



Friends of the Bardwell Scholarships

Fall-2014
Issue 27

Changing Lives One Degree at a Time

Extraordinary! Bardwell Scholarships Celebrate 6 Recent Graduates



*Kevin Pleasant
AAS HWC 2014*



*Joshua Hugh Mac-Williams
AA HWC 2014*



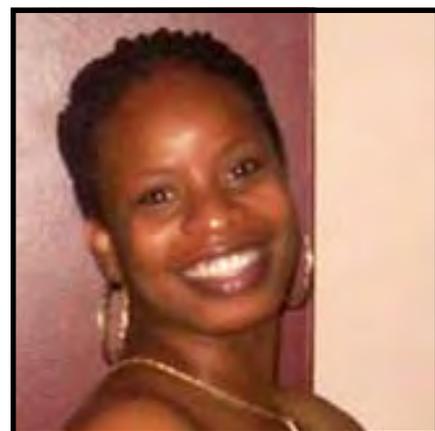
*Alba Orizaba
AA HWC 2011
BA NEIU 2014*



*Shirley Doty-Lewis
AA HWC 2014
BA Mt Holyoke College 2014*



*Riley Jones
AA HWC 2013
BA NLU 2014*



*Lawana Loving
AA HWC 2010
BA DePaul University 2014*

Reflections of an Undocumented RBS Scholar...

Finally, I can pause and reflect. This is another reason why I love RBS; it even allows me to do some self-care. I dealt with personal, family, political, social, and overall institutionalized issues throughout my college experience. I secretly felt like quitting many times. I knew my will and the money invested in me would outweigh those hopeless feelings...

I enrolled at Harold Washington College in fall of 2009. I walked into HWC filled with hopes, goals, and fears. Two semesters later, I met Hedy and the RBS organization. She illuminated my path and played a huge role on making college accessible to me. When politicians, family, and educational institutions said "NO", Hedy and the RBS said "YES" and "YES" until I graduate if necessary!!!! She provided me with the financial assistance needed, which allowed me to quit one of the two jobs I had and dedicate more time to my studies. I recognized the privilege and opportunity this was as an undocumented student so I promised myself that I was going to make the most out of my college experience. And I did.

During my time as a full time student at HWC and full time employee, I also joined the honor society Phi Theta Kappa, Organization of Latin American Students, US Leadership Scholarship committee, and an employment success program. These resources allowed me to grow and meet AMAZING individuals like Devon Powell, Gabriel Razo, Alyssandra Cruz-Bond, and Maria Gonzalez.

Currently, I am a senior at Northeastern Illinois University and continue to be an active student. I am the president of an undocumented student led group organization at NEIU and a Sociology tutor. I have received scholastic recognition for my participation in Alpha Kappa Delta, the Sociology Honor Society, and Alpha Chi National College Honor Society, which in is an honor society comprised of only the top ten percent of juniors and seniors at NEIU. During the summer of 2014, I was also a Sociology and Latino and Latin American Studies tutor and participated in an independent study as a research assistant.

I will graduate NEIU in December, 2014 with a Bachelor's Degree in Arts in Sociology with a minor in Latino and Latin American Studies. I plan to take two to three years off then return to grad school to obtain a

Master's Degree in Sociology. I am determined to assist others who want to learn and change the world. Hedy's leadership style has served as a model to me; she created a space where all humans are welcome.

Once December comes, I can enjoy more sleep and begin the job search process with my DACA card. Until then, I will continue the daily juggle and struggle that RBS strongly supports. Thanks to Hedy and donors, scholars like myself are able to fully reach our maximum potential. It takes a community to make success stories like this happen; I am proudly one of them.

Alba Orizaba
AA HWC 2012
BA NEIU 2014
Bardwell Scholar



Alba Orizaba

Joining the RBS Family

Hello all: I am Joshua Hugh Mac-Williams, a recent addition to the Bardwell Scholarship family. Hailing from Little Village in Chicago, I will be graduating from Harold Washington College this December, en route to the next level of my educational experience in pursuit of a career in architecture. While this first milestone of my educational journey is imminently visible today, just two months ago the view was not so clear.

Having earned more than the allowable number of credit hours at one institution before receiving a degree, the financial aid I have been depending on to make my schooling possible was being withheld. This meant that despite how close I was to my first degree, I would have to either transfer prematurely to a much more expensive school or take at least a semester off to save enough to return later. This recently established regulation was put in place in response to abuses of the system, and also to encourage the forward progress of students, but does not take into consideration the amount of coursework necessary to those pursuing architecture—the average architecture student takes between seven and eight years to earn a professional degree that will allow them to sit for licensure examinations. On top of this, we are required a minimum of 3,600 internship hours and eighty hours of community service. All in all, this lengthy undertaking usually requires more than a decade to complete.

As a forty-two year old, I have learned that it is not in ones best interest to rush through anything as important as an education. That said, I don't feel that I have the same luxury of time as I would have if I had begun this process a couple of decades ago. While I had appealed the hold on my financial aid, as advised, I discovered just days before the semester began that my appeal had been denied, the funds would not be released, and I was dropped from the classes in which I'd enrolled.

Discouraged and unsure of what to do, I was fortunately pointed in the direction of Ms. Hedy Cohen. Despite the short-noticed nature of my predicament she promptly met with me and listened to my story. I should say that I would likely have been receiving scholarships for the majority of my time at HWC, but I'd felt that because financial aid had been sufficient assistance, it was best to leave those funds for others that may have had a greater need. I did end up receiving the Harold Washington Academic Achievement Scholarship, but this covered strictly tuition, leaving well over a thousand dollars in lab, online access, and test fees and the insanely exorbitant costs of textbooks outstanding. Taking this into consideration, Ms. Cohen saw fit to help me with what has proven to be the push that made my last semester at the City Colleges possible.

As extremely grateful as I am for the monetary assistance I've received, I feel that of even greater value is the fact that I am now part of a community of people striving for the betterment of not just self, but of society. As one of the newest

members of the Bardwell family I've only met a handful of others who share this special status, but I look forward to knowing more of this incredibly diverse group, and I relish the opportunity to share experiences, resources, and dreams of how we will make our world a better place.

Joshua Hugh Mac-Williams
AA HWC 2014
Bardwell Scholar

Second Annual Roger Bardwell Scholars Picnic

With clear skies and calm waters, the shores of Lake Michigan graciously welcomed the Second Annual Roger Bardwell Family Picnic on August 9th, 2014. In the company of Pearl and tables full of banana pudding, burgers, cakes, and flavored drinks, new additions to the family mingled with those of older generations and bonded over empowering stories and aspirations for the future. Though food always plays an important role in bringing people together, this time it was rather a mutual commitment to graduate from college despite financial or personal struggles.

For the Roger Bardwell Scholars, I can safely say, summer ends not in dread to return to a monotonous class schedule, but in excitement and eagerness to reach new heights fostered at this picnic. Like any ordinary family, the Roger Bardwell family of scholars can only grow with time. Though this year's Family Picnic was another moment in our family album that we will all warmly remember, it will nevertheless be a family tradition we will all keep alive for scholars to come, especially with the indefatigable support and energy of Hedy Cohen.

Hugo Rodriguez
AA HWC 2012
Shimer College Student
Bardwell Scholar



Second Annual Scholars picnic, August 9, 2014

Traveling the Last Leg of this Journey

On May 3, 2014, I earned my associate's degree and graduated from HWC with the next goal being to earn a bachelor's degree. As this year comes to a close, so does my journey towards obtaining that degree. In November 2014, I will graduate from National Louis University with a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Behavioral Science. I would like to tell you that it was a short journey, but I would be lying. It has been a long and at times challenging journey, but now that it is near, the time doesn't seem that long.

It was a long journey, but I am glad I stayed the course. So many times I wanted to quit, but along the way I became more and more committed. Things actually became easier because of the support I received from my family, particularly from my son, and my girlfriend, who were instrumental in helping me with my most challenging class, math. Along the way, I made friends who were just as supportive. Something about school brings people together in a good way. It is the common goal of wanting to graduate, combined with wanting to see each other succeed and standing by each other to ensure it happens.

I was fortunate to start my journey at HWC as I met some amazing people there, too. Hedy has been there for me and a number of us, directly and indirectly. I cherish our conversations about how I planned to complete my educational requirements; however I appreciated the discussions about life and celebrating the smallest milestones more as she, too, wanted me and others to enjoy the ride along the way.

My last 14 months have been spent in an accelerated program at National Louis University, where I again met a group of amazing people. During this time, I even attended additional training programs to enhance my skills and knowledge to be prepared for opportunities both within my department and after I retire. You see, I am 51 years old and working on my 3rd career. The one meaningful goal I did not accomplish early was acquiring a degree so for me, this will validate all the years' experience I have in a variety of fields. If you look around the world, you will see that without a degree or formal education you limit your options.

I have been asked if I will continue until awarded a master's degree and I said, "Oooooohhh no, I am done". However, today I realize I will only be done for a short period, because that last step cements you in the annals of history in your field of knowledge, expertise and



Super people, Hedy Cohen and Riley Jones

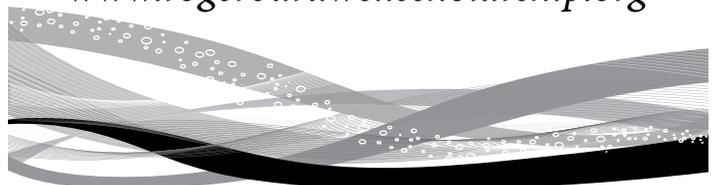
most importantly the minds and hearts of your family and friends, who are looking at you in admiration and as inspiration. If you have family of school age children, this demonstrates to them that anything is possible and shows them that if they persevere the reward is sweet!!

Lastly, this whole thing is allowing me to celebrate myself and accomplishments, which some of us rarely do. Being able to see that degree on your wall, table or at your parents' house being proudly displayed allows you to say to all, yes I did it ... I really did it !

See you in class...

Riley Jones
AA HWC 2013
BA NLU 2014
Bardwell Scholar

Visit our website at
www.rogerbardwellscholarship.org



Chasing My Dream

It is never too late to chase your dreams. My dream was to graduate from college. Getting a college degree has been one of my goals for a very long time. The road to becoming a first generation college graduate has been paved with many challenges, life lessons, and great memories. The journey, no matter how difficult, has been worthwhile.

Initially, when I went back to school, my goal was to settle for an associate's degree because of my age. But I could not get the quote from George Eliot out of my mind, "It is never too late to become the person you might have been." So at the mature age of 55, I not only graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a Bachelors of Arts in Religion and a minor in Africana Studies on May 18, 2014, but I also received an Associate of General Studies with honors from Harold Washington College. Who does that? Me, that's who! The realization of the dream was better than I imagined. I never imagined that I would be receiving two college degrees in the same month from two different institutions. I felt like Job in the Bible receiving double for my trouble. To top it off I received the Judy Light Memorial Fund Award which is the lifetime learning award from the Frances Perkins Scholars Association at MHC. The satisfaction of accomplishment is my greatest award. I can say, "I did it." Dreams do come true. Dreams delayed don't have to be denied.

The two years I spent at Mount Holyoke were two of the best years of my life. I came to realize that I did not choose Mount Holyoke College, it chose me. I am truly convinced that I was on Mary Lyon's mind and in her vision in 1837 when she founded the first women's college in the country. She wrote my name in her plans, she saw me coming. I could not have been chosen by a more perfect place to live out my dream. Memories from my time at MoHome will live with me forever. I have been blessed to live a dream.

I learned a great deal both in and outside the classroom. Each day I had the opportunity to be among some of the smartest women in the world. I will never be the same. I discovered new things about myself and the world. I discovered my voice and in that I decided that I want to be a writer.

I feel that everyone should be afforded the opportunity to attend college and money should not be what prevents them from fulfilling that goal. Without the assistance of Hedy Cohen and the Roger Bardwell Scholarship, my dream would have continued to be delayed. I am forever grateful for the love, support and encouragement I received from family and friends. My goal is to give back so that other students will have the resources needed to achieve their goal of graduating college. It's never too late. Keep dreaming!

Shirley Doty-Lewis

AA HWC 2014

BA Mt Holyoke College 2014

Bardwell Scholar



Ellen Goldberg (left) and Shirley meet with other students from HWC who attend Mt Holyoke.



(from left) Diana Hampton, Odie Naybor, Shirley Doty-Lewis, and Sharie Doty holding precious grandson Carter Zion Wilson.



Shirley continues the RBS tradition of shoe shopping for those earning bachelor's degrees.

What Makes Me Ready Today

I remember that January day in 2009 when I was directed to see Hedy Cohen by Dean Wendell Blair. I sat in his office, crying like a pubescent boy who didn't make the team of higher education. All I wanted to do was go to school. It wasn't that I'd never been part of higher learning, but during that time in my life I wasn't ready. After wiping the tears and feeling foolish, a forty-four year old man crying in front of another grown man, I made my way to meet Hedy. My mind filled with what ifs and countless obscenities about how the financial aid system sucks with regard to working individuals. As my heart became heavy with the shame of not having completed this process earlier in life, my determination to not be defeated became the source of my strength.

While sitting in Hedy's office she began to engage me in conversation about the Roger Bardwell Scholarship Program. I was showered with information about how Bardwell Scholars are basically nontraditional students who are not only seeking, but more importantly, creating change, progression, and success in their lives. I knew this was something I needed to be a part of, especially since I was creating that change, making that progress and being stumped in my success by being underemployed because I didn't have a degree or credentials although I had been successfully doing this work for over ten years. Not having a degree does not make one incompetent, incapable or unemployable, however it limits the opportunity to grow. In opposing these limits, it greatly impacts feelings of self-worth. Hedy asked me a very poignant question and told me to write an essay as part of the application process. I had no idea how this question would stir my spirit and pierce my soul. The question? What makes you ready today? I answered that question for her. I bared my soul, sharing those dark places that once existed and how I filled them with people, places, things and situations that some might consider dehumanizing, devaluing and degrading. I had nothing to be but honest. I knew that if I wanted to enter higher learning, this was my last chance; I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. I got accepted into the Bardwell Scholarship Program in 2009 and now I'm graduating in December 2014 with an Associate's in Applied Sciences, Social Work/ Youth Work. As I look back, there have been obstacles and challenges. I remember many days sitting in Hedy's office, staring and saying, "Why is it that every semester something major happens causing me to divide my attention between my goals and someone else's needs?" This is supposed to be my time if for no other reason than I'm ready today. Why is it that I must deal with the sickness of others and have to act as caretaker while trying to complete papers for class? Because I'm ready today. Why must I continue to redefine, rearrange and restructure my life to ensure that others' needs are met while trying to understand and pass these math classes? Because I'm ready today. Why do I need to move out of housing while trying to study for finals? Because I'm ready today. Why did someone have to kill one of my transgendered youth with a bullet and leave

the body for me to identify, then having to tell one of my closest friends that her cousin was dead, which caused me to have a breakdown and leave work and school with an incomplete in two classes? Because I'm ready today. Why was it that the man I love deeply, who has supported me and has been my biggest cheerleader/supporter have a medical procedure which caused him to be hospitalized for twenty-one days which left me trying to figure out how to manage work, class, and attend to him? Because I'm ready today. Why was it that on Sunday, January 5, 2014 my co-worker who was another of my greatest supporters, have a heart attack and pass away? Because I'm ready today. Why is it that I had my position from work taken from me along with a considerable amount of money because I didn't have a degree? Because I'm ready today. Why was it that I was forced to make a choice between my job and school and I chose school? Because I'm ready today. What makes me ready today? I remembered those feelings of worthlessness that I'd felt long ago when so called friends who had achieved certain plateaus in their education used it as a weapon to hurt me. I remembered that it's not how you start nor how you finish, but what you do in between out of selflessness. I remembered that RBS gave me an opportunity that I once believed was a fleeting dream. I remembered that through it all some wonderful people surrounded me and gave me the unconditional love, strength and support I needed. I remembered that others have endured more and crossed the line. What makes me ready today? I didn't give up. What makes me ready today is that you can take whatever you want from me, but you can't take my education. I'm just getting started. Thanks for all the guidance, strength and support from the RBS family and contributors. You will never know how much this program is transforming the lives of others for generations to come. Bardwell Scholars will be able to pass down the value of education to their families. That's not just life changing but priceless. To Reginald Jackson, Jr. and Rosalind Pleasant-Durbin, thank you both for pushing, pulling and holding me up during this journey. Without the two of you, I'm nothing. Dean Blair, Dr. Michael Heathfield, Jashed Fakhrid-Deen, Leslie Villaseñor, and Dr. Sonia Kennedy, you have made my learning experience at HW extraordinary. You are not just awesome educators but awesome human beings who pushed me to be better. Cynthia, Michael, David, Consuella, Jerma, Glenda, Eva, Charles, Nicole, Chet, and Shelton, I am because you all are! Hedy Cohen, what can I say? We spent countless times pushing, pulling, deciding, wondering, laughing, strategizing, debating and seeing who was going to be the last Diva standing. I'm graduating so we both win and we're both still standing. I am so grateful for all that you have done for me and everyone that has crossed your threshold in hopes of achieving an education.

Kevin Pleasant
AAS HWC 2014
Bardwell Scholar

No Limitations

As I sit and reflect on my academic journey, my heart begins to flutter and I feel my lips spread apart into a semi-circular motion forming a smile. I am overjoyed. How did I get here, I think to myself. Graduating with a Bachelor's Degree from DePaul University? Pinch me, I must be dreaming, I thought. Did I really make it? I mean, did I achieve the goal that I set out to achieve when all the odds were stacked against me? Oh yes, I surely did!

My journey toward success has been extremely long with many trials and tribulations challenging both my mental and physical strengths. Having been a teen mom and as a result, a high school dropout, my future looked pretty bleak. I was told that I would never amount to anything and that any dreams I had went out the window when I became a parent at such a young age. I remember having to dig deep within myself to block out all negative connotations and keep pushing forward to overcome the label of being another statistic. I had to learn to be my own motivator, set goals, and achieve them one by one. I enrolled at HWC back in 2007. At that time, I had no idea what area of study I wanted to major in. However, I was certain that higher education was a necessity to be a good role model for my child and become competitive within the job market. I was introduced to the wonderful Hedy Cohen and the Bardwell Scholar program in 2008 by my then academic advisor, Terry Pendleton. Hedy was phenomenal from the very beginning. She was warm, attentive, and genuinely cared about my goals, dreams, and aspirations. Initially, it was very difficult for me to understand why a perfect stranger, would want to help me reach my goals. This thought process was primarily due to my very limited resources of positive influences in my life. **However, the more I worked with Hedy, the Bardwell Scholars, and the HWC staff, it became clear to me that there are people who are genuinely willing to assist me in my journey to further my education and pursue my dreams.**

Bardwell Scholars has helped me in a several ways, all of which have been very valuable and have contributed to the molding of the person I am today. I have received assistance with tuition and book coverage which I wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise. I received warm welcomes, words of encouragement, and forums to discuss anything that I had going on in my personal life that could potentially derail me from the train ride toward success. I remember Hedy asking me "Why do you want to further your education and graduate?" At the time my response was "Because everyone whom I cared about told me I couldn't do it". I have since realized, it was never about any of those people, it has always been about me and MY dreams. I wanted to explore all that life had to offer and I knew that exploration starts with educating myself beyond preset limitations. At

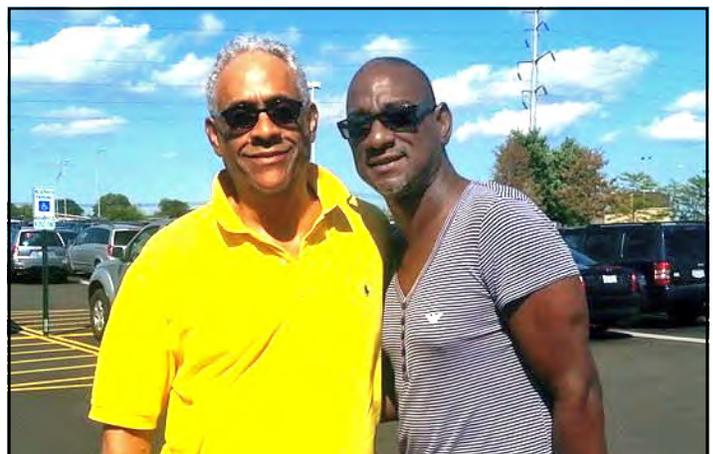
my graduation ceremony from HWC, I remember the feeling of joy I felt when I embraced my Bardwell Scholar family and shared in the joy of happiness and achievement. Now that I am graduating with my bachelor's degree, I am looking forward to reliving that joyful feeling of another accomplishment. Looking back over every hurdle that tested my commitment to my education and every late night and early morning studying that I put in to stay true to my commitment, I am overjoyed with happiness because it was truly well worth it.

There's not enough ink in my pen to fully express my gratitude and appreciate for the investment that RBS has put into my education and the dreams I've set for my life. I am forever grateful and will continue to play it forward to those who now sit in the seat where I once sat with what seemed to be unreachable dreams.

*Lawana Loving
AA HWC 2010
BA DePaul University 2014
Bardwell Scholar*



Lawana Loving, (middle) with son DeShawn and daughter Arieohng



Kevin Pleasant (right) with spouse Reggie Jackson, Jr.

Thank you to Contributors

Bardwell Scholars is both proud and humbled that, with your help, we are a 100% donor funded organization. Much gratitude is extended to the individuals listed below for their ongoing support. In addition we thank those who read our newsletters, visit our website, attend our functions or talk to others about the work we are doing. In a world where many people are doing important work, we clearly thank all of you for choosing to support RBS.

As each contribution is of significance, we list them alphabetically and equally.

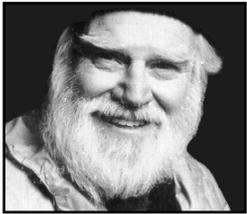
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