

Linda Hood Talbott: Making Student Dreams a Reality

One of Kansas City's most revered philanthropists, Linda Hood Talbott, Ph.D., has chosen to leave her estate to the Honors College. The \$1 million gift will endow the dean's position. An endowed position provides a steady flow of funding for the dean to use at his/her discretion for the benefit of honors students. In addition to the estate commitment, Linda endowed the first scholarship for Honors College students. She meets regularly with the two current recipients of the scholarship, offering mentoring and encouragement.

Senior LeAnna Cates was one of the first recipients of the Linda H. and Thomas H. Talbott Honors College Scholarship.

"Dr. Talbott constantly pushes me to be my best," LeAnna says. "Her reassuring advice and consistent support have allowed me to perform at a level that was not possible before."

LeAnna, who plans to become a medical scientist, interned as a researcher at Boston University this summer. She says she would not have had the financial resources for the internship without the Talbott Scholarship.

"She has been both a mentor and a strong female example for me in my role as editor-in-chief of the UMKC undergraduate research journal (*Lucerna*) and as a leader on campus," LeAnna says. "She has instilled in me the importance of community, philanthropy and leadership."

Once an honors student, Linda understands its benefits to UMKC and Kansas City.

"Whatever their ultimate career goals, the broad liberal education provided by the Honors College will help students of all majors learn to think analytically, write clearly, speak and express themselves persuasively, compare and contrast cultures, communicate with diverse audiences, research to learn what they don't know, and — best of all for a satisfying life and vocation — how to continually learn and enjoy learning throughout their lives."

In the 50-plus years since her graduation, Linda has been a consistent champion of the university. After earning three degrees from UMKC, including her doctorate, she became the university's first director of development. Her first project was raising money for a new performing arts center. The performing arts were dispersed throughout 13 locations at the time. The initial goal was \$14 million. Her team raised \$20 million.

Linda spent her career working in fundraising, eventually founding her own consulting firm,

Talbott & Associates. She was honored for her leadership by three U.S. presidents and several international organizations.

"We are tremendously grateful for Linda's continued support as a trusted advisor to our faculty, staff and students," says Dean Jim McKusick.

Look for Linda at one of this year's Honors College events, where she will be wearing a big, supportive smile.



Linda Talbott, Ph.D., joined students for lunch in the Oak Street Residence Hall courtyard on a sunny spring day. LeAnna Cates, front row, center, organized the lunch in honor of her mentor and benefactor.



National Merit Scholar Maria Gentry could have gone to college anywhere — she chose UMKC because she was offered a Trustees' Scholarship. Now a senior in the Honors College, Maria is thriving in academics and as a campus leader.

“Being able to earn my degrees without any debt has allowed me to pursue my dream of medical school. I have been free to follow my passions without the stress of financing my education.

- Maria Gentry, Trustees' Scholar, Honors College Class of 2017

If you're interested in contributing to UMKC scholarships or the Honors College, contact:

Dean Jim McKusick
816-235-5569
honors@umkc.edu



UMKC Foundation
816-235-5778
contact@umkcfoundation.org

Letter from the Dean

We begin the year with enthusiasm and eager anticipation. Approximately 300 students will participate in honors courses and community activities this year – a 50 percent increase since last



fall. This means more diversity of thought and more exceptional leadership in and out of our classrooms. We plan to engage 600 students in the Honors College experience by 2020. The success of our students and graduates serves as a magnet for highly motivated students. Achievements and awards put facts behind our promises. In April, junior Elizabeth Porto won the prize for best poster in STEM research at the Great Plains Honors Council Conference. Several other students also presented at the conference,

including Maria Gentry. Maria was named Trustees' Scholar of the Year this spring, and she has a prestigious internship at the Stowers Institute for Medical Research. Alumna Hannah Lofthus made us proud when she received the 2016 Ryan Award, a national award for an urban school principal who led significant improvements in student achievement. Hannah has been chief executive officer of the Kauffman School, a Kansas City charter school, since its founding in 2011. The Missouri Charter Public School Association named the Kauffman School the Missouri Charter School of the Year last fall. Our honors students also volunteer at the school as part of their community service. In other exciting news, the Honors College has a new home on the fourth floor of Cherry Hall, right next to the Oak Street Residence Hall and its honors living-learning community. The university allocated \$1.2 million for renovation of Cherry Hall, a former residence hall. It's now a modern space housing several academic departments. The Honors College floor includes a study lounge and spacious,

bright offices for meetings with our academic advisor and faculty. We invite you to come visit us soon! Lastly, please join me in welcoming Stephen Christ, Ph.D., the newest Honors College faculty member. Dr. Christ moved to Kansas City for the opportunity to work with honors students. He earned his doctorate in sociology from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2015. Last year, he taught at Truman State University. Dr. Christ encourages students to participate in learning and get excited about social science! His research focuses on how Mexican immigrants form their identities as Mexican Americans. All of our Honors College faculty members are committed to bringing out the best in students. We believe in the power of a supportive community of intellectual peers. Together, we are developing future leaders for Kansas City and beyond.

Dean Jim McKusick
UMKC Honors College

Focused on Success: 2016 Graduates



Derick Letman
After the last of his four children left home, Derick Letman decided to finish his college education. After graduating with university honors, Derick is now pursuing a master's in social work at UMKC. He plans to attend law school after graduation with the intent to practice family and health-care law. Currently a substance abuse counselor, Derick already has a solid foundation for achieving his goal — to build a long-term treatment center in Kansas City for people struggling with substance abuse. An inspiration to us all, Derick worked two jobs while studying full-time. On top of all that, he reviewed and submitted articles to the Honors College's undergraduate research journal, *Lucerna*.



Jordan Miles
Honored as one of the top 20 graduating seniors for academics and volunteerism, Jordan Miles credits the Honors College for her success at UMKC. "The Honors College gave me the confidence to go for my goals and really work hard to achieve those goals of getting into Wash U and becoming a physical therapist one day," Jordan says. "Without the Honors College, I don't know where I would be today." While studying hard to get into physical therapy school, Jordan devoted countless hours to community service. As president of Alpha Delta Pi, she led numerous community service projects. One event she organized, a basketball tournament fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House, raised \$4,000.



Cole Payne and Hannah Huhman
Cole and Hannah met on their first day on campus. They have been together ever since. Both geology majors (Hannah also majored in physics), the couple is ready to take on the Arctic as graduate students at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Fans of outdoor adventure, they hiked the entire John Muir Trail in California — a two-week trip — after graduation. Their academic interests go well with their hobbies. Hannah will use her geology and physics expertise to study glaciers. She hopes to work in a lab after receiving her master's degree. Cole will study remote sensing and satellite imaging, a continuation of his work at UMKC.

Students in Action



Chelsea Wheeler '18
As a participant in the Disney College Program, Chelsea dresses in a Victorian costume and goes to work at the Grand Floridian Hotel in Orlando. Then she attends seminars on public relations and leadership taught by Disney College Program alumni. For her next step toward a career in editing and PR, the Centralia, Mo. native plans to apply for a Disney internship.



Elizabeth Porto '17
Elizabeth crushed the competition at the 2016 Great Plains Honors Council Conference at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Ark. Porto won the award for best STEM poster for student presenters with more than 60 credits completed. Porto is pursuing majors in biology and chemistry. She says her favorite part of being in the Honors College is meeting students from across all disciplines.



Ben Gans '19
When Ben arrived at UMKC, he was pumped up about rowing. No team? No equipment? No problem. Ben created the UMKC Crew team, made up of men and women who want to get a great workout and build community. The team practices at Wyandotte County Lake in Kansas City, Kan., and on the Kansas River. The Roos crew takes part in intercollegiate regattas throughout the region. Dean Jim McKusick is the faculty advisor.



Abigail Brown '18
Abigail won first place in the UMKC Social Justice Scholars Awards for her paper, "Childhood Obesity: An Environmental Divide." The event was created to support student and faculty mentorship through scholarship impacting the community. Abigail is a Trustees' Scholar from Washington, Mo.

Summer Abroad: Time to Grow

From internships to study abroad, Honors College students expand their horizons at every opportunity. Four honors students spent six weeks in Buenos Aires, Argentina, this summer. Drew Cox, Zach Dull, Sophie Genovese and Claire Tadokoro studied Spanish at the University of Belgrano. Matthew Edwards, a UMKC Spanish professor, led the trip with a total of 13 UMKC students participating.

Drew, who is double majoring in biology and Spanish, plans to attend medical school and practice family medicine or pediatrics. While in Buenos Aires he shadowed at a hospital.

“Argentina is facing the issue that they’re the only country in the region with free health care,” Drew observes. “People come to their hospitals from all over for treatment.”

Students learned about Argentinian culture by staying with a host family.

“Everything is later there,” Drew says. “They eat dinner at 9:30 or 10:00.”

Drew has studied Spanish since his freshman year of high school. He backpacked through Ecuador with his high school Spanish teacher for his first study abroad experience. In Buenos Aires, he and the others studied Spanish five hours a day. Then they explored the city. Drew was interested in the Italian influence from colonial days.

The six-week trip to Argentina ended with a 22-hour bumpy bus ride to the other side of the country. Students visited Salta, where many people are of Andean heritage. The Spanish colonized Salta in 1582.

“It was a lot different there,” Drew notes.

A native of Joplin, Mo., Drew decided to double major after taking a Latin studies course his first semester at UMKC. He interned with the Juntos Center for Advancing Latino Health at the University of Kansas Medical Center last year. This year, he will intern at a clinic where about half of the patients speak Spanish, and he will volunteer as an interpreter at another clinic.

“I think there’s definitely a barrier to care when a physician can’t communicate with his patients,” Drew says. “I would like to practice preventative medicine, and speaking Spanish will help.”

Drew is president of the UMKC Latin American Student Organization and a resident assistant. He says the best advice he

has received from a professor is, “Don’t pass up any opportunities — big or small — that come your way.”

Students interested in studying abroad can learn more by contacting the International Academic Programs office. The office has study abroad information sessions every Tuesday and Friday in the Atterbury Student Success Center.



UMKC students Gabby Penaflo, Claire Tadokoro and Drew Cox visited Argentina’s sites this summer.

Ready to see the world?

Studying abroad is an enriching experience unlike any other. Visit info.umkc.edu/international and check out upcoming Honors College trips at honors.umkc.edu.

Make Plans to Study Abroad in Scotland

July 1-29, 2017

Spend four weeks with professors Henrietta Rix Wood and Laurie Ellinghausen immersed in Scottish history, literature and culture.

Earn up to six honors credits on the trip — one Anchor 3 course and one Discourse H300 course. Contact our office to learn how you can earn one of 10 Honors College Study Abroad Scholarships valued at \$2,000 for this trip.