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## Introduction Preamble: McNair Scholars Program

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## INTRODUCTION

### Ronald Erwin McNair



“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.”

- Ronald McNair

Ronald E. McNair, the second African American to fly in space, was born on October 12, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina. While in junior high, McNair was inspired by a teacher who recognized his potential and encouraged him to pursue his dreams. In 1971, he received his bachelor’s degree magna cum laude in physics. Five years later, he earned a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

After graduating from MIT, McNair joined the Hughes Research Laboratories in California, where he worked on a variety of projects related to laser technology. In 1978, he was selected by NASA as an astronaut candidate and, after completing a yearlong training and evaluation program, became eligible to join future space shuttle flight crews.

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded and crashed into the ocean, tragically ending McNair’s life and the lives of six other astronauts. After his death, Congress approved funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, which supports and promotes the high standards of achievement exemplified by Ronald E. McNair.



## **McNair Scholars Program at UNC**

The University of Northern Colorado McNair Scholars Program is a federally funded TRIO program designed to prepare high-achieving students from first-generation/low-income and/or underrepresented populations for graduate studies. The ultimate goal is to provide students the experience and support necessary to complete doctoral degrees in their chosen disciplines. Components of the program include a one-year research seminar, during which students partner with faculty mentors and complete independent research projects for presentation and publication, and a semester-long senior seminar, designed to assist students in applying to graduate programs. By linking academic excellence and social diversity, the UNC McNair Scholars Program seeks to transform personal and academic goals into a successful future.

### **2014-2015 Program Staff**

Krista Caufman, Director  
Karen Krob, Assistant Director  
Rachel Haug, Graduate Assistant

### **2014-2015 Scholars and Faculty Mentors**

Jared Hudson, English (Creative Writing)  
*Chris Talbot, Ph.D., Gender Studies*

Nakita Jarmon, Audiology & Speech Language Sciences  
*Kathryn Bright, Ph.D., Audiology & Speech Language Sciences*

Tia Kilgore, Audiology & Speech Language Sciences  
*Tina M. Stoodly, Ph.D., Audiology & Speech Language Sciences*

Amanda Landron, Biology  
*Alan Price, M.A., Criminal Justice*

Cassandra Lempka, Human Services  
*Jill Bezyak, Ph.D., CRC, Human Services*

Denise Muro, English & International Affairs  
*Marcus Embry, Ph.D., English*

Jake Sage, Sport & Exercise Science  
*Brent Peterson, Ph.D., Sport & Exercise Science*

Aдриanna Smell, Sociology  
*Josh Packard, Ph.D., Sociology*

*The UNC McNair Scholars Program is funded through a TRIO grant from the U.S. Department of Education PR/Award #P217A120106. For 2014/2015, the UNC McNair Scholars Program received \$252,846 in federal funds, PR/Award Number P217A080039.*



## **Research Project and Competition**

During their first year in the McNair program, students concentrate on completing independent research projects under the guidance of a faculty mentor. The project culminates in oral presentation at a national conference and submission for publication with the *Undergraduate Research Journal (URJ)* at UNC. Prior to publication, a blind review panel of non-McNair faculty and staff evaluates each project for excellence in scholarship and written presentation of the research. Additionally, faculty mentors assist students with revisions and ultimately must approve the project for publication.

During this process, eligible students' projects are also entered into the annual UNC McNair Scholars research competition. Members of the blind review panel independently rank eligible papers as they review them for publication. Writers of the top three papers are awarded scholarships from \$400-\$1,000. Scholarships may only be applied to undergraduate tuition costs at UNC. Therefore, only continuing students are eligible to compete; students whose graduation coincides with the completion of their projects are not eligible.

Thank you to the following faculty and staff for their generous assistance with the research competition and publication process!

### **2014-2015 Research Competition Reviewers and Judges**

Cathy Heise, *Academic Support & Advising*

Susan Hutchinson, *Graduate School & International Admissions*

Sonja Rizzolo, *Graduate School & International Admissions*

Angela Vaughan, *University 101 & Psychology*

### **2014-2015 Research Competition Award Winners**



First Place: Tia Kilgore  
\$1,000 scholarship



Second Place Tie: Jake  
Sage & Jared Hudson  
\$600 scholarships



Third Place: Amanda Landron  
\$400 scholarship

## **The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado**

The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado (URJ) is a fully open access academic journal that strives to recognize the scholarly accomplishments of undergraduates at UNC and stimulate future scholarly activity. The URJ is published electronically three times per year: spring, summer, and fall. One issue each year is designated a special publication featuring the works of UNC's

McNair Scholars. This print issue is representative of the original works available electronically. All URJ publications are available at <http://journals.sfu.ca/urjnc/index.php/urjnc/index>.

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**Undergraduate Research Journal at University of Northern Colorado  
Special McNair Scholars Edition**

*Editor: Hunter Montoya*

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