

Developing Leaders Through Graduate
Education

McNair Scholars Program
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Graduate Assistant Schedule

Oleksandr Komarenko		
Monday	Office hours:	11:00 am-5:00 pm
Tuesday	Office hours:	11:00 am-5:00 pm
Thursday	Staff Meeting: Office hours:	3:00 pm-4:00 pm 4:00 pm-5:00 pm
Friday	Office hours:	8:00 am-5:00 pm
Dodie Miller		
Monday	Office hours:	10:00 am-2:00 pm
Tuesday	Office hours:	10:00 am-2:00 pm
Wednesday	Office hours:	10:00 am-2:00 pm
Thursday	Office hours: Staff Meeting:	12:00 pm-3:00 pm 3:00 pm-4:00 pm
Friday	GRE Verbal & Writing Workshop	9:00 am-11:00 am
Sheila M. Toering		
Wednesday	Office hours:	9:00 am-5:00 pm
Thursday	Office hours: Staff Meeting: Office hours:	9:00 am-3:00 pm 3:00 pm-4:00 pm 4:00 pm-5:00 pm
Friday	Office hours: GRE Math Workshop: Office hours:	9:00 am-11:00 pm 11:00 pm-12:00 pm 1:00 pm-4:00 pm



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For more information on the MSU McNair Scholars Program, call (507) 389-1188 or visit our website: <http://trio.mnsu.edu/mcnair.html>

Commemorating the 20th Challenger Anniversary

In this issue we would like to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the tragic incident that cut short the life of Dr. Ronald McNair and six other brave American astronauts of the STS-51L mission of the space shuttle Challenger. These men and women gave their lives in the spirit of exploration and service to their country, and their sacrifice must not be in vain.

As we continue to open the door to graduate education for

low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students, we draw inspiration from the courage, vision, and determination of the Challenger astronauts. It is up to the new generations of scholars and researchers to continue the work that was so tragically cut short on that fateful January morning in 1986.

The McNair Scholars Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato keeps the legacy of our namesake alive by em-



The Challenger space shuttle crew represented a cross section of the American population in terms of race, gender, geography, background, and religion.

powering the bright minds who will continue carrying the torch of research and exploration.

McNair 2006 Honors

The third Annual McNair Honors Program was held on May 1, 2006 to recognize the achievements of current and graduating Scholars, express appreciation to faculty mentors, and welcome new scholars.

In her farewell speech Afton Enger, a graduating senior and Scholar of the Year, conveyed her appreciation for the opportunities that the McNair Scholars Program has given her. She attributed much of her success to the sup-



Scholar of the Year Afton Enger and her mentor Dr. Anthony Filipovitch, recipient of the Outstanding Mentor Award

port she received from the program and expressed her gratitude to everyone involved with

the McNair Scholars Program at MSU, as well as faculty mentors "who so generously offer their time and guidance."

Reverberating Afton's gratefulness for faculty mentors' contribution to the success of the McNair Program and most importantly the Scholars' academic achievement, each of the mentors was recognized and awarded a *Certificate of Appreciation for Exceptional Service as a Mentor to a McNair Scholar*.

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Welcome 2006 Scholars

The McNair Scholars Program would like to congratulate and proudly accept the 2006 Minnesota State University, Mankato Ronald E. McNair Scholars. (Read about each of the 2006

Scholars on pages 3-5).

Dear McNair Scholars, we are excited to have this opportunity to help you achieve your academic goals and hope you take full advantage of the services

offered by the McNair Scholars Program!

We wish our new Scholars the best with their upcoming summer research and future graduate school plans.

McNair Honors Farewell Speech

I think most Scholars know what I mean when I refer to the adventures of a McNair Scholar, such as...

- Attending the California summer "boot camp" – missing the flight out, and almost missing the flight back, among other things...
- Applying to seven graduate schools...
- ...Having to wait for the outcome from those seven schools
- Studying for the GRE's, taking the numerous practice tests, and memorizing meanings to words you'll never use again in your life
- And finally taking the GRE's

Aside from those minor inconveniences, I have gained so much from being a part of the McNair Program. When I began the program two years ago I had nothing to put on my resume and didn't know what a curriculum vitae was. The McNair Program helped me plan out what I

needed to do to be able to have a resume that I am proud of today.

- I had a great mentor, Dr. Tony Filipovitch, who helped me with my research and offered guidance on my graduate school search
- I've been able to go all over the country to visit schools, which I never would have been able to do on my own
- I made great friendships with other students
- My GPA has gone up quite a bit
- And this fall I will be attending graduate school at one of my top choice schools – even with a little bit of funding!

For all their hard work in helping all of us scholars along the way, I would like to thank the Director of the Program, Michelle Carter, who always has time to help students in any way that she can; Administrative Assistant Marla Bock, who very smoothly helped plan many

events, as well as all of my trips, without incident; all of the faculty mentors who so generously offer their time and guidance; as well as past and present staff of the McNair Program.

To all of the scholars who are graduating, I wish you good luck in your endeavors, and to all of you who are just beginning the McNair Program, I hope that you can take from it what I did – because you will benefit from it tremendously.

I would like to share with you all a quote from Nelson Mandela given at his inauguration speech, borrowed from author Marianne Williamson:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant (and) tal-



Afton Enger, McNair Scholar of the Year, delivering her Farewell Speech

ented...? Actually, who are you not to be? ...Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. ... We are born to make manifest the glory ...that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

tion in the form of honorary award plaques were presented to Afton Enger as the *Scholar of the Year* and Sandy Vue as the *Outstanding Senior*. Special acknowledgment awards went to Rachel Burkard who received the *Outstanding Research Presentation Award*, Jamie Vang who was granted the *Excellence Award*, and Deqa Muhidin who was presented with the *Inspiration Award*.

After honoring the "old guard," Michelle Carter, the Director of the McNair program welcomed the new 2006 Schol-

In addition, special recogni-

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McNair Honors 2006

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Jamie Vang with her mentor, Dr. Patricia Peterson

Special recognition went to Dr. Anthony Filipovitch who was granted an *Outstanding Mentor Award* plaque, and Dr. Fer-

nando Delgado who was presented with a special *Certificate of Appreciation*. Following the faculty mentor recognition, Scholars

were honored. Each of the graduating McNair Scholars was recognized and presented with a

Summer Program Schedule

Date	Time	Room	Purpose
Mon., June 12, 2006	10:00 am – 11:00 am	Armstrong Hall 0219	Pick up summer program materials
Fri., June 16, 2006	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	GRE Prep
	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	Workshops, etc.
Fri., June 23, 2006	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	GRE Prep
	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	Workshops, etc.
Fri., June 30, 2006	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	GRE Prep
	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	Workshops, etc.
Fri., July 7, 2006	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	GRE Prep
	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	Workshops, etc.
Fri., July 14, 2006	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	GRE Prep
	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	Workshops, etc.
Fri., July 21, 2006	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	GRE Prep
	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Wiecking Auditorium	Workshops, etc.

Conferences and Travel Opportunities to Consider:

University of Minnesota Graduate School Campus Visitation—The University of Minnesota campus visit will take place on Tuesday, July 11, 2006. There will be a Graduate School staff presentation about the process of applying for graduate school. Students will meet with faculty to discuss their research, and have a staff-led tour of the campus. The Graduate School website address is <http://www.grad.umn.edu>

12th Annual McNair Summer Research Conference – This conference takes place July 13 – 16, 2006 in Beautiful Niagara Falls, New York!!! They will, once again, have Wonderful Speakers, workshops, oral and poster presentations, the popular Whirlpool Jet Boat Tour, session snacks and beverages, and much

more! In addition, UB's Graduate School has decided to host another "Graduate School Visit" that starts the morning of the first conference day: July 13th. Just go to the conference home page for more information about this Graduate School Visit. Please let our office know if you would like to attend ASAP. Internal Deadline: June 15, 2006
<http://wings.buffalo.edu/vpaa/mcnair/conference/index.htm>

Penn State's McNair Scholars Summer Research Conference – This conference take place July 28 – 30, 2006 at the Penn State Conference Center and Hotel. The keynote speaker at the opening banquet will be Dr. Tina Nova, chief executive officer, president, co-founder

and director of Genoptix, Inc. To learn more about this conference please visit their website at <http://app.outreach.psu.edu/MCNAIRSCHOLARS/> Internal Deadline: June 15, 2006

14th Annual California McNair Scholars Symposium—This four-day conference features the research and academic accomplishments of over 250 McNair Scholars from across the nation. Highlights include a graduate school fair, a dinner-dance and a cruise on the San Francisco Bay. To learn more about this symposium visit the conference website at <http://conferences.ucdavis.edu/mcnair> Internal deadline: June 22, 2006

Congratulations!

McNair Scholar **Gabriel Afolayan** was elected as the Student Body President!

Other Congratulations

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McNair Scholar **Tonya Slager** (graduated in December 2005)

will be pursuing a Master's degree at University of Minnesota, Duluth. She also received the first Art Pulford Memorial Scholarship.



McNair Scholar **Sandy Vue** (graduated in May 2006) has been accepted into Southwest

University in Chongqing, China. She will begin her studies in the fall of 2006. Although Sandy was accepted into Portland State University's graduate program in Anthropology, she decided to defer graduate school in order to study and work in China for a year. She plans to pursue a master's degree in Chinese or Asian Studies upon returning to the United States.

Introducing 2006 Scholars *Continued from page 3*

the world around him. He quickly became fond of math and science as they explained the reasons behind natural phenomena and events. In his hometown of Negele Borano, Ethiopia Waaqo went to school where, despite the shortage of resources, he tried learning as much as he could from the experiments he could attempt.

At the community college he attended in the US, Waaqo learned about DNA and cloning research. This, and especially the work of Rosalind Franklin, inspired him to engage in experiments. Once at MSU, Waaqo was delighted to have been given an opportunity to design and conduct his own experiments in microbiology, immunology, and parasitology, areas in which he intends to continue his research.



Jimmie Gunn

Jimmie was born and grew up in a small town on the outskirts of Gainesville, Florida. His passion for football helped him stay out of trouble and on track in school. After high school he attended a community college where he studied hard and played football. His dedication was recognized when he received the Academic All American Award for his achievements.

After coming to MSU Jimmie continued his hard work at school and in sports. He became the captain of the football team, was recognized with the Maver-

ick Achievement award, and received other regional and local awards and honors.

Jimmie's goals are to continue on with his education up to the doctoral level. His interests lie in the field of Corrections, especially juvenile crime prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile offenders. His goal is to dissolve the stigma associated with youth from poverty. He wants to go back to the community as a leader and a role model who through his education, possesses the means to help youngsters develop as valuable citizens and members of the society.

Sharon Kvamme

A native of Brooklyn Park, MN, Sharon will be the only female in her graduating class in Mechanical Engineering. She is passionate about her field of study and has worked on projects at MSU researching the University's heating and cooling systems. She is determined to continue her research in graduate school, and is considering going all the way and getting her doctorate someday. As a woman who succeeded in sciences, she dreams to be an inspiration for other girls to pursue science and engineering careers.



Tashina LaRocque

Tashina comes from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in North Dakota. She is a mother of two beautiful chil-

dren, and is dedicated to her education. Before coming to MSU Tashina attended the Turtle Mountain Community College and the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. She draws her inspiration from the life story of her grandma, who was the first in the family to go to college and become a nurse at the reservation hospital at the age of forty five. She also wants to be a good role model for her children.

Tashina believes in overcoming adversity through higher education and is devoted to becoming a licensed elementary education teacher and going to graduate school. Her academic passions are found in curriculum development and lesson writing. Tashina would like to focus on teaching important issues including multicultural and environmental issues, as well as health and wellness.

Yusuf Mohamed

Yusuf's dream is to become a surgeon and researcher. Currently he is a pre-med student at MSU and is working to continue his education in medical school.

One of ten children in his family, Yusuf has had to face and overcome many hardships. With of the civil war ravaging his home Somalia, his family had to flee their home. They spent nearly a decade in refugee camps in which he could not even dream of going to school. Instead of a happy childhood, filled with joy of learning, he grew up in the world full of violence and corruption.

Eventually, in 1998, he and his family arrived in the United States as refugees. Without any knowledge of English or previ-

ous educational experience, Yusuf began his education in America. He found the power to overcome these and other challenges and graduated high school at the same time as his American schoolmates at age 17.

Lucky Muhammad

A political science major, Lucky is determined to study the emotional effects of war on children. In graduate school she intends to study conflict resolution, human rights, and political psychology. Having witnessed violence in Somalia's civil war and personal loss at a young age, Lucky is passionate about improving the lives of children across the globe. Especially those children who suffer because of the evil and violence brought to their world by adults through conflicts and wars.

Upon completing her graduate studies, Lucky dreams to work for the benefit of the children of the world through the United Nations as the main agent of change. Contrary to common stereotypes, viewing race, gender, and religion as advantages in her quest, Lucky wants to help others and prevent other children from having to relive the horrors she and many other children had to go through.



Joshua Randall

A first generation college student, Joshua grew up Mankato

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Introducing 2006 Scholars *Continued from page 4*

and went to school in New Ulm. In high school he demonstrated determination and dedication in academics and as an athlete.

An ambitious and hard working student, Josh, in addition to his Speech Communication and Management double major, is working on minors in Business Administration and Marketing. An active participant of the Maverick Forensics, Joshua has participated in various events at regional and national competitions, and has presented at the 2005 National Communication Association conference. In addition, Joshua was recognized as the Top Presenter in his section at the Undergraduate Research Conference and is a recipient of the Burt and Patsy Meisel Scholarship.

Joshua believes that education is the answer and is determined to continue his studies in organizational communication at the graduate level. Some of his re-

search interests include employee motivation and the impact public speaking makes on society.

Ultimately, upon completing his PhD, Joshua wants to become a university professor, speech team coach, and a family man.



Jonathan Shaw

Jonathan, having experienced hardship and poverty first hand, has learned to value education. Prior to coming to MSU he attended a community college, where he got an Associate in Arts degree with a focus in social science. His academic and professional goals include com-

pleting his undergraduate degree in sociology and corrections, and continuing on to graduate studies. Jonathan believes that graduate studies will provide him the necessary education and experience to become a successful juvenile probation officer. In addition, as ways to give back to the community and to assist other minority students in planning and organizing their quest for academic success, Jonathan aspires to become involved with developing non-profit juvenile transition programs and teaching.



Khou Yang

Having emigrated from Laos

at the age of five, Khou grew up in the projects in St. Paul and Oakdale. Her family was very poor and, because of that, when she started middle school she had low self esteem. Through persistence and hard work leading to academic achievement Khou overcame these issues.

After high school her dedication to education led Khou to attend MSU. After extensive and careful consideration she found her major and her passion – cultural psychology and counseling. She is also working on her minors in biology and gerontology.

Khou's ultimate goal is to finish graduate school and become a counselor. She dreams of helping those who need assistance from a counseling psychologist in her community.

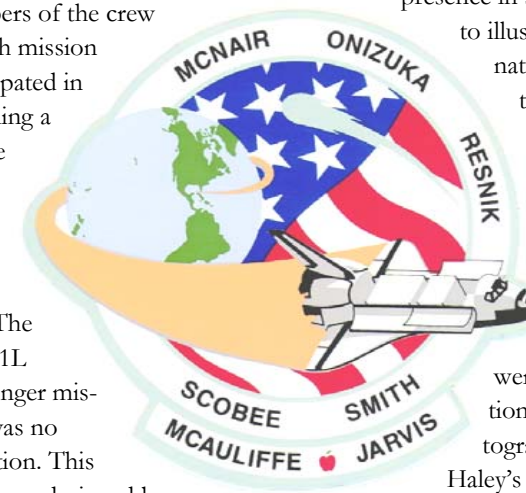
Challenger Mission STS-51L

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the tragic Challenger incident. Why was the craft named "Challenger?" What was the mission of that fateful January flight designated STS-51L? For what cause did the crew so courageously put their lives in danger?

Space Shuttle orbiter Challenger was named after the British Naval research vessel HMS Challenger that sailed the Atlantic and Pacific oceans during the 1870s. The Apollo 17 lunar module also carried the name of Challenger. Like its historic predecessors, Challenger and her crews made significant scientific contributions in the spirit of exploration.

As it had become customary for NASA missions by 1986, all members of the crew of each mission participated in designing a unique insignia for its mission. The STS-51L Challenger mission was no exception. This patch was designed by the seven crew members of the shuttle Challenger to represent their mission goals and duties.

The shuttle is depicted launch-



ing from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida and encircling the planet to signify America's presence in space and to illustrate the nation's drive to explore the space frontier. Among duties of this mission were observation and photography of Haley's Comet, backdropped against the U.S. flag in the insignia; the launch of a communications satellite, represented by the open

cargo doors of the shuttle; and conducting a variety of scientific experiments, including those involved with the Teacher in Space Project. The names of each of the crewmembers encircle the scene. The name of the first teacher in space, Sharon Christa McAuliffe is followed by a symbolic apple.

Ronald E. McNair, the second African-American to venture into space in 1984, was one of three mission specialists aboard the Challenger in 1986. McNair, who earned a Ph.D in physics from MIT, was a husband and father of two children. Although the STS-51L Mission was not McNair's first opportunity in space, it proved to be his last.

McNair 2006 Honors

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McNair Scholar Sunnie McCalla, her mentor Dr. John Krenz, McNair Scholars Director Michelle Carter, and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Scott Olson.

ars. In her speech Michelle encouraged them to not only take advantage of the opportunities offered by the McNair Scholars Program at MSU, but also to “take the initiative to fully explore the opportunities” in the University as a whole. “Believe that you are fully equipped to be successful and commit to your academic goals,” Michelle charged. She concluded with these stirring words, “I urge you to pursue excellence in everything you do. Distinguish yourselves whenever the opportunity presents itself. But most importantly, I urge you to lift others as you climb.”

◀ On the left: Dr. Scott Olson saves the day by providing an alternative location when the fire alarm went off during the middle of our honor’s program. Without a moment’s hesitation, Dr. Olson suggested that we move the remainder of the honor’s program to the 3rd floor of the administration building.

Graduate Admissions: Timeline for Success

SUMMER PRIOR TO YOUR SENIOR YEAR

1. Research prospective graduate programs.
2. Develop a list of 6 to 10 graduate programs.

SENIOR YEAR

Fall Semester

1. Visit graduate programs and attend McNair or professional conferences.

September

1. Contact faculty members to write recommendations for you. Ask your research mentor for a recommendation.

2. Work on a draft personal statement that will later be tailored to each graduate program.
3. Identify external sources of graduate funding, noting their deadlines.

October

1. Take the GRE no later than mid-October.
2. Ask your mentor and McNair staff to review your personal statement. Make revisions as necessary.

November

1. Complete applications with November or December dead-

lines. Use the checklist that will be provided by the McNair Scholars Program.

2. Apply for external funding sources; many will have deadlines between November 1 and January 1.

December

1. Request official transcripts from all colleges attended.
2. Complete applications with January deadlines.

January

1. Call the departments to which you have applied to be sure that all applications are complete.

2. Apply for financial aid, assistantships and fellowships at your prospective graduate school(s). Fill out your FAFSA after filing your taxes.

March to April

1. Schools will probably notify you about your admissions status. (Accepted, Provisionally Accepted, Rejected, or Wait-listed).
2. Graduate programs will make financial offers (Assistantships and Fellowships).
3. Some institutions may request your decision by April 15.

Other Congratulations



McNair Scholar Afton Enger (graduated in May 2006) will be pursuing a

Master of Community and Regional Planning at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. She also was accepted into University of California, Irvine,

University of Delaware, and Minnesota State University, Mankato.



McNair Scholar Joseph Mohrfeld (graduated in May

2005) will be pursuing a Master’s degree in Communication Studies at Colorado State University.

He was also accepted by the University of Montana.



McNair Scholar Mustafa Mohamed (graduated in Fall 2005) will be pursuing a Mas-

ter’s degree in Social Work at the University of Minnesota.

McNair Scholar Tonya Phillips

(graduated in December 2005) will be pursuing a Master’s degree in Corrections at MSU.

McNair Scholar Mohamed Salad

(graduated in May 2006 from St. Cloud State University) was accepted into University of Minnesota’s school of Dentistry and will be attending there.

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A Note from the Director



Michelle Carter, Director

As we prepare to embark upon this summer’s research component, I would like to encourage the McNair Scholars

to maximize this summer research experience. Although the McNair program requires you to conduct research and participate in workshops, I am suggesting that you develop a short-term strategic plan. Please consider the following elements as you craft a draft document:

Your personal vision:

Where do you see yourself in the future? Where are you heading? Your vision should be broader than “preparing to ob-

tain a doctoral degree.” Attempt to identify your purpose and your passion.

Your mission

Why are you participating in this summer program? What role does this summer program play in your vision?

Goals:

Set achievable goals for the summer program. Create a timeline and/or deadline for each goal. Example: I will de-

velop a list of my top 6 prospective graduate programs by the end of the summer.

Strategies:

What methods will you utilize to accomplish your goals? Example: I will develop a strong relationship with my mentor so that she will be well-equipped to write a meaningful letter of recommendation. Identify the professional, emotional and financial resources that are available to you.

Introducing 2006 Scholars

Fatah Ahmed

Originally from Somalia, Fatah is the youngest child in a family of nine. Before coming to the United States she lived in Nairobi after her family fled to Kenya to avoid the violence of the Somali civil war.

Fatah’s parents worked hard to raise and educate their children, but the highest level of education they could afford for them was high school. In the United States new opportunities opened up for Fatah, however.

Despite her limited English skills, Fatah began attending high school upon arrival in the US. At first she struggled with the language, but managed to overcome these difficulties and successfully graduate.

After high school Fatah enrolled at MSU. She dreams of continuing her education at the graduate level, ultimately striving to receive a Doctor of Nursing degree. It is very important to Fatah to succeed in college now and later in graduate school, as

she is the first member of her family to attend college.

three of her younger siblings.

Yessica is devoted to her education. From her younger years she was often the person her

cause of empowering women in the fight against violence and abuse. She aspires to help people in Latin America in general, and particularly in her country of origin, Nicaragua. Her goals include continuing her education through the Master’s and PhD levels, focusing her studies and research in the fields of human rights and community organization. She wants to be a leader and inspire other women to stand up for themselves. Recently she studied abroad in her country of origin, Nicaragua, where she took classes and worked in a domestic abuse shelter.



Three new scholars Lucky Muhammad, Sharon Kvamme, and Yessica Bonfil

Yessica Bonfil

Yessica is determined to pursue a doctoral degree in Psychology. Her ultimate goal is to help and mentor younger people. Second oldest child in her family of five kids, Yessica grew up to become a determined and outgoing go-getter. As one of the oldest children she had to help raise

family and members of her community asked for help, particularly with translating. Prior to coming to MSU Yessica attended Inver Hills Community College where she received her Associate in Arts degree.

Tanisha Brown

Tanisha is dedicated to the

Waaqo Daddacha

Waaqo’s interests are spread in the fields of medicine, biology, and medical technology. Having lived in the United States only since 2001, Waaqo has been dedicated to his education. Once in the US he enrolled at a community college and soon after transferred to MSU to study medicine and biology.

From a young age Waaqo developed a keen curiosity about

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