

July 29, 2009

FOR RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

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Tau Beta Pi Announces 2009 Laureates

Tau Beta Pi, the international engineering honor society, has named four Laureates in the Association's annual program to recognize gifted engineering students who have excelled in areas beyond their technical majors.

The 2009 Tau Beta Pi Laureates are Chad R. Fusco, a 2009 civil engineering graduate of Case Western Reserve University, cited for his achievements in the arts; Kathryn C. Kellogg, a 2009 graduate of South Dakota School of Mines & Technology with a degree in mechanical engineering, cited for her achievements in the arts; Uchechukwuka D. Monu, a 2009 electrical engineering graduate of Howard University, cited for her achievements in athletics; and Samantha van der Drift, a rising senior at Texas Tech University majoring in civil and environmental engineering, cited for her diverse achievements. They join 65 other remarkable Tau Bates who have been named Laureates since 1982.

The Laureate Program exists to further Tau Beta Pi's second fundamental purpose as stated in the Association's Constitution: “. . . *to foster a spirit of liberal culture in engineering colleges.*” The primary concern of the Society is to recognize students of superior scholarship and exemplary character and to honor eminent practicing engineers. The Society also encourages excellence in engineering education and in the ethical practice of engineering.

The Laureates will be honored with other 2009 national award winners on October 17, 2009, at the 104th annual Convention to be held in East Brunswick, New Jersey. Tau Beta Pi President Dr. Larry A. Simonson, P.E., will present each with a \$2,500 cash award and a commemorative plaque. Their biographies follow:

(more)

CHAD R. FUSCO, *Ohio Alpha '09*, is a civil engineering graduate with a theater minor at Case Western Reserve University and plans to obtain a master's in structural engineering there.

His commitment to the arts began in high school with school plays and web development. Chad joined the student theater group as a freshman at Case. He proved himself by taking charge, as a director, of a musical, *The Pajama Game*. Chad served as public relations officer for the Footlighters theater group his sophomore year and redefined the role.

He also became *Ohio Alpha's* Public Relations Chair, marketing the annual "Bookswap" program, and making it the most successful event to date. His future plans focus on growing as a design engineer. He has worked for the Seattle Department of Planning as an intern helping to develop several building projects. He plans to pursue another internship with a structural engineering focus.

At Case, Chad achieved a G.P.A. of 4.0 in his major and academic honors including first place in the ASCE North Central technical paper competition.

KATHRYN C. KELLOGG, *South Dakota Alpha '09*, is a mechanical engineering graduate of South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. She graduated in 2006 with a B.A. *magna cum laude* in music from Texas Christian University.

Katie started playing the violin at the age of four. She went on to be a soloist with the Black Hills Symphony Orchestra and concertmaster for the South Dakota All-State Orchestra. Katie is devoted to cultivating her love for music in others. She began teaching violin at the age of 14 and she continues today while balancing her schedule as a student. Although she performs nightly with her band at the Fort Hays Chuckwagon, Katie is a capable musician of classical, bluegrass, and Latin American.

In 2007, she was crowned Miss Rapid City thanks to her performance of *J.S. Bach's Sonata 1* during the pageant. She went on to be third runner-up for the title of Miss South Dakota after she and her violin won the talent portion of the contest.

She put her engineering skills and musical talent together to develop a music stand that turns the pages automatically. Katie's internships include working on an engineering team using fiber-optic strain gauges to monitor cracks at Mt. Rushmore. She has been the Corresponding Secretary for *South Dakota Alpha* and made the dean's list each year.

UCHECHUKWUKA D. MONU, *District of Columbia Alpha '09*, is an electrical engineering graduate at Howard University and has been accepted to work on her Ph.D. at Stanford University.

She is a swimmer training to qualify to represent her native Nigeria at the 2012 London Olympic Games. Uche comes from a family of swimmers, and shares the record of most individual gold medals won (7) at a national sporting event with her sister. She still holds two national records, in the 50-meter and 200-meter backstroke.

Uche swam for Howard's varsity swim team and holds the university records for the 400 and 800-yard freestyle relays. She was named to the North East Conference all-academic team in 2005 and 2006, and to the Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association all-academic team in 2007 and 2008.

She completed two internships as a summer analyst with Goldman Sachs & Co., and at the former Lehman Brothers. Uche also led the *DC Alpha* Chapter as president and to a TBII Greater Interest in Government initiative to teach high school students about electromagnetism.

SAMANTHA VAN DER DRIFT, *Texas Beta '10*, is majoring in civil and environmental engineering at Texas Tech University, and plans to graduate in May 2010.

Samantha grew up in the Netherlands, and began playing tennis at the age of six. She climbed the rankings to number four in Holland, in the under-17 age category. Soon she started playing international junior tournaments and training at an academy with professional players and coaches.

In an effort to continue her tennis career and study at a university, she decided to attend Texas Tech University. Samantha has co-captained the tennis team at Tech for two years and was unanimously voted captain for her senior year. She currently holds the record for most singles matches won at Tech.

In addition, Samantha is an athlete mentor for local schoolchildren, and works with an elementary school reading program.

Her career goal is to help preserve the environment for future generations. Samantha plans to become LEED accredited. She has joined Engineers Without Borders, where she is fundraising chair of a project to create a water sanitation system for a tribe in Panama.

Tau Beta Pi, the world's largest engineering society, has initiated 508,000 members since it was founded in 1885. Headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, the Association has 234 active collegiate chapters and 17 active alumnus chapters throughout the country.