

Tuesday, March 30, 2010

Three seniors win prestigious Wilson and Human Relations awards

By Dan Bodene, contributing writer

Tawnee Milko and Waseem Samaan have been awarded Oakland University's Matilda R. and Alfred G. Wilson awards, respectively, and Norris Chase has won the Human Relations Award for 2010.

All three graduating seniors were recognized for their contributions and accomplishments with the most prestigious honors the university offers.

The honorees were recognized by OU's Board of Trustees this March, following selection for the awards by a nominating committee.

Since 1965, the Wilson awards have been presented to students based on their contributions as scholars, leaders and responsible citizens of the university. The Human Relations Award, established in 1990, recognizes significant leadership in advancing intergroup harmony.

2010 Matilda R. Wilson Award

Tawnee S. Milko

A biology major with a grade-point average of 3.86, Milko has experience as a student liaison to the OU Board of Trustees and has been deeply involved with the Honors College, including serving as its Student Association president and student representative to the Honors College Council.

She has been an International Student Volunteer, Crittenton Hospital Emergency Room volunteer, Clinton River Watershed Festival elementary class guide and Presidential Scholarship Program student advisor. She testified with OU President Gary Russi at a hearing of the Michigan Senate Subcommittee for Higher Education Appropriations.

Milko received several scholarships, including the Presidential Scholarship, National Merit Finalist Scholarship, OU Talented Scholar Award and an Undergraduate Research Award.

"I know many very talented leaders who have contributed so much to Oakland's scholarship and culture, so simply sharing the Wilson Award nomination with such women is an incredible honor," said Milko. "I've been very grateful to Oakland for giving me the opportunity to gain the wonderful wealth of diverse experiences I've had here. It's very humbling to receive recognition for things I've actually done out of a sense of responsibility to give back to the university."

2010 Alfred G. Wilson Award

Waseem Samaan

Maintaining a 3.87 GPA in his accounting and finance studies, Samaan was involved with several organizations such as Beta Alpha Psi, Beta Gamma Sigma, National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants and Oakland Accounting Students Information Society.

Samaan also was recognized by the School of Business Administration as a Junior Scholar, Senior Scholar and Global Scholar. As a Global Scholar in China, Samaan conducted research, learned basic Mandarin language and gained insights into Chinese culture. In addition, he completed several internships at companies including Faurecia and KPMG.

Among Samaan's awards and scholarships are the Michigan Merit Award, Chaldean Award, Festival of Writing Award, Detroit and OU NABA scholarships and the Accounting and Finance Board Scholarship.

"This award is phenomenal – it's the most incredible thing that has ever happened to me," said Samaan. "It is the biggest honor for me to be recognized in this way by OU. I don't feel I could have done as much in my life without having attended OU – and I couldn't have done it without my professors."

2010 Human Relations Award

Norris Chase

Winning the 2009 Keeper of the Dream Award Scholarship was only one of Chase's accomplishments, which include co-founding the student organization RED COW (Revive Experience Dream Change Our World), where he also served as president.

Through that organization, Chase promoted weekly study nights, helped direct monthly community service projects, and planned and conducted weekly executive board and monthly general meetings.

Chase's experiences at OU also included stints as a student peer mentor with both the Center for Multicultural Initiatives and Project Upward Bound Summer Academy, and events coordinator for the Residence Hall Council. He will graduate with a degree in Business Management.

Chase credited mentors, friends, other students and faculty with helping him to excel at OU.

"More than anything, I am extremely grateful and thankful to all of the faculty and students who gave me the opportunity to interact and grow with them personally, and within their department," he said. "I am sincerely proud of this achievement. Such a prestigious award from the university assures me that anything is possible if you dedicate your time and focus to it."



Tawnee Milko was awarded the 2010 Matilda R. Wilson Award for her work at Oakland.



Waseem Samaan was awarded the 2010 Alfred G. Wilson Award for his activities.



Norris Chase received the 2010 Human Relations Award for his service.

SUMMARY

Tawnee Milko and Waseem Samaan have been awarded the Wilson awards and Norris Chase has won the Human Relations Award for 2010.

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