



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MORTAR BOARD FELLOWS NAMED FOR 2016-2017

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Mortar Board National Foundation proudly announces that \$40,000 has been awarded to eight exceptional Mortar Board members to support their graduate education during the 2016-2017 academic year. Mortar Board National Foundation president, Denise Rode, Ed.D., observed, “The Mortar Board National Foundation is proud to contribute to the success of these eight outstanding members. We applaud their accomplishments, and look forward to the contributions they will make in the fields of medicine, law, dentistry, neuroscience, information science and technology, and structural engineering.”

The Mortar Board National Foundation (MBNF) has endowed funds to support Mortar Board members’ graduate education. Since 1942, nearly \$850,000 has been given to members via a highly-competitive selection. Once able to support the complete cost of a graduate degree, the Mortar Board fellowship now is a help to members who pursue their advanced degrees. There were 71 applications this year; eight members were selected and sketches of each follow.

Thomas Kim, of Pacific Lutheran University was named the Barbara Cook Fellow. He was president of the Black & Gold chapter and completed undergraduate work in mathematical economics (B.S.) and psychology (B.A.), both with a 4.00. He is pursuing a J.D. at the Sandra Day O’Connor School of Law at Arizona State University and says, “My passion for the immigrant community was best expressed by serving as the very first president of the 231st chapter of Mortar Board. During my chapter’s very first full academic year, I conceptualized and established a weekly tutoring program that strengthened STEM enrichment programs in seven local elementary, middle and high schools by connecting top tier PLU students to underrepresented Hispanic students. With Pacific Lutheran University’s 30+ top senior students tutoring and emphasizing scholarship, leadership, and service on a weekly basis, many Hispanic

students experienced an authentic taste of exceptional STEM education and reported feeling more confident.

The Ellen North Dunlap Fellow is Brooke Denise Walterscheid of Texas Tech University's Forum chapter. She is pursuing an M.B.A., Ph.D. and M.D. at the Texas Tech University Rawls College of Business and the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine. Her undergraduate work was in cell and molecular biology with a 3.86 GPA. She explains her passion for specialty care in rural and underserved areas, "I was absolutely taken aback by what I saw, or rather, did not see, on my first trip traveling through West Texas to Lubbock. Miles and miles of desolation and hours between towns left me wondering, "Who is taking care of these people? ... I knew that I had been called to serve, and my vocation is to be a physician."

Mallory Kathryn Smith of Hope College has a Mortar Board Fellowship earned after stellar undergraduate work in chemistry. She is seeking an M.D. from Wayne State University School of Medicine and says, "I have learned that one does not always need to journey past the borders of the United States to see the devastations associated with inadequate healthcare. Many in Detroit are arguably as medically underserved as those in developing nations. I am a patient education coordinator at a student-run free clinic, assisting in the care of patients in need of medical attention for diabetes, hypertension and other conditions. I attend clinic every other weekend with fellow altruistic classmates to provide free healthcare to these patients, an activity that I am passionate about continuing for the rest of my career."

Mortar Board Fellow Abigail Christine Burrus is a Salem College member with a 3.99 in biology and biological sciences. As she works on her Ph.D., she will focus on developing answers to phylogenetic and developmental evolutionary questions regarding plant systematics and vascular plant development through research that involves historical collections.

Mortar Board Diane Selby Fellow Lauren Katharine Wichman was vice president of the Lux chapter at Case Western Reserve University. After earning her B.A. in chemistry with 3.885, she is working towards an M.D. degree. She is

studying the effects that long noncoding RNAs (lncRNAs) have on mouse spermatogenesis. LncRNAs are a type of RNA molecule that regulates gene expression in mammals.

Mortar Board Ruth Weimer Mount Fellow Kristen Marie Lear graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and was secretary of the Monnett chapter. She completed her B.A. in zoology with a 3.92 and is working on her Ph.D. in integrative conservation and forestry and natural resources at the University of Georgia. She describes how her work stemmed from a Theory to Practice Grant from Ohio Wesleyan to pursue my passion for bats by developing. She says, "For my project I built and installed 18 bat houses of two different designs and monitored the houses for activity with a thermal imaging camera, ... [and now] at the University of Georgia I am conducting interdisciplinary research that integrates both the natural and social sciences for the conservation of an endangered pollinating bat species.

Mortar Board Zelma Patchin-Oklahoma State/ Washington State Fellow

Garrett Thomas Oberst graduated from Butler University with a 3.94 in chemistry. He is pursuing an M.D. and says, "One of my main personal goals is to start a scholarship program for disadvantaged youth to receive scholarships to pay for college. Through working with the US Dream Academy and other organizations, I have seen that many children are set up to fail. I would love to play a part in changing the life of a child and helping them improve their condition. Additionally, I would like to take my medical knowledge abroad. In Africa, it costs about a dollar to administer a vaccine. A vaccine could not only save someone's life, but also give him or her the strength needed to attend school and take care of their families."

Mortar Board Ramier-Coleman Fellow Joycelyn Kay Yip holds her biomedical engineering degree from the University of Southern California and is now pursuing an M.S. in mechanical engineering - materials science and a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering - cell and tissue engineering also at USC. Study abroad in Brisbane working with the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology allowed her to help develop microprojection array technology, a method of vaccine delivery and disease detection. Her independent goals

involved finding an ideal material for these devices and investigating the effects of heat treatment on the functional properties of polycarbonate needles. She says, "My research culminated in a report as well as a poster and presentation at a local research symposium, in which I won the UQ Advantage Award. The lab has now started using polycarbonate because it has a lower replication error and can be manipulated to penetrate 18.37 μ m deeper into skin than untreated silicon. Working on such a meaningful and successful project in a city so far from home truly opened my eyes to the global health problems currently impacting our species. It is incredible how similar the biomedical goals are across countries. I hope to conduct a piece of my thesis work in Europe so that I can further broaden my connections as well as international mindset."