



THOMAS J. WATSON FELLOWSHIP
A PROGRAM OF THE THOMAS J. WATSON FOUNDATION

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

MARCH 12, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Cleveland Johnson, Director
Thomas J. Watson Fellowship
11 Park Place, Suite 1503
New York, NY 10007
(212) 245-8859
Email: TJW@watsonfellowship.org
Web site: www.watsonfellowship.org

FORTY COLLEGE SENIORS ARE AWARDED WATSON “DREAM” GRANTS

The Thomas J. Watson Foundation awarded forty fellowships to college seniors to pursue their unique passion or dream for a year of independent exploration and travel outside the United States.

In addition to their academic achievements, these newly-announced Fellows have been leaders on- and off-campus. They include: NGO board members, EMTs, volunteer firemen and forest rangers, radio producers and filmmakers, published authors, student body officers, varsity athletes, entrepreneurs, environmental educators, community volunteers, a volunteer parole officer, and a tintinologist. Their accomplishments include: founding an artist collective with two non-profit record labels, lobbying for environmental organizations at UNFCCC negotiations in Copenhagen, creating summer- and after-school programs for inner-city youth, and executing self-designed humanitarian/developmental projects in the developing world.

The forty TJW fellows come from twenty-three states and three foreign countries and exhibit a broad diversity of academic specialty, socio-economic background, and life experience. As the forty-second class of Watson Fellows, they'll traverse seventy-six countries, exploring topics from policewomen in the Islamic world to medicinal plant markets, from geothermal energy to open-fire cooking, from large-format photography to creek boating, from recycled buses in the Global South to the use of hip hop in holistic healing. (See full list below.)

An award-winning slam poet will study cultural attitudes toward the Islamic veil. A young engineer will live in and explore eco-cities. The son of video game designers will look at social aspects of gaming culture in East Asia. A track and cross-country runner will investigate the emerging sport of parkour. A Jewish Ukrainian émigré will examine the rebirth of Judaism in the post-Soviet world. A former coal miner (and owner of his own biodiesel company) will survey sustainable rural economies. An electronic visual artist/composer will seek out hotbeds of electronic art. A neuroscientist will explore fermentation in global culinary traditions. A volunteer fireman/forest-firefighter/EMT will examine emergency infrastructure on three continents.

As interesting as the projects are, “these awards are long-term investments in people, not research,” says Cleveland Johnson, Director of the Watson Fellowship Program and a former Watson Fellow. “We look for persons likely to lead or innovate in the future and give them extraordinary independence to pursue their interests outside of traditional academic structures. Watson Fellows are passionate learners, creative thinkers, and motivated self-starters who are encouraged to dream big but demonstrate feasible strategies for achieving their fellowship goals. The Watson Fellowship affords an unparalleled opportunity for global experiential learning.”

Awardees come from select private liberal arts colleges and universities. 150 finalists were nominated this year to compete on the national level. Each fellow will receive \$25,000 for twelve-months of travel and exploration.

The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Program was established in 1968 by the children of Thomas J. Watson, Sr., the founder of International Business Machines Corp., and his wife, Jeannette K. Watson, to honor their parents’ long-standing interest in education and world affairs. The Watson Foundation regards its investment in people as an effective long-term contribution to the global community.

In the history of the program, approximately 2640 Watson Fellows have taken this challenging journey. A Watson Year provides fellows an opportunity to test their aspirations and abilities and develop a more informed sense of international concern. Fellows have gone on to become college presidents and professors, CEOs of major corporations, MacArthur “genius” grant recipients, politicians, artists, lawyers, diplomats, doctors, journalists, innovators and researchers across a wide range of sciences and engineering disciplines.

This year’s Thomas J. Watson Fellowship recipients are:

Elias Aba Milki (Amherst College)	Maya Higgins (Scripps College)
Clint Agresti (University of Puget Sound)	Jonathon Jenner (Earlham College)
Roxanna Azari (Wheaton College)	Jody Joyner (Colorado College)
Carina Baskett (Rice University)	Madeline Kreider Carlson (Haverford College)
Seth Bergeson (Whitman College)	Skye Lawrence (Bowdoin College)
Robert Best (Harvey Mudd College)	Jose Martinez (Williams College)
Andrey Bilko (Ursinus College)	James Morton (Union College)
Simone Biow (Bryn Mawr College)	Lauren Nutter (College of the Atlantic)
Maia Brown (Oberlin College)	Frances O’Connell (University of the South)
Charles Cavness (Middlebury College)	Timothy Richards (Haverford College)
Jeanette Charles (Scripps College)	Kevin Rowe (Hamilton College)
Lisa Chung (Oberlin College)	Jennifer Rusciano (Colgate University)
Nadim Damluji (Whitman College)	Anson Stewart (Swarthmore College)
Sarah Ebel (Bowdoin College)	Andrew Terwillager (Carleton College)
Blakeslee Evitt (Davidson College)	Nathan Thomas (Hendrix College)
Frederick Franke (Union College)	Filippos Tsakiris (Grinnell College)
Shae Frydenlund (Colgate University)	Max Wall (Hamilton College)
Taliesin Gilkes-Bower (Bard College)	Corey Watts (Williams College)
Nathan Hall (Berea College)	Alex Winter (Lawrence University)
Alison Harrington (Wellesley College)	Liana Woskie (Wesleyan University)

To see the winners and their project descriptions, please visit our website at:

http://www.watsonfellowship.org/site/fellows/10_11.html