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Minorities unify for scholarships

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NORMAL - A group of black organizations handing out **scholarships** Thursday night gladly broke some traditions in the process.

The first innovation was the gathering itself. Seven groups gathered for the first time Thursday at Normal Public Library to award 15 **scholarships** and celebrate academic achievement. Before, each group gave awards individually.

"We decided to give them together as a sign of unity in the community," said Ayanna Price of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, one of the groups at Thursday's event.

Several students welcomed that.

"I think it's very uplifting to be recognized like this," said Carena Autmon.

"It's good to be acknowledged for doing something positive," said Christina Lewis. "A lot of times you hear about the negative."

One sorority broke new ground by giving a **scholarship** to a working, single mother instead of a newly graduated high school senior. Another gave a **scholarship** to a student bound for community college.

Dianne Dixon, who received a Beta Iota Beta sorority **scholarship**, was one of those groundbreaking students. She couldn't be at the Normal Public Library for the ceremony, food and fellowship because she was at class.

Dixon, who is a mother, works at State Farm Insurance Cos. during the day and this summer attends a night class at Heartland Community College.

The sorority decided there was a need to help single parents, said members Reland Carter and Subrena Robinson.

Another new **scholarship** from the Beta Iota Zeta sorority was for a community college student.

"I will go to ISU to eventually become an elementary teacher," said Nicole Love, 29, who juggles part-time work, raising her 10-year-old son and going to Heartland Community College as time permits.

While the awards were being passed out, **Tony Jones** of Kappa Alpha Psi and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had some words for recipients.

Starting college is one thing, he said. "More importantly, we want you to finish college."

He said there are a lot of distractions, but getting a college education makes a difference for the rest of a person's life.

"You'll be tempted to skip 8 o'clock classes ... go to a party instead of study for your mid-terms," he said.

"I think that's great advice. We all see there's going to be distractions. We have to hold on to our morals and values," said KaReisha Robinson, winner of multiple **scholarships** locally as well as a four-year Bradley University **scholarship** valued at \$16,000.

Students were reminded they had some help to get this far.

"Behind every great student is a parent," said Keith Baker of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. "If it wasn't for your parents, you wouldn't be where you are today."

Bloomington-Normal winners

Scholarships were awarded by seven Twin City-based organizations to the following Bloomington-Normal students during a joint **scholarship** presentation Thursday evening.

Omicron Delta chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority: Christina Lewis, Antonio Murry, Stacy Jefferson and KaReisha Robinson.

Nu Psi Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity: Lewis, Jefferson, Robinson, Brett McGee, Carena Autmon and Keara Williams.

Bloomington-Normal Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority: Lewis, Robinson, Jefferson, Murry, Autmon, and Nicole Love.

Bloomington-Normal Alumni Chapter of Grambling State University Alumni Associations: Sha 'Ron Tyus.

Bloomington-Normal Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity: Lewis, Winston McCauly and Edwin George.

Bloomington-Normal Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: Tashika Kindle, Christy Patton, Brett McGee, Nathaniel Haywood, Jefferson and Robinson.

Beta Iota Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority: Autmon, Robinson and Dianne Dixon.

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