

UNC junior nabs Truman Scholarship

BY LINDSAY MICHEL AND JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITORS

Members of the basketball team aren't the only students piling up national accolades these days.

On Tuesday, the Harry Truman Scholarship Foundation named UNC junior Lauren McAlee one of 75 Truman Scholars, earning her \$30,000 for future studies.

The award is the most prestigious honor available to college juniors throughout the nation, said Nick Didow, chairman of the UNC Truman selection committee.

"It still really hasn't sunk in," McAlee said, explaining that when Chancellor James Moeser called her with the news, she thought he was referring to something other than the award.

"I feel very, very lucky for the scholarship and just to have so

much support from people on campus who helped me out a lot."

McAlee, a Robertson Scholar from Crofton, Md., has been active in the Maryland state government and has targeted education reform.

Boasting a 3.96 grade-point average, she is spending this semester establishing a youth advocacy program to diversify activities in the rural community of Mound Bayou, Miss.

The passion McAlee has for public service makes her a testament to the Robertson Scholars program, said Eric Mlyn, director of the program.

"Lauren is really a credit to UNC, to the Robertson program and to everything she's doing for education in the United States," he said.

UNC was one of 299 colleges and



Junior Lauren McAlee will receive \$30,000 for future studies as a Truman Scholar.

universities that nominated a total of 602 students for the award. UNC nominated four students, and McAlee was one of two finalists.

She is UNC's 28th student to receive the distinction since the scholarship was created in 1977.

"She, like those who came before her, is a wonderful person," Didow said. "She is genuine and dedicated to improving the life of those around her."

"She continues the strong tradition this campus represents in

social and economic justice and providing outstanding Truman applicants."

McAlee was a voting student member of the Maryland State Board of Education as a senior in high school. It was this experience, she said, that fueled her desire to provoke change.

"I just loved the work I was doing," she said. "So after that, I was like, 'I don't want to leave (the education field).'"

McAlee said she hopes to parlay the scholarship into a career in teaching and public policy to improve the public education system.

"I can't think of anything that's more important and that really has more potential to change people's lives."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Controversial bill is latest salvo in battle

BY LAURA YOUNGS
SENIOR WRITER

A bill designed to protect students and faculty from political discrimination hit the N.C. Senate floor last week, but some say it's unnecessary and potentially ineffective.

Sen. Andrew Brock, R-Davie, introduced a bill that would require UNC-system schools to adopt an "academic bill of rights" protecting political beliefs on campus.

He said the document would provide students and faculty with equal protection in an academic setting. "We don't want our professors to discriminate on the basis of race, sex or religious beliefs," he said. "Why should we then allow discrimination on political beliefs?"

The issue of academic freedom has been a hot one at UNC-Chapel Hill. Two debates on the summer reading program, as well as a controversy sparked by an English lecturer's e-mail, have made the University one of the centers of a national debate.

Brock said his experiences at Western Carolina University, as well as incidents at UNC-CH and national support for academic bills of rights, inspired his action.

Under his bill, schools would adopt a nine-point policy including requirements to hire and fire faculty regardless of political belief and to provide students with fair grading.

George Leef, executive director of the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, said he's pleased that the bill outlines, in black-and-white terms, what is permissible at universities.

The John William Pope Foundation is in the spotlight at UNC-CH. It's offered to help fund a curriculum in Western studies, but some faculty say its financial support of the conservative Pope Center — a

group that has publicly criticized the University — is unacceptable.

But discrimination is a nationwide trend, Leef said — one occurring often enough that something should be done, even if it doesn't happen all the time. "The notion behind the academic bill of rights is to turn down the degree of politicization in universities," Leef said.

Incidents like the one last year involving UNC-CH English lecturer Elyse Crystall — in which she chastised a student via e-mail for views he expressed on homosexuality in class — might not have happened with such a law in place, Leef said.

But Thad Beyle, political science professor at UNC-CH, said bills like Brock's are part of a national conservative movement pushing the matter. Though errors occur occasionally, they are not frequent enough to call for a state law, he said.

Eric David, a second-year UNC-CH journalism graduate student, said the bill would be ineffective and difficult to enforce. "It seems more like a feel-good bill," he said.

David, who recently finished a thesis on the campus conservative movement, also said the bill's vague language makes it hard to refute.

And incidents like the one involving Crystall wouldn't have been prevented, he said, adding that schools already have guidelines preventing political discrimination.

But Brock said the bill encompasses more than current guidelines because it deals with students as well as faculty.

"It's basically trying to create an equal protection for all," he said. "You don't want to have one student get in trouble for their views."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Planetarium seeks new star to lead program

BY KATHERINE EVANS
STAFF WRITER

The search for a new head of the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center — which defines the UNC experience for thousands of North Carolinians — is full steam ahead.

The position is one of the most high-profile at UNC, said Interim Director Jeff Hill, who served as director of marketing and business ventures for the planetarium.

The facility — which has an annual budget reaching \$2 million — draws in more visitors than any other UNC attraction, excepting athletic events. It pulled in schoolchildren from three-quarters of the state's 100 counties last year.

"We served 135,000 to 140,000 North Carolinians (this year): 70 percent of them have no other connection to UNC other than attending

shows," Hill said. "This is what they know about UNC-Chapel Hill."

Members of the search committee met Tuesday to discuss strategies to publicize the position and to revise the official job description.

"This is a real opportunity for an unconventional candidate," said Chuck Lovelace, executive director of the John Motley Morehead Foundation.

Members of the committee said that the candidates must embody a combination of entrepreneurial know-how and academic prowess but that the right balance between the two is open for discussion.

"They have to be able to speak in a way that would not make us all cringe," said Laurie McNeil, chairwoman of the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Other members acknowledged

this need but stressed the importance of casting the broadest net over the sea of potential applicants. The committee is considering hiring a private search firm to reach candidates from outside academia.

Holden Thorp, the planetarium's previous director, stepped down from the position to become the chairman of UNC's Department of Chemistry, effective July 1.

Under Thorp's watch, the planetarium saw attendance increase by 40 percent. Thorp counts an increased emphasis on the science center and more undergraduate involvement at the planetarium among his accomplishments.

"It's hard for me to imagine that there's anyone in this business who would not want this job," Thorp said. He also said his successor

should have the desire to educate schoolchildren and mentor undergraduates and the ability to work well in a business setting.

While no definite timetable for the selection process has been set, leaders said they hope to have finalists visit the University by the end of summer. Officials aim to fill the position by the end of the calendar year.

"This is a very important position in the University — definitely part of the fabric of the University," said Carol Tresolini, associate provost for academic initiatives, who helped put together the search committee.

"He or she will have to hit the ground running."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.



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POLICE LOG

FROM STAFF REPORTS

- Chapel Hill police received a report Monday of the statutory rape of a 14-year-old girl. According to reports, the girl was raped without force by a 23-year-old man Feb. 21 about 10 p.m. at a residence at 751 Trinity Court.
- Two employees of Hams of Chapel Hill were the victims of separate larcenies from vehicles, Chapel Hill police reports state. According to reports, the first employee's vehicle was broken into at the corner of Sunset and Starlight drives at 1:40 a.m. Sunday. The victim's purse, which contained more than \$900 in valuables, was stolen in the incident. The second employee's vehicle was broken into at 2:34 a.m. Monday at 310 W. Franklin St. The perpetrator gained access to the vehicle by throwing a rock through the windshield, causing \$250 in damage. More than \$1,000 in valuables were stolen in the incident.
- A larceny was reported following a Monday assault in Chapel Hill, police reports state. According to reports, a 23-year-old Chapel Hill woman was assaulted at 112 Noble St. about 4:34 a.m. The perpetrator took her necklace, valued at \$1,650, following the incident.
- Three area youths were found in the Street Scene Teen Center, at 179 E. Franklin St., at 6:07 a.m. Tuesday, and each was charged with one count of misdemeanor breaking and entering and one misdemeanor count of underage possession of alcohol, police reports state. According to reports, Nathaniel Floyd Gray, 16, of 108 Will St. in Carrboro; Leroy Allen Luncford, 17, of 501 Jones Ferry Road T1 in Carrboro; and Allison Elizabeth Murrow, 16, of 108 Hillspring Lane in Chapel Hill all were found sleeping in the center outside of operating hours with several cans of Milwaukee's Best Ice.
- An employee of the Timberlyne Shopping Center Food Lion was arrested Monday on one felony charge of embezzlement, Chapel Hill police reports state. According to reports, Charles Laverne Brown, 17, of 2629 Dairyland Road in Hillsborough, was arrested after police reviewed videotapes that showed her writing out money orders to herself. She was released on a written promise to appear at the first opportunity in the Orange County District Criminal Court in Hillsborough.

The Daily Tar Heel
P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
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News, Features, Sports, 962-0245
One copy per person; additional copies may be purchased at The Daily Tar Heel for \$.25 each.
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