar Victoria Sulak was awarded the Louise Johnson Award from the Psychology Faculty.**



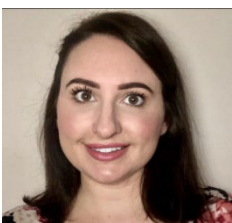
**McNair Scholar Gabrielle McGee was awarded the Outstanding Scholar Award and the Outstanding Student Award from the Psychology Faculty.**



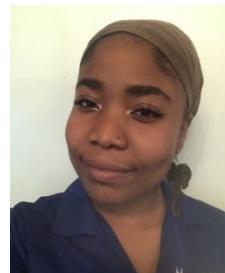
**McNair Scholar Katrina Gainey was named the SC NASW BSW Student of the Year and the 2020-21 Winthrop University BSW Field Student of the Year.**



**McNair Scholar Brandon Ellison was awarded the ACS-Piedmont Section Excellence in Undergraduate Research Award.**



**McNair Scholar Aimee Sykes was named Winthrop University's 2021 BSW Student of the Year and a recipient of the Linda M. Ashley Scholarship.**



**McNair Scholars Keonna Jordan received an honorable mention at the SEPA conference by the Women and Minority Award Committee.**



**McNair Scholar McKenzie Bennet has been selected as the recipient of a 2021 National Research (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship to continue her studies surrounding voting rights for marginalized groups. McKenzie is one of only six Social Science – Public Policy recipients chosen in the country for the prestigious fellowship.**

**Congratulations Scholars!!! We are so proud of you!!**

# SOURCE 2021

Scholar	Presentation Title
Kiera Alexander	Impact of COVID-19 on Food Insecurity and Resiliency in College Students
Katrina Gainey	Undergraduate Students' Perceptions, Knowledge, Attitudes Toward Human Trafficking
Ana Rodriguez	Consent Attitudes, Aggression, & Gender on Perceptions of Sexual Assault & The Role of Youth Race, Stereotype Acceptance, and Aggression on Perceptions of School Altercations
Kalin (McKenzie) Bennett	The Effect of Political Culture on Voter Personality Preferences for Political Leaders: A South Carolina Case Study
Kai Griffin	Science and Social Narratives: A Research Based Art Methodology into Explorations and Explanations of Gender and Bodily Diverse Prepubertal Youth
Yashuri Del Rosario Rodriguez	Latinidad and Portrayals of Second- and Third-Generation Latinx Immigrants in One Day at a Time
Carlos Escoto-Diaz	Assessing Effects of Decellularization and Culture Conditions on Small-Diameter Vascular Graft Seeding & Characterizing the Function of Bacteriophage Cain Genes in Host Mycobacterium smegmatis
Brandon Ellison	Predicting a viable pH-induced peptide switch to be incorporated with human L-chain ferritin
Kai Griffin	Queer Art Exhibitions: Diverse Inclusion or White, Gay Canon
Eric Walters	Visible-Light Mediated Radical Additions of Aldehydes with Organotrifluoroborates
Taylor Sandifer	Resilience of Student Organizations During the Global COVID-19 Pandemic
Savannah Stinson	Celebrity Influence on Black Men's Constructions of Masculinity
Molly Quetel & Eric Walters	Photoredox Mediated Alkylation of Imines with Potassium Organotrifluoroborates in the Presence of an Organic Photocatalyst
McCayla Partain	Campus Mental Health Services and Student Needs in COVID-19
Jomar Lewis	In Silico Binding Analysis of a Zone 2 Modified Sphingosine Kinase Inhibitor
Egbe Omougui	Predictors of Criminal Behavior: Crime Exposure, Childhood Adversity, Discrimination, Parenting Styles, Socioeconomic Status
Victoria Sulak	Sexual Education Policies and Sexual Risk in Sexual Minority Youth
Titus Echols	The Impact of Distance Learning on Students with Low-Socioeconomic Backgrounds: An Autoethnography Exploration
Kendarius Butler	In silico binding analysis of sphingosine kinase 1 inhibitors for improved oral bioavailability

## SOURCE Finalists

### Poster Presentations:

- **Lydia Rodriguez**  
The Role of Youth Race, Stereotype Acceptance, and Aggression on Perceptions of School Altercations
- **Lydia Rodriguez**; Christopher Brokaw; Stephanie Vasquez Loaeza; Kayla Howard  
Consent Attitudes, Aggression, & Gender on Perceptions of Sexual Assault
- Hunter Cannon; Kathyne Courtney; **Carlos Escoto-Diaz**; Joel Haley; Mackenzie Jenkins; Allyssa Lewis; Caleb Meyerand; Dallas Nivens; Bryan Patterson; Alexis Ramirez; Jordan Rucker; Hallie Smith; Laela Walker; Bethany Wise  
Characterizing the Function of Bacteriophage Cain Genes in Host Mycobacterium smegmatis

### Oral Presentations:

- **Carlos Escoto-Diaz**  
Assessing Effects of Decellularization and Culture Conditions on Small-Diameter Vascular Graft Seeding
- **Eric Walters**  
Visible-Light Mediated Radical Additions of Aldehydes with Organotrifluoroborates
- **McCayla Partain**  
Campus Mental Health Services and Student Needs in COVID-19

## Best in SOURCE

**Carlos Escoto-Diaz**

# Inez Bell Caskey Student Scholars Award

The Caskey Awards are given each year in three categories: Humanities and Arts; Social Sciences; and Science and Mathematics. Award recipients are selected by a faculty committee in a highly competitive process. Winners are chosen based on the quality of their scholarship and the significance of the work to the students' disciplines.

## McNair Scholar Finalists

### Social Sciences

### Science and Mathematics

McCayla Partain  
(Social Work)

Carlos Escoto-Diaz  
(Biology)

Katrina Gainey  
(Social Work)

Brandon Ellison  
(Chemistry, Physics, and  
Geology)

Gabrielle McGee  
(Psychology)

McKenzie Bennett  
(Political Science)

## McNair Scholar Recipients

Carlos Escoto-Diaz  
(Biology)

Katrina Gainey  
(Social Work)

## Celebrating McNair Staff



Graduate Associate, Jasmine Goode, will be graduating with a M.Ed. in Counseling and Development. Executive Support Specialist, Barb Yeager, will be graduating with a B.S. in Healthcare Management. Work Study Student and McNair Scholar, Katrina Gainey, will be graduating with a Bachelors of Social Work. We are so proud of our amazing staff!



Executive Support Specialist, Barb Yeager, received an award from the College of Business for excellence, service, and leadership in Healthcare Management.

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