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Article from the **Pantagraph** (Bloomington, IL)

Showing the way to college// Program awards over \$35K in scholarships

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BLOOMINGTON - Jessica Thornton, a senior at Eastern Illinois University, told high school graduates that college has not been the best years of her life.

In her "college confession," she said, "The best is yet to come."

The former **scholarship** winner was a guest speaker Saturday at the Joint **Scholarship** Reception at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Bloomington, where more than \$35,000 in **scholarships** were awarded to 15 students.

The **scholarships** were given by 10 organizations, mostly fraternities, sororities, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Mentoring and Proving **Scholarships** Program.

Tony Jones, a founder and coordinator of the program, said this is the fifth year for mentoring program and the seventh year since several organizations offering **scholarships** combined their efforts in a single annual award presentation event.

Thornton participated in **MAPS** and found another use for the acronym in her life. For her, it also stands for "making attainable plans for success." That is something she has done during her college years, and has been inspired by her parents and those who have believed in her along the way.

"They saw potential in me and gave back," she said.

The program is meant to empower students and help them with the financial needs. "We hope they will come back and make a difference in Bloomington-Normal," said Carla Campbell-Jackson, a coordinator of the program. "A lot of students already have."

A Bloomington High School graduate walked away with the most **scholarships** - six - at the event.

"I'm a motivated person," said Jason McGee, who will study accounting at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He said he wasn't sure of the monetary total yet of the six **scholarships**, but it will help with his education.

The son of Joy and Gerald McGee of Bloomington was active in band and student government and made it on the list of Who's Who in American High Schools.

"When I want something and if it is attainable, I go for it as hard as I can," he said.

Marcus Brown, representing State Farm Insurance, which sponsors the **scholarship** reception, said of McGee and the other winners: "They are not just given these **scholarships** - they earned them. They are hard-earned."

Kelli Watson, a reporter for WEEK-TV in Peoria who has played her flute on the Great Wall of China, inspired students with a Dr. Seuss story titled, "Oh, the Places You'll Go."

Watson said her family moved from an area of Chicago where gangs were becoming a problem to the suburbs, where they were the only black family in an all-white neighborhood. When she was only 6 years old, a mob came to her door telling the family to leave. "That was 1990," she said.

When more blacks moved into their neighborhood, she was called "Oreo" for being white in the middle and black on the outside. But she said no efforts to hush her voice were successful. She went on to win many awards in school and had many opportunities during and after attending the University of Syracuse.

"My parents and God always knew the places I would go," she said.

2007 Joint **Scholarship** Program winners

More than \$35,000 in **scholarships** were awarded to 15 students Saturday at the Joint **Scholarship** Reception at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church.

Hilary Alexander, Bloomington High School graduate - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Mentoring and Providing **Scholarships** Program (**MAPS**), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Shikera Chavers, University High School - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.

Courtney Canard, Normal Community West High School - Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.

Tosha Childs, Normal Community High School - **MAPS** Program

Patina Dunn, Normal West - Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.

Scott Ebo, BHS - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., **MAPS** Program (**MAPS**)

Kendra King, Normal West - **MAPS** Program, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.

Jason McGee, BHS - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., MAPS Program, NAACP, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

Andre Monroe, Normal West - **MAPS** Program

Warren Moore, Normal West - **MAPS** Program, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Legacy **Scholarship**

Joshua Netter, NCHS - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

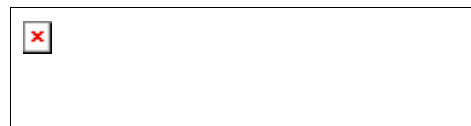
Tiara Pegues, Normal West - **MAPS** Program , Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

Demetrius Scott, NCHS - **MAPS** Program

Dante Shelton, BHS - MAPSProgram, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Legacy **Scholarship**

Charles Turner, NCHS - Sigma Gamma Rho Inc.

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