Stephen Dorner, our new Mitchell Scholar!

For the second consecutive year, an Honors student has been awarded the prestigious George J. Mitchell Postgraduate Scholarship. Named in honor of the former U.S. senator, it is a nationally competitive fellowship sponsored by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance to support one year of graduate study in Ireland. Stephen Dorner, from Alpharetta, who will graduate this spring with majors in microbiology and environmental health sciences, is one of only nine Mitchell Scholars selected this year from more than 150 colleges and universities across the nation. “I am thrilled for Stephen, who richly deserves this recognition,” said Dr. David S. Williams, director of the Honors Program. “Stephen took full advantage of all that the Honors Program provides and it has been very rewarding to watch his development as a scholar and leader.”

During the summer of 2008, Stephen worked in health clinics in Costa Rica and Nicaragua through the Honors International Scholarship Program. He then participated in undergraduate research in Peru with Dr. Luke Naheer, focusing on the pulmonary health effects of wood burning stoves. Stephen is co-author of two pending publications about this research. After returning to Athens that fall, Stephen founded UGA Without Borders, a student organization that addresses public health and economic development challenges facing underserved local and global communities. Through the Honors Program’s Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO), Stephen also worked as an undergraduate researcher with Dr. Mary Alice Smith on the low-dose response of pregnant guinea pigs to Listeria monocytogenes, a food-borne pathogen that causes stillbirths and spontaneous abortions in humans. Their research has provided valuable answers to questions concerning food safety policy.

Stephen continued his efforts to address health issues, yet in a much different way, during the summer of 2009. Through the Honors in Washington Internship Program, Stephen worked in the office of Representative Hank Johnson, where he wrote an amendment to health reform legislation passed by the House of Representatives (HP 3200). The amendment proposed funding for neglected parasitic diseases that disproportionately impact impoverished communities. Stephen credits this internship experience with defining his future goals and plans. He wants to work to integrate public health with development practice and policy to overcome physical and socioeconomic burdens, and thus elevate the baseline of health around the world.

To get a feel for what drives Stephen, this paragraph from his recent Amazing Student profile on the UGA website captures it all: “If I could share an afternoon with anyone, I would love to share it with my nieces and nephew. Children have an incredible way of reminding you what’s important in life and keeping your feet firm on the ground. They are my motivation as I work to protect their health and well-being, my conscience as I strive to be a good role model, and my inspiration as I feed off of their constant joy and energy. As adults, we have an incredible responsibility to impart the knowledge we learn both in and out of the classroom to future generations so that they, too, may become active members of the global community. An afternoon with my nieces and nephew—whether playing princess, cars or reading a book—is always an afternoon well spent.”
Modeling Success

Darryl Tricksey, an Honors student from Atlanta, was sold on UGA when he received the news that he had been awarded the CURO Apprenticeship, because he liked the idea of doing undergraduate research work as soon as he arrived on campus. Darryl has now conducted research under the guidance of Dr. Larry Nackerud in the School of Social Work and with Dr. Victoria Plaut of the psychology department in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. In May 2008, Darryl traveled to Costa Rica to attend the CURO International Symposium, where he presented his research project titled “African-American Models of Success.” Following that experience, he interned at Georgia Power in Atlanta, where he conducted heat stress and sound level readings to assess compliance with OHSA standards. On campus, he has worked as an orientation leader and is an active member of Kappa Alpha Psi, through which he was awarded the Guy Levis Grant, the highest undergraduate award given in the fraternity for meritorious service and campus leadership. Last summer, Darryl traveled to New York to participate in the Greater New York Hospital Association’s Summer Enrichment Program, where he worked in a pulmonary hypertension clinic and also in infection control at St. Luke’s Hospital. After graduating this May, Darryl will participate in a Spanish immersion program before he attends medical school.

Dr. Pamela Kleiber Receives Fulfilling the Dream Award

In January, Dr. Pamela Kleiber was awarded a President’s Fulfilling the Dream Award at the seventh annual Freedom Breakfast honoring the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Through her coordination of CURO programming, Dr. Kleiber has served an inclusive community of young scholars who represent diverse fields of study, geographic regions, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, she has an extensive record of creating civil and deliberative conversations in the classroom, as well as in the larger community, on national and international issues such as racial and ethnic tension, poverty, and freedom of speech.

The President’s Fulfilling the Dream Awards are given annually to recognize exemplary work toward achieving Dr. King’s dream of equality and inclusion. Recipients are chosen by a committee composed of representatives from UGA and the Athens-Clarke County government and school district, which also co-sponsors the Freedom Breakfast with the university.
Univeristy of Georgia undergraduates do not have to wait until graduate school to engage in inquiry-based research endeavors guided by faculty members. For almost a decade now, first-year and second-year UGA students have been involved in these activities as participants in the CURO Apprentice Program. Through these faculty-mentor research partnerships, thirty CURO Apprentices are currently working on a variety of projects in disciplines ranging from infectious diseases and kinesiology to music and international affairs. “Every year, CURO Apprentices are welcomed into research environments by renowned faculty research mentors,” said Dr. Pamela Kleiber, associate director of the Honors Program. “When we put high-achieving students together with top faculty researchers, the learning outcomes for the students are illustrated by their success in earning scholarships and admission to top graduate and professional schools.”

First-year student Oluremi Ojo said that the program has given her the opportunity to focus on a subject that is very personal to her. Working under the guidance of infectious diseases professor Dr. David Peterson, she is investigating the genetic behavior of a particular strain of a mosquito-transmitted parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum*, which attaches to the placenta in pregnant women and causes malaria. “My father is from Nigeria, a malaria-stricken part of the world, and my uncle was diagnosed with malaria a few years ago,” said Remi, who is from Stone Mountain and is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in biological sciences. “When I read about Dr. Peterson’s research, I was immediately interested because I knew it would help me understand this disease. I am learning more than I ever could in a classroom.” Second-year apprentice Donny Snyder said that the insider’s perspective in a particular field of research also helps to determine what kind of career path to pursue. He is studying different types of campaign influences during presidential elections with political science professor Dr. Paul-Henri Gurian. Donny would like to pursue a career in government or politics and may focus on political campaigns. “Working on research projects has allowed me to understand the components of the research process, as well as to develop personal contacts in a way that would not be possible otherwise,” said Donny, who is from Albany and is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in political science. “I think more than anything else, CURO is what I will be most proud to have been a part of while at the University of Georgia.”

“The CURO Apprentice Community of Scholars means being surrounded by people who love knowledge and are well versed in many different fields. Differences in perspective and discipline give me new outlooks on the world, challenge me, and provide a wonderful environment to learn and develop meaningful friendships with the future leaders of our society. It also means, being surrounded by professors and peers that genuinely want you to succeed, learn, and support you through the good times and bad. The community starts with the Honors Program and is only amplified in the CURO apprentice program.”

—Cleveland Piggott ’10, CURO Apprentice, Mid-Term Foundation Fellow, UGA Amazing Student, majoring in biology and psychology
Three Honors Students Receive Mid-Term Foundation Fellowships

Three Honors students have been awarded 2010 mid-term Foundation Fellowships. They are Matthew Sellers of Perry, majoring in English; Jacob Rooney of Roswell, majoring in mathematics; and Victoria Akin of Macon, also majoring in mathematics. “It is a great pleasure to welcome Matt, Jacob, and Tori to the Foundation Fellowship,” said Dr. David Williams. “Individually, their passion for learning, leadership, and service is obvious, and as a group, they are sure to enrich the community of Fellows.”

Tori Akin, a Ramsey Honors Scholar, conducts research under the guidance of epidemiologist and biostatistician Dr. Andreas Handel in the College of Public Health. Tori created a computer program that simulates the progression of influenza, gathering data to support more efficient production of antiviral drugs. Tori also teaches math concepts weekly to middle school children through the MATHCOUNTS outreach program and has been a volunteer for the UGA Math Club’s annual high school math tournament. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in mathematics for a teaching and research career in higher education.

Jacob Rooney, a National Merit Scholarship recipient, is currently a participant in a knot theory math research group led by mathematics professor Dr. Jason Cantarella. Such research teams are made up of UGA faculty and students who collaborate on a single topic throughout the year. Jacob also has been involved with the high school math tournament at UGA and with MATHCOUNTS. Jacob, who also plays the violin, has tutored students in courses that focus on music, Spanish, and applied sciences. He would like to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics and work in academia.

Matt Sellers, a Ramsey Honors Scholar, was a 2009 CURO Summer Research Fellow. He focused on the poetry of Robert Penn Warren under the guidance of English professor Dr. Hugh Ruppersburg, who also serves as senior associate dean in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. Matt volunteers for AIDS Athens, a non-profit organization that provides supportive services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS. After earning his UGA degree in English, he would like to pursue a career in activism, focusing on diversity issues related to gender.

Deep Shah, one of UGA’s two Rhodes Scholars in 2008, recently received the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans, which will pay for up to two years of graduate study. Deep, who earned degrees in international affairs and biology at UGA, is currently in his first year at Harvard Medical School after earning a master’s degree in comparative social policy at Oxford University. Deep intends to pursue a career as a physician policymaker. The Soros, who are originally from Hungary, established their fellowship program in 1997 with a $50 million charitable trust. The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for New Americans (persons whose country of origin is not the U.S. or whose parents immigrated to the U.S.) to attain their goals and become leaders in their chosen fields. This award is widely recognized as being among the most highly competitive in the nation.
Each fall, Honors students file into Sanford Stadium to cheer for the Bulldogs. For them, it is just another great day to be at UGA. Fourth-year Foundation Fellow Allon Mordel is in the stadium as well, and though he hopes to see most of the game, the chance of that happening is slim. Allon is one of several Emergency Medical Service (EMT) personnel that line the periphery of the stadium, standing ready to provide help whenever needed. A biology and finance major from Marietta, and a native of Israel, Allon began training as an EMT during his second year on campus. In addition to a full load of classes at UGA, he took night classes at Athens Tech and completed more than 100 hours of clinical work. Allon received his EMT license in June 2008. That summer, he returned to Israel to volunteer for the Magon David Adom (MDA) Team, through which he earned certification as a licensed medic in his native country. During his first few weeks, his team was the first on the scene of a terror attack in Jerusalem, which left three dead and more than 40 wounded. Allon and his team sprang into action: “You get on the scene, comprehend what you’re seeing and try to help,” he says. “There is no time to think, you just act.” Allon continues that mindset when he is on his shift back in Athens with National EMT Services. So, next time you see an ambulance or are a spectator at a UGA football game, look for Allon in the driver’s seat or standing underneath the scoreboard and say hello.

**MathCounts**

Due to their extensive travel support, Foundation Fellows have made their mark across the globe, providing service and outreach that stretches far and wide beyond campus. Yet some of the most important work that Fellows are involved with takes place less than 30 minutes away from Moore College. Third-year Fellow Phillip Mote has combined his desire to help others with his love for problem-solving, establishing a MATHCOUNTS team at UGA to provide extracurricular math instruction and mentoring to middle school students throughout the Athens area. Phillip, a biochemistry and economics major from Marietta, GA, says that “when I came to UGA in 2007, creating a MATHCOUNTS program was my initial idea, although I didn’t know what form it would take. Jenny Taylor (also a Foundation Fellow) and I talked to faculty members in a couple of departments and eventually got connected to Clarke Middle School. It was closest to campus and they already had a MATHCOUNTS program there. “Within a year, Phillip and Jenny (who also works as the on-campus recruiting coordinator for MATHCOUNTS) had convinced several friends to participate and by the time another year had passed, Phillip’s vision had expanded to nearly 100 Georgia students, with math enrichment opportunities at seven area middle schools. “I would say the spring of 2009 was a crucial time to really get things off the ground,” said Phillip. “That’s when Foundation Fellow Betsy Allen and I really worked on reaching out to different schools, principals, and math teachers, meeting with them and discussing MATHCOUNTS with those who didn’t have a team. We also talked about how we could help those that already had MATHCOUNTS teams.” Math education professor Dr. Denise Mewborn says that “Philip took his passion for, and positive experiences with, MATHCOUNTS as a middle-school student and parlayed them into an outreach project that has had a positive impact on many area middle school students, teachers, and UGA students.” According to Phillip, the UGA students who participate in MATHCOUNTS derive as much, if not more, than they are giving.
It is hard to miss third-year Honors student Yasmin Yonis on campus, since she is full of energy and has a ready and big smile. Yasmin and her family came to Atlanta from war-torn Somalia when she was three years old. Drawing on her own background as a refugee, she has decided to use her experiences to help make the world a better place for those who are suffering or are disadvantaged. Yasmin, who carries journalism and international affairs majors, has found a number of ways to make that happen. For instance, she created a mentoring program at an elementary school in Athens where 5th grade students are paired with UGA students to address the high drop-out rate in the county. Yasmin has also worked through the Honors in Washington program with Voice for America (VOA) TV for Africa, where she assisted on TV and radio news shows for the continent. In addition, she served in Atlanta as an intern for the International Rescue Committee resettling refugees from countries such as Burma, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Thailand. Currently, she serves as the opinion editor for the Red and Black student newspaper where she also writes educational pieces about her Islamic faith, as well as women’s and human rights. Yasmin is a Truman Scholarship national finalist and she has been accepted as a Law Fellow at Berkeley’s Junior Summer Institute where she will study public policy, economics, and law to prepare for graduate school. To read more about Yasmin, visit www.uga.edu/amazing/yonis.html.

A Voice to be Heard

Although a quiet person by nature, Jeremy Akin has found many ways of being heard. He likes to sound his voice as a tenor with the UGA Opera Ensemble, the Classic City Jazz Group, the University Chorus, and the Men’s Glee Club. He has also presented his undergraduate research on alternative schools in Chatham County at the CURO Symposium. He worked as executive director of the ONE Campaign @ UGA that creates service opportunities for students in the local Athens community. However, it is Jeremy’s work as a mediator for the Mediation Center in Savannah that has other people talking. Jeremy took classes and interned as a general mediator and became a volunteer civil mediator, registered by the Georgia Board of Alternative Dispute Resolution. He is the youngest active volunteer mediator on the Mediation Center’s roster. Wendy Williamson, Executive Director of the Mediation Center, an Honors alumna, and a longtime friend of Jeremy and his family, says, “For me, accompanying Jeremy Akin through childhood, adolescence, and now college has been a glorious adventure. He has an internal radar for helping those in need and directs his many talents and endless energy to improve the world around him.”
In September of this year, the Honors Program will celebrate its 50th anniversary. We invite our alumni from the past 50 years to share with us their memories and anecdotes of favorite Honors professors, Honors courses, and classmates. We hope to use these memories during our 50th anniversary celebration. If you have any comments or memories to share you may send them to: Dorothe Otemann, Coordinator of External Affairs, UGA Honors Program, 001 Moore College, Athens, GA 30602 or to dotemann@uga.edu. You can contact her at 706/583-0698.

THANK YOU!

Kate McGlamry

I chose to attend UGA because...
...of the Honors Program. I knew that I wanted to attend a big school, but I didn’t want to get lost in the crowd. The Honors Program offered me the benefits of a small school while also giving me the big school feel. Not only that, but the Honors Program offered me incredible research and internship opportunities that I knew would expand my college experience far beyond the classroom. Thanks to the HOPE Scholarship and UGA’s Honors Program, I have been able to obtain a first-class education without having to go into debt.

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“I know that my experience abroad has shaped me for years to come. I think it is virtually impossible to study abroad for an extended period of time and not be affected in a meaningful and life-changing way. Now that I am back in the United States, Europe feels a world away, but the experience and knowledge I gained stays with me. I will go back to school to finish my undergraduate degree in public relations and my masters in Nonprofit Organizations, but I am no longer just Emily, the student. I am Emily, world traveler, scuba diver, Austrian skier, pepper sausage eater! I still wear my “Embrace the Journey” bracelet that my mom bought for me when I left for Italy. I will always remember its meaning and how it taught me to embrace every challenge, experience, and feeling. I may not be scaling a Tuscan hillside, but my next journey will be full of fun and challenges too. I am grateful for my study abroad that taught me to embrace the journey and hang on for the ride!”

Emily Thomsen traveled to Italy during the summer of 2009 on the Monika Riely Honors International Travel Scholarship.