

## DIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT

## Hard work, aid from UNCF help keep her on track

By STEPH McKENNA  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

A smashing academic career has propelled a medical student at Brown University onto the national scene as a success story of the United Negro College Fund.

A profile of Angel Byrd, who is pursuing two advanced degrees at Brown, was among 10 featured during the UNCF's annual fundraising telethon.

"It was a tremendous honor," says Byrd, of her inclusion in the national fund's recent telecast. "They flew my mom and me to California for the taping. We met so many celebrities. It was amazing!"

Bryd knows firsthand how valuable financial support from the UNCF can be for students who otherwise might not be able to pursue their academic dreams. Through UNCF, Byrd became a Gates Millennium Scholar, which financed her undergraduate studies at Tougaloo College, and also some of her time at Brown. She recently received an award, the UNCF/Merck Graduate Science Research Dissertation Fellowship, which will allow her to complete her doctorate.

Born and raised in Mississippi, she has two older brothers. Her dad died when she was 5. Her mom is a social worker.

Valedictorian of her high school class in 2000, Byrd attended Tougaloo, a predominantly black college outside Jackson, Miss., which has had a decades-long partnership with Brown. As a sophomore, she was accepted in the Early Identification Program at the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown.

Byrd says that Tougaloo promoted research and encouraged students to stay involved and make good use of their summers. With the support of a professor at Tougaloo, Bryd got involved in the Minority International Research Training Program through which she spent a summer doing research in Beijing.

She came north to Brown in her junior year to do research at the Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center affiliated with The Miriam Hospital. That experience prompted her to pursue a joint M.D./Ph.D. program at Brown.

She graduated magna cum laude from Tougaloo in 2004 with a bachelor of science in chemistry. Now she is completing graduate work at Brown for her doctoral degree in science research and will transition back to the medical school for her final two years. Her goal is to become a pediatric endocrinologist.

"My mentors are truly invested in me," says Byrd. "I just want to learn



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**Angel Byrd** is pursuing two advanced degrees at Brown and working at Rhode Island Hospital, above. Her goal is to become a pediatric endocrinologist.

as much as possible."

She said she hopes that her profile shown at the UNCF telethon will be an inspiration to aspiring students. "I want my story to speak volumes to students," says Byrd, whose message is that financial support is there for

those willing to work hard.

"Because of UNCF, I've been able to achieve my goal. I've been so blessed."

Text "UNCF" to 50555 via cell phone to donate \$10 to give to students through the United Negro College Fund.

Is there a person or event in your community that you would like to spotlight?  
E-mail Steph McKenna at [diversitycalendar@yahoo.com](mailto:diversitycalendar@yahoo.com)

DIVERSITY  
CALENDAR

**The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society** is honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to the African-American community, Saturday, Feb. 18, from 2-4 p.m. at Metacomet Country Club, 500 Veterans Memorial Parkway, East Providence.

Honorees are **Mildred Nichols, Onna Moniz, Stanford Cameron and Joe Wilson Jr.** The event includes an art auction, refreshments and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets are \$50; mail/checks, payable to RIBHS, to 101 Dyer St., Providence, 02903. For information, call (401) 421-0606.

To submit items for this list, e-mail [news@providencejournal.com](mailto:news@providencejournal.com) and put "diversity" in the subject field.