

Bush Foundation Selects 20 Leadership Fellows for 2005

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Saint Paul, Minnesota (May 4, 2005) — Thirteen Twin Cities-area residents, four Greater Minnesota residents, two South Dakotans and one Wisconsin resident are among the 20 individuals to receive Bush Leadership Fellowships for 2005. The fellowships support full-time study in academic or self-designed educational programs. The program's goal is to help individuals at mid-career prepare for greater leadership responsibilities and enhanced contributions to their communities.

The fellowships will support study in a wide range of fields, including international labor standards, international educational policy and economic development in the African-American community; museum development; social movements and citizen engagement; international human rights and using nonviolent negotiation to resolve international conflicts. The 2005 fellows include educators, attorneys, artists and psychotherapists.

In addition to the Leadership Fellows Program, the Bush Foundation provides fellowships to artists and physicians. The Foundation also makes grants to nonprofit organizations in Minnesota and the Dakotas that work in the areas of arts and humanities, ecological health, education, and health and human services. The Foundation was established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth. It supports the work of leaders and organizations to improve their communities and provides opportunities for those who lack them.

FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS—TWIN CITIES AND SUBURBS

Margaret A. Adamek, Minneapolis—Adamek will complete a Ph.D. in work, community and family education at the University of Minnesota. She will address public health issues like alcoholism, diabetes and depression by linking biochemistry to nutritional interventions. As the director and founder of The Sugar Project at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University, Adamek's work addresses the relationship between food and health, especially in the Native American population.

Michael K. Belton, Minneapolis—Belton will attend Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and intern with the National Ten Point Leadership Foundation in Boston. His goal is "to significantly and permanently reduce the number of youth homicides, particularly in communities of color." Belton is the director of Hennepin County Juvenile Probation.

Pamela Johns Danforth, Saint Paul—Currently a culture teacher at the American Indian Magnet School, Johns Danforth will seek a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from the

University of Minnesota in order to qualify to teach at the university level.

Mekha, Minneapolis—Currently the executive director of Freeport West, Inc., a Minneapolis nonprofit agency working with inner-city youth and families, Mehka will pursue a master's degree in public administration at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and complete a self-designed study program to develop a model for economic development in the African-American community based on cultural principles and practices, not solely on race identity.

Dipankar Mukherjee, Minneapolis—Mukherjee is the founder and artistic director of Pangea World Theater in Minneapolis. The Theater is known for its multicultural-themed presentations. He will study peaceful and nonviolent mediation and conflict resolution techniques in South Africa, Switzerland and India by meeting with leaders, activists and mentors working for world peace and human rights.

Maria Cristina O'Brien, Minneapolis—O'Brien will pursue a master's degree in public affairs at the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. She is currently the art director of the Mira Gallery in Minneapolis and an academic advisor in the TRIO/Student Support Services program at Augsburg University. O'Brien will also study Mexican/Chicano visual art in order to foster the growing number of local Hispanic artists, help raise them to national prominence and use their art as a bridge between cultures.

Paul O. Orieny, Maple Grove—A psychotherapist, Orieny will seek a Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy at the University of Minnesota. He will also work with nationally known experts on immigrant families to create culturally healthy solutions for recently arrived African immigrant families in crisis. "I would like to be a resource that social services, county and medical facilities can consult with to find solutions," he said.

Jason T. Stark, New Brighton—Stark is an Ojibwe language and social studies teacher at the Nawaynee Center School, Inc. in Minneapolis. He will study tribal and federal Indian law by completing a law degree and a master's degree in public administration at the Hamline University School of Law. "I want to preserve Ojibwe rights and sovereignty through traditional principles of law, governance and diplomacy," he said.

Robert Sykora, Minneapolis—Sykora's goal is to work with others to build smart public policy that sets limits on how technology collects and disseminates information about individuals. He currently serves as the chief information officer with the Minnesota Department of Public Defense. He seeks a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Erik M. Takeshita, Minneapolis—A senior policy aide to Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Ryback, Takeshita will attend the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University to earn a master's degree in public administration and study arts-based community development.

Deborah Talen, Minneapolis—Talen, founder and former executive director of Rainbow Families, will attend Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government to earn a master's degree in public administration. She also intends to study social movement and citizen engagement in order to increase the effectiveness of nonprofits.

Khu Thao, Minneapolis—Thao is a social worker in the area of child protection for Hennepin County. She will use her fellowship to pursue a doctorate in psychology at Argosy University. Thao will combine her knowledge of psychology and Hmong cultural beliefs to create mental health services that are effective and sensitive to the needs of Hmong patients.

Maureen L. White Eagle, Eagan—A managing attorney for the Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, White Eagle will develop the skills to found or direct a human rights organization dedicated to women and children through self-directed study in the U.S., Thailand and Brazil.

FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS—IN GREATER MINNESOTA

Yolanda L. Arauza, Moorhead—An instructor in the Department of American Multicultural Studies at Minnesota State University in Moorhead, Arauza will pursue a doctorate degree in history at North Dakota State University. She hopes to gain a tenure-track position at a university where she can recruit and enroll more Latino students from the Red River Valley area.

Lillian K. Duran, Hanska—Duran is an early childhood special education teacher in the Mankato Public School System. Her fellowship goal is to bring more bilingual early childhood programs to rural Minnesota. She will attend the University of Minnesota to earn a doctorate in educational psychology.

Jeff Hilgert, Duluth—The development coordinator of the Damiano Center, an emergency center for unemployed and working poor people in Duluth, Hilgert wants to become a leading labor advocate with a human rights organization. He will pursue a doctorate degree in labor relations at Cornell University. As part of his studies, he will spend time at the International Labor Organization’s International Training Center in Turin, Italy.

Gary W. Johnson-Cheeseman, Royalton—Johnson-Cheeseman, an assistant professor at St. Cloud State University, will complete a doctorate in educational leadership at Saint Mary’s University in Winona. His goal is to attain a tenure-track position at a respected university where he can further the development of the American Indian community.

FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS—SOUTH DAKOTA

Yvonne G. Lerew, Hartford—She is an education coordinator for the Refugee and Immigration Programs of Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota in Sioux Falls. Lerew will use her fellowship to attain a master’s degree in international educational policy at Harvard University. Her goal is to improve educational opportunities for immigrant teenagers and young adults.

Cassandra K. Soeffing, Sioux Falls—Soeffing is a science teacher at the Axtell Middle School in Sioux Falls. She will attend the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City to complete a doctorate in atmospheric, environmental and water resources. Her fellowship goal is to improve science education by bringing more real world science into the classroom.

FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS—WISCONSIN

Juliet R. Fox, Menomonie—A Dunn County supervisor and lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Fox will attend the Fielding Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, California to obtain a doctorate in human development and organizational systems. Her fellowship goal is to work among educators, public officials and businesses to help communities flourish and change through the use of technology.

About the Bush Leadership Fellows Program

Bush Leadership Fellowships provide from two to 18 months of support for learning experiences in a broad range of fields, including public service, education, government, health, business, engineering, architecture, science, law, journalism, and social work.

Selection criteria include applicants' personal qualities, past work experiences, career goals, and the potential impact of their fellowships on their communities. Demonstrated leadership and evidence of leadership potential are essential qualities.

Eligible applicants are U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are at least 28 years old and employed at the time of the application due date. Applicants are required to have at least five years of full-time work experience and to have lived at least one continuous year immediately prior to the due date in either Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, or one of the following 26 counties in northwestern Wisconsin: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Buffalo, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, La Crosse, Lincoln, Oneida, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Price, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, Taylor, Trempealeau, Vilas, and Washburn.

There is no upper age limit for application to the Bush Leadership Fellows program.