

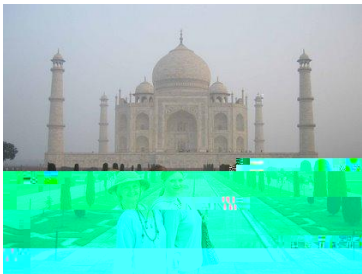
FALL 2008

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NEWSLETTER OF THE LAMAR UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

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### Birdwell Retires, Travels the World



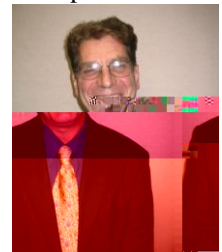
After many years of hard work and dedication to the Honors Program, Dr. Donna Birdwell retired after this past spring semester. Dr. Birdwell has been embracing her love of travel and culture since her retirement. She has travelled in India with her daughter,

the Tibetan language. You can learn more about her adventures at <http://www.wideworldhome.net-a.googlepages.com/>

### New Leadership in the Honors Program

#### *Interim Director*

Dr. Kevin Dodson has taught philosophy at Lamar University since 1991 and now holds the rank of Professor. He attended the University of Washington, where he graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in Philosophy and was accepted into the UW chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. After a brief rest, Dr. Dodson went on to study philosophy at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, completing his Ph.D. in 1991. Since then, he has served as



focused on the history of modern philosophy, moral and political theory, and the philosophy of history, and he has received support for his work from the German Academic Exchange Service and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In addition to presenting papers at both national conferences and international congresses, Dr. Dodson has published numerous articles and is a coeditor of the Online Encyclopedia of Enlightenment and Revolution and senior editor of Ways of Knowing: Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Knowledge (Kendall/Hunt).

#### *Interim Assistant Director*

Dr. Nicki Michalski has been at Lamar University since



from Eastern Michigan University and her Ph.D. from Wayne State University. She teaches classes ranging from public speaking and performance studies to rhetorical theory. Her areas of research include rhetorical criticism and popular culture. She has been a member of the honors faculty at Lamar since 1999 teaching Honors Public Speaking and

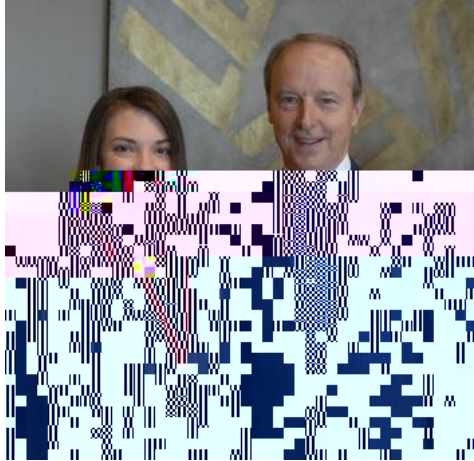
Honors seminars dealing with rhetorical criticism.

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## Mikel Named First Beck Fellow

Honors Program member Jennifer Mikel was awarded the first David Beck Fellowship in November 2008. This is the most prestigious award given to La



project is a nursing internship in Ghana, where she will work in a rural hospital she was in high school and met a nurse who had worked in Africa. in nursing with a fantastic trip that would be a journey of a lifetime. I was so happy that David Beck came up with this fellowship so that it could be

David Beck, the sponsor of the fellowship, is an alumnus of the university and is one of the top lawyers in the state. He is also a regent of the Texas State University System and has served as president of the LU Foundation. Beck established the fellowship to provide promising Lamar students with the opportunity to pursue unique educational experiences they would otherwise have to forego. (information provided by the LU website)

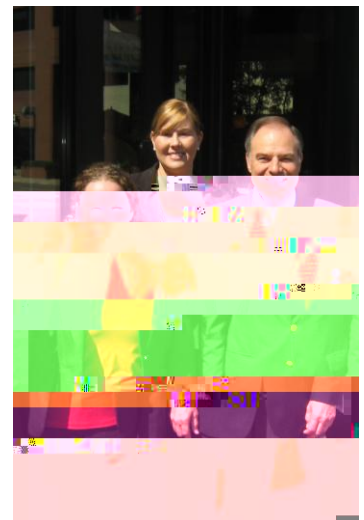
## Honors Students Attend National Democratic and Republican Conventions

Four Honors Program members were given the experience of a lifetime with visits to the National Conventions this summer. They were participants in the Washington Center project. Caitlin Kruger and Craig Tahaney attended the Democratic Convention where they met Alisa Hicklin. Hicklin is an honors alumna, current political science professor at the University of Oklahoma and an active part of the Washington Center convention project. The Republican Convention was attended by Daniel Whitton and Jill Hamilton.

## Kruger Recalls Her Experience at the National Democratic Convention

*Senior Political Science and Communication major, Caitlin Kruger, tells of her experience at this year's Democratic National Convention:*

I had the honor of attending the Democratic National Convention thro1(it)xe2(n)6( )-2(a)-13(y)6( )-2(o)ranNation cad The Wa8in-



## **STUDY ABROAD**

### **Volunteering in Belize**

*Josmery Ramirez writes:*

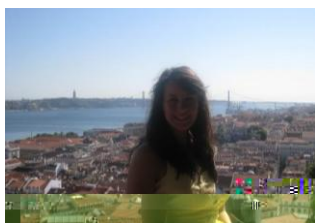
During my freshman year, I came upon a community service organization known as Rotaract. What began as an attempt to secure a few points for the Honors Program has turned into a life-changing experience. Through Rotaract, I have had the opportunity to work with the children of Chunox, Belize, helping raise over \$10,000 in educational scholarships. I traveled there this past summer and had the pleasure of sharing this experience with my fellow Honors Program students Laura Whitmire and Madison Bunde. While in Belize, we conducted a service project known as Camp Believe encouraging children to believe in their dreams.

My work in Belize opened doors to other opportunities, and I am now proud to say that I am the recipient of the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship for 2009-



## Study in Spain by Callie Summerlin

Did you know that Lamar houses a Study Abroad office on campus dedicated to making your study abroad happen? In fact, because so few students pursue this opportunity, it is likely that those who *do* will receive a Study Abroad Scholarship (up to \$2,000). Of course, be resourceful in your efforts to find as much alternative funding as possible. For example, did you know that the Honors Program offers financial support through the McMaster Scholarship Fund for honors students engaging in academic pursuits? I also applied for the study abroad scholarship (\$1,000) offered to fifty students nationwide by the National Honors Society



## **Ralph Bunche Summer Institute Aides in Jarmon's Search for a Graduate School**

This summer I attended the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute hosted by Duke University. It is a 5-week, intensive research program designed to create the graduate school experience in political science for racial and ethnic minorities who have been historically underrepresented in political science graduate schools. The institute prepares students for graduate school and helps them determine whether or not they really want to attend graduate school.

While there, students learn to use statistical software, attend lectures headed by professors, and participate in discussion seminars headed by teaching assistants. Students also are encouraged to develop research tools and use them in the application of a research agenda, which is extremely important in the field of Political Science. The students also participated in a graduate fair in which recruiters from various schools presented information about their graduate program.

The Bunche Institute solidified my decision to go to graduate school and gave me the resources necessary to succeed. I was extremely satisfied with my Bunche experience and would encourage anyone who is interested to apply.  
**by Chris Jarmon**

## **REU at Clarkson University by Ritchie Acosta**

