



NEW LEADER SCHOLAR BIOS 2007

LANICE AVERY received her BA from San Francisco State University and is now in her third year of doctoral work at the University of Michigan. She is jointly enrolled in the Psychology Department as well as Women's Studies. Lanice has published two papers, received an honorable mention from the National Science Foundation and is the recipient of a three-year pre-doctoral Ford Fellowship. The first in her family to attend college, she has a deep commitment to help marginalized youth continue their education. Lanice worked for many years with various HIV/AIDS organizations helping the transgender community obtain access to social services. Having experienced firsthand the impact of discrimination based both on race and sexual orientation, she has devoted her energy to assisting oppressed groups with help in housing, employment and advanced education. In her senior year at SFSU, she was invited to join a select number of honor students who were helped with research training and application to doctoral programs. She has received three New Leader Scholarship Awards.

ELAINE BARTOLOME, See 2009 entry (awarded a second New Leader Scholarship).

DERICK BROWN; See 2009 entry (awarded a second New Leader Scholarship)

SHARYN HALL received a BA from U.C., Berkeley, having majored in both Psychology and Sociology. She is currently in a Master's Program in Journalism at Harvard University. As a single mother, Sharyn and her son were homeless and living out of a car when she applied to Berkeley, and he, to Berkeley City College. While at Berkeley, she was a leader in several student programs, including Fly to Berkeley that seeks to recruit, welcome and acculturate new students from underserved populations. Sharyn has researched, produced, and been on the air with Clear Channel Radio. As a McNair Scholar, her research focused on the cultural roots of stigma and prejudice.

YESENIA OCAMPO graduated from U.C., Berkeley with a degree in Sociology. She has returned to her initial passion and plans to become a nurse practitioner. Her parents migrated seasonally as farm workers between Mexico and the United States, living in labor camps in the Central Valley. This exposed her early on to issues of social injustice and has led to her commitment to become an "activist". Overcoming many barriers and stereotypes, she enrolled in Bakersfield City College. (the first in her family to do so), and transferred to U.C., Berkeley after excelling there. Yesenia has worked in Migrant Head Start as a teacher's aide and as a team leader in the Jumpstart program, teaching literacy and social skills to preschoolers. In her community, she has worked for the Dolores Huerta Foundation, helped low-income pregnant women and collected food for the disadvantaged in her rural community. Despite her heavy work load, Yesenia volunteered extensively at Children's Hospital in Oakland while an undergraduate. She worked as a Coordinator for the Mt. Diablo CARES Programs based at a low income, largely Hispanic, elementary school in Concord. Returning to her parents' community, she hopes to become a pediatric nurse practitioner, serving communities like the one in which she was raised. Currently, Yesenia is working as a Recovery Coordinator for College Community Services, a provider of outpatient health services for children, adolescents and families. She works with at-risk youth providing mental health services.

RULETTE MAPP received her BA in Art History from U.C., Berkeley. She is a single, divorced mother with three children, who was emancipated from foster care at 18, and learned to face the world alone. After odd jobs and an initially unsuccessful try at college, Rue opened a small game and hobby store in 2003 while raising her children as a single parent and simultaneously holding another job. Following her transfer to U.C. from a community college, she dedicated herself to recruiting and training under-represented minorities and non-traditional older students and student parents to Berkeley. She has been given numerous honors, including the Celia J. Peeler Award, the Philanthropic Education Organization Award and IDEAL Scholar designation. Rue was the keynote speaker at the 2007 Multi-Cultural Transfer Day. A year ago, Rue created an online community called “Outdoor Afro” as an attempt to induce more people of color into outdoor family activities. She has been invited to attend two White House Conferences in the past year, highlighting programs like hers. This year, she was hired as a Youth Investment Program Officer by the Stewardship Council to oversee grant giving and evaluation. Most recently, she was awarded conservation “hero” status by the Wilderness Society. Rue hopes to “move the needle” and continue her graduate studies in the near future.

DANIEL PAREDES received his BA from U.C., Berkeley with majors in Political Science and Sociology in addition to a minor in Urban Planning. This past spring, he received a Master’s Degree in Urban Planning from UCLA. “Surrounded by gangs, drugs, and poverty” he made mistakes that almost cost him his future. He describes his high school years as turbulent and crisis-filled, leading to suspension and ultimately to school expulsion. An older brother and sister, along with a high school teacher, taught him how to “work within the system.” Epitomizing this progression, Daniel first became a mentee of the Academic Achievement Programs, then a peer mentor, and finally a Student Program Coordinator. While working 20 hours per week, he also interned at Berkeley’s Center for Race and Gender as well as volunteering for the Big Brother/Big/Sister Program on campus. He credits both parents, immigrants from Mexico, with teaching him the value of hard work. At the present time, Daniel is working at an International Charter High School in Los Angeles, helping to prepare students for college. This work is an outgrowth of his position at the Youth Policy Institute for the past two years. He has received two New Leader Scholarships.

SAMORN SELIM received both her BA and JD from UC, Berkeley. Her family and older siblings immigrated to the United States from Laos due to political and economic oppression. Prior to her acceptance to law school at Berkeley, she volunteered extensively at Hospice and the San Joaquin County Superior Court Family Law Center and simultaneously developed a program to teach life skills to high school students. Samorn was awarded several scholarships for her outstanding academic performance, while also coordinating the Berkeley Law Foundation Phoenix Fellowship. She worked for one summer at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, D.C. on consumer rights issues and in 2008 she served as a law clerk extern for a federal court judge in San Francisco. In the summer of 2009 she traveled in Laos and Thailand engaging in human rights work. Samorn is fluent in Thai, Laotian and American Sign Language, all of which will greatly enhance her nonprofit work while in Laos and Thailand. In 2009 she started work as an attorney for a national firm that emphasizes pro bono public interest work and diversity. She has received four New Leader Scholarships.

CHRISTYNA SERRANO, (See 2012 entry, awarded a sixth New Leader Scholarship)

SARAH THIBAUT, See 2009 entry (awarded a third New Leader Scholarship)

AREZO YAZD earned both her BA and JD degrees from U.C., Berkeley, having majored in Political Science and Middle East Studies. Born in Iran, imprisoned with her mother as a baby, she emigrated here with her family in 1984, when forcefully expelled due to her mother's Kurdish ancestry and political activism. Arezo is the first woman in her family to attend college and as a Kurd Muslim woman; she is deeply involved in a number of organizations that help recent immigrants. She has volunteered for Survivors International, the East Bay Sanctuary and has worked with the Kurdish Youth Forum. She served as a Communications Fellow for the U.S. Women without Borders Campaign under the Women's Funding Network. Her role was to build support for women that were the victims of sex trafficking and who were seeking asylum under the Gender Asylum and Recovery Project. She was the executive editor of the Berkeley Journal of International Law and editor in chief of the Middle East and Islamic Law Journal in addition to serving on a number of student boards while at UCB. In 2008, she externed for the Senate Judiciary Committee, working on the staff of Senator Feingold and following that she worked for Human Rights Watch in Washington, D.C. Arezo has been awarded five New Leader Scholarships.