



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
Winthrop McNair Alumna pursuing her PhD in the Quantitative and Chemical Biology program at Vanderbilt University
(Mentor: Dr. Jason Hurlbert)

Dear Colleagues,

January 28, 2021 is the 35th anniversary of the Challenger explosion that killed Dr. Ronald E. McNair and his fellow astronauts. This week, we reflect on the sacrifices and legacy of Dr. McNair and his family. This legacy includes, but is not limited to, the 187 TRiO McNair programs around the country funded by the U.S. Department of Education “to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society” “through involvement in [undergraduate] research and other scholarly activities” (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/triomcnair/index.html>).

Winthrop’s McNair program was founded in 2009 and is funded to serve 30 new and continuing participants each year. Students can come from any undergraduate degree program at Winthrop and other SC institutions. Two-thirds of each cohort must be first generation college students from low-income families. The majority of Winthrop’s Scholars come from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in graduate education.

So far, we have served 162 outstanding students. All of our students have completed high quality research with expert faculty mentors. That experience has opened doors for them and resulted in impressive outcomes for our program. Almost all of our 2020-21 seniors have applied to graduate programs in the past few months. Offers for interviews, master’s programs, and at least one PhD program are rolling in.

Of the 142 Winthrop McNair alumni not currently enrolled in undergraduate degree programs, 138 (97%) earned at least one bachelor’s degree. Alumni who graduated over a year ago have earned 63 Master’s Degrees, 5 Specialist Degrees, and 13 Doctorates (see below). The expertise and investment of faculty mentors, work of the [Advisory Board](#), dedication of the McNair staff, and support of the administration make this possible. We continue to owe huge debts of gratitude to the folks in Grants, Financial Aid, Records and Registration, Student Services, Campus Housing, Printing Services, Accounts Payable, The Foundation & Alumni Relations, ONCA, Undergraduate Research, Eagle STEM, Honors, ASC, and so many others throughout University College and the institution.

Winthrop McNair Scholars Who Earned Doctorates

#	McNair Scholar	Grad Cohort	Doctoral Degree & Year	McNair Mentor
13	Dr. Keisha Carden	2013-14	PHD Psychology 2020 <i>University of Alabama</i>	Dr. Merry Sleigh
12	Dr. Cecile Gadson	2011-12	PHD Psychology 2020 <i>University of Tennessee</i>	Dr. Tracy Griggs
11	Dr. Muri Mata Howle	2010-11	PHD Educational Leadership 2020 <i>Clemson University</i>	Dr. Joseph Prus
10	Dr. Derion Reid	2012-13	PhD Chemistry 2019 <i>Northeastern University</i>	Dr. Takita Sumter
9	Dr. Michael Capps	2011-12	PHD Mathematics 2019 <i>Colorado State University</i>	Dr. Joe Rusinko
8	Dr. Diamond Melendez	2014-15	PharmD 2019 <i>University of Maryland – Baltimore</i>	Dr. Aaron Hartel
7	Dr. Kristin Ramirez	2015-16	DPT 2019 <i>University of Nebraska Medical Center</i>	Dr. Janet Wojcik
6	Dr. Zachary Collier	2012-13	PHD Research & Evaluation Methodology 2018 <i>University of Florida</i>	Dr. Brad Witzel
5	Dr. Ronald Nelson	2011-12	PHD Chemistry 2017 <i>Wake Forest University</i>	Dr. Takita Sumter
4	Dr. Kevin Mayes	2011-12	MD 2017 <i>University of South Carolina</i>	Dr. Christian Grattan
3	Dr. Ashton Brock	2010-11	PHD Chemistry 2016 <i>University of Virginia</i>	Dr. Takita Sumter
2	Dr. Shantelle Igiozee	2012-13	DPT 2016 <i>University of St. Augustine Health Sciences</i>	Dr. Janet Wojcik
1	Dr. Brittany Stapleton-Livingston	2011-12	DPT 2015 <i>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</i>	Dr. Janet Wojcik Dr. Kim Wilson

We look forward to sharing more good news soon. The [McNair Advisory Board](#) just invited 9 new students to join the program and they are calling for more applications this spring. We are always recruiting undergraduates for future cohorts, so please recommend strong students check out McNair.

For more information about Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, please check out our website (www.winthrop.edu/mcnair).

Thank you for all you do to support McNair Scholars, staff, and faculty.
Cheryl

Cheryl Fortner-Wood, Ph.D.

*Proud Director of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program
Professor of Psychology
Winthrop University*

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers