

M&F continues intern program to help prospective black bankers

Two WSSU students have benefited from program so far

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE



Photo by Courtney Gaillard

Marques Johnson, a WSSU senior, is this year's M&F Scholar.

Marques Johnson is known by many as a numbers man, and now he can add the title of M&F Scholar to his repertoire. Last month, Mechanics & Farmers Bank named Johnson, a senior business management and sports management major at Winston-Salem State University, as the 2003 Mechanics & Farmers Bank Scholar.

Johnson, who is the second student to receive the scholarship, said he is honored to have the opportunity to be both intern and scholar through the program.

"I thought (the internship) was a great opportunity. I've seen many of the things that M&F has done in the community, such as on-campus M&F Day, programs with area churches, and I have noticed the relationship the bank has had with its customers," said Johnson, who said he's had a "knack for numbers" since he was child.

Originally from Virginia, Johnson has been living in Winston-Salem for the last couple of years with his family. He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. When he's not working at the bank, Johnson said, he is spending his time this summer buried in a calculus book for a summer school class.

The Mechanics & Farmers Bank Scholarship and Internship program was established last year. Undergraduate students majoring in business or economics at WSSU with at least a 3.0 GPA are eligible for

the program.

Evelyn Acree, vice president and city executive of Mechanics & Farmers Bank, developed the program. She said the program allows the bank to invest in the future.

"We felt that (Johnson) could benefit from the internship as well as the bank could benefit from his innovative and creative ideas. He characterizes that young market that we're trying to tap into. He's a very dynamic young man...He's gone above and beyond the call of duty," Acree said.

According to Acree, Johnson is always willing to do and learn more in an effort to soak up all that the internship has to offer him.

"We're exposing him to all areas of banking and our call-

ing effort," Acree said.

Over the last month, Johnson has been learning the day-to-day operations of the local Mechanics and Farmers branch located on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. From operating a teller window, customer service, account activation, loan consultation and assisting the branch manager, Johnson is being exposed to the ins and outs of banking.

"I've really enjoyed learning from the leaders of the black community," Johnson said. "They've been an excellent example; just learning from them has been truly extraordinary. I've learned so much about banking, and most

of all, I've learned about people and how to develop a good rapport with customers."

Johnson dreams of one day becoming a financial consultant to a professional sports team. His love of sports and business is what encouraged him to earn a degree in both fields.

"Some of the experience you get at Mechanics & Farmers you can't learn in the classroom. That's why I encourage my friends to get hands-on experience," Johnson said.

Johnson will graduate from WSSU in the spring and plans to pursue an MBA in banking or financial investment.

Liberia

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forces to Liberia — has indicated it won't make a decision until west African troops are on the ground and the situation can be better assessed.

Monrovia has become overrun with thousands of refugees who have fled three recent attacks on the city. Aid workers are warning of a humanitarian disaster as food stores dwindle and disease festers amid heavy fighting in parts of the city.

Sharpton said his delegation's mission is humanitarian in nature, but he would try and help ease along the peace negotiations that began on June 4 — the day a U.N.-backed court in nearby Sierra Leone indicted Taylor on war crimes for his role in supporting a rebel

group's terror campaign in that country.

Sharpton said he wouldn't choose sides in the conflict, which has raged since insurgents took up arms against Taylor in 1999, adding "wherever we can help the peace process, we will."

"The side that doesn't want to see the continual murders and pain and starvation in Liberia is the side that will ultimately win the trust of the people," Sharpton said.

Taylor, a former warlord elected president in 1997, launched Liberia's unrest in 1989 with his own insurgency.

Sharpton also was accompanied by the Rev. Al Sampson of Chicago; attorney Lewis Meyers; and Akbar Muhammad, Islam expert and Africana studies professor at New York's Binghamton University.



Tuskegee Airman Vernon Haywood.

Blacks prominent in state aviation exhibit

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wright's historic flight at Kitty Hawk, the N.C. Museum of History will open an exhibit Tuesday celebrating the first century of flight.



McNair

More than 150 artifacts, photographs and videos bring their stories — many of which are "firsts" in aviation — to life.

Included in the exhibit are tales of North Carolinians who were Tuskegee Airmen, the first all-African-American military flying unit, which led to the full integration of the military in 1948. The Tuskegee Airmen included Raleigh's Vernon Haywood, one of the first blacks to fly jet aircraft. Haywood served as a Tuskegee Airman in the European theater during World War II. He was also one of the first African-Americans jet instructors.

Ronald E. McNair, who attended N.C. A&T State Univer-

sity, also is featured in the exhibit. McNair was one of the NASA astronauts aboard the space shuttle Challenger when it exploded on Jan. 28, 1986.

The story of Thomas H. Davis, a Winston-Salem native who founded Piedmont Airlines, also is told in "Pioneers of Aviation." Piedmont Airlines became the state's most successful home-based passenger airline.

Oct. 4, the N.C. Museum of History, located in Raleigh, will feature the topic "Fighting for Change: Military Service and Civil Rights" during its 2004 Symposium on Civil Rights. The program will focus on the struggle of African-Americans and American Indians who entered the military after President Harry S. Truman's executive order calling for desegregation. Special guests include Wilson V. Eagleson, a former Tuskegee Airman and member of the 99th Pursuit Squadron, and William Weathersbee, a member of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion and the Second Ranger Infantry Company Airborne.

"Pioneers of Aviation" will be on display through 2005. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

For more information of the exhibit, log onto the museum's Web site, <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org>.

Musical

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to absorb every vocal nuance and stage performance detail.

"The audience is going to think they are listening to the actual groups because we did not want (the actors) to interpret what they think the person should sound like. We wanted them to sound just like the performers."

Ngina James said the results have been well worth the challenge she faced of trying to mimic the pure innocence in the voice of Shirley Owens, the lead singer of The Shirelles, whose hits included "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" and "Sol-

to make memorable music.

"When I learn a song, I feel like I am learning a part of that person," she said.

John Steven Crowley knows much of the music in "Doo Wop Shoo Bop" like the back of his hand. One of the oldest members of the cast, the silky-voiced Crowley grew up in the 1950s and '60s.

"This is the music my parents would sit and listen to," he said.

Crowley also wears many hats in the production. He plays Tony Williams, the lead singer of The Platters, a member of the Mills Brothers and several other vocal heavyweights. Crowley has the voice to pull it off. He grew up singing gospel, which

time of pure innocence in America."

Doo wop music also helped to bridge racial gaps in its day, as white teenagers, for the first time, wholeheartedly began to embrace music performed by black artists. A bit of that history is addressed in the musical. Taylor likes to call her productions "edu-tainment" because they entertain as well as educate. But the entertainment is most important, she pointed out.

"We try to sneak some education in there because most people don't like to be educated," she said.

There are many subthemes in the production. For example, some of the black artists had to

contend with white artists remaking their songs to great success and most did not receive just compensation for their work. But the main moral, said Taylor, is that music is universal, and good music is timeless.

"Music is the one thing that we all have in common. It breaks down barriers. It transcends all races and colors," Taylor said.

Doo Wop Shoo Bop will be staged Aug. 5-8 at the R.J. Reynolds High School Auditorium. Shows each night will be at 8 p.m. On Aug. 9 the show will be staged at both 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$35. For tickets, call 723-7907 or log onto www.nbf.org.



Photo courtesy of the Black Ensemble Theatre

Actors as The Five Satins.

dier Boy." "The biggest compliment is when people come up to me and say, 'You sound like the real thing,'" said James, who caught the acting bug after getting burned out in her public relations job. James also plays The Platters' Zola Taylor and other characters in the musical.

James is only 28, so much of the music she performs on stage was foreign to her when she won a spot in the cast. She said she is now a fan of the doo wop era and is enamored by the artists who scaled many mountains in order

has given him the foundation to perform a variety of musical styles, from jazz to opera.

"Harmony is harmony," Crowley said, after declaring his love for all kinds of music. But doo wop music has a special effect on audiences, he said. He remembers performing "Doo Wop Shoo Bop" before a nearly white audience and seeing grown men in tears as songs from their past were performed.

"This music is like the soundtracks of so many people's lives," Crowley said. "It is a trip down memory lane. It was a

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