

PTS NEWSLETTER

PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARSHIP FUND — ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

S U M M E R 2 0 1 7 E D I T I O N

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



Pierre Toussaint Scholars & Alumni with Mr. Hakeem Rahim, the Winter Workshop Presenter on January 4, 2017

The summer is upon us, and as we prepare for another successful retreat weekend -- a time of spiritual fun and fellowship, a time to reconnect with one another, and welcome a

new class of scholars into the PTS family, we also prepare to close another chapter -- this being the time of year when we honor our graduates, who have been with us since they began their undergraduate studies...and welcome them into the new roles of PTS alums, mentors, supporters, and in some cases committee members. I'm always so very proud to have witnessed the growth of these scholars and to see how far they've come...and how prepared they are for the next phase in their lives. I encourage all of you to continue to stay in prayer and allow God to work through you as you transition into the "real world." Know that we are praying for you always and wish you nothing but the best. Continue to stay active in your parish communities and know that we are always here for you. Most of all, we thank you for your steadfast commitment to your program! Until next time, work hard & pray often! - Leah

The Legacy of Pierre Toussaint, a PTSF Short, filmed and directed by PTS alumnus & current filmmaker, Gabriel Kerr (Columbia University '12), was featured at the 2016 PTSF Awards Dinner. Gabe spent months interviewing scholars & alumni of the



program; as well as, filming a group on a tour of the life of Venerable Pierre Toussaint in lower Manhattan. Current scholars, studying film, assisted with the filming... making it a true scholar production.



Gabe filming at Pierre's first grave site and then in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Pierre's final resting place.





CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2017 GRADUATES

DANICA B.
HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
(WASHINGTON D.C.)

JURIS DOCTOR DEGREE (JD)

PARISH: OUR LADY OF GRACE, BRONX

HIGH SCHOOL: ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

UNDERGRADUATE: GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

“What does the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program mean to me?

Love and Support! I would use these two words to describe what this program has meant to me over the past seven years. It’s really difficult to sum it all up; however, I know this program is what it is because Leah, Brother Tyrone and countless others love each of us so much that they make sure that we are given every tool we need to live happy, productive and prosperous Christian lives. From the monthly prayer books, international service and faith-based trips, to day-long conferences hosted by financial planners, spiritual advisors, and mental health counselors, what more could a young adult have asked for over seven years. I am most grateful for the friends and mentors I have gained along the way. Thank you for answering the phone whenever I have called and needed encouragement. To the remaining scholars: please find value in this program. Never feel alone or too prideful to ask for help.”

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: “1st Year Associate at Fried Frank LLP.”)



IRENE M.
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF
PHARMACY & PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
(BUFFALO, NY)

DOCTOR OF PHARMACY (PHARM. D)

PARISH: ST. THERESA OF THE INFANT JESUS, BRONX

HIGH SCHOOL: PRESTON HIGH SCHOOL

“Being a Pierre Toussaint Scholar has allowed me to receive many blessings during my past seven years as a college student at UB. I was able to join millions of other young adults in Madrid for World Youth Day 2011. I am also grateful to have traveled to New Orleans and to

Haiti in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and to deliver supplies to our brothers and sisters abroad. Locally, the PTS Retreats and Winter Workshops have always been memorable times spent with

my fellow scholars as we do not often get the chance to meet since many of us attend distant schools. I will be forever grateful to this program for the opportunities it granted me to grow as an individual and to form friendships with other young adults whom I otherwise would have never known. Good luck to all the PT Scholars, especially my fellow seniors. We’ve got this!”

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: “I have accepted an offer to be a Pharmacist under Rite Aid, and I will be servicing stores in the Lower Hudson Valley region.”)



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2017 GRADUATES



KAYODE E.

**MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
(CAMBRIDGE, MA)**

BS IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING & COMPUTER SCIENCE

PARISH: CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY, NEW ROCHELLE

HIGH SCHOOL: NEW ROCHELLE HIGH SCHOOL

"It is my firm belief that communities are central to one's growth and success, or the lack thereof. The best communities nurture their members, providing them the support they need during rough stretches and celebration in times of success. By these benchmarks, the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program has excelled above and beyond expectations as an indispensable force of love and support throughout my undergraduate experience. Because of the love that the PTS family has shown me and my peers, I now cherish and embrace the responsibility to give back to those in need more than ever before.

Consider this parting message a vow to do just that no matter what station I find myself in life. To my fellow graduates, I extend my congratulations for our accomplishments and my foregoing plea to help the next person in line. None of us made it this far without the support of some influential figures. Be that figure for someone else! Finally, to the continuing scholars, please respect the beautiful program that is PTSF. They really do care about us and the least we can do is honor their minimal requests of us. Please push through with your studies and keep in touch! I believe that everyone in this program is blessed in their own special way. Make the most of this talented network of people, and you will take yourselves to unimaginable heights!"

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: "Beyond undergraduate studies, I plan on continuing my studies at MIT in pursuit of a Masters in Artificial Intelligence. Alongside this effort, I will be plotting my next venture involving humanitarian and technological development in Nigeria."



CLARISA G.

**MACAULAY HONORS COLLEGE AT THE CITY
COLLEGE OF NEW YORK (NEW YORK, NY)**

BA IN ROMANCE LANGUAGES (FRENCH)

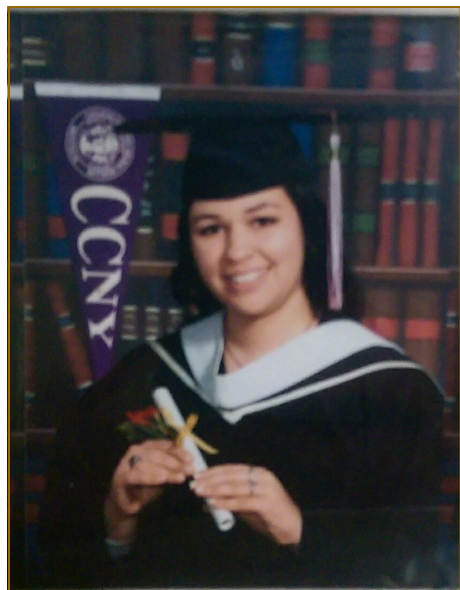
PARISH: IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BRONX (GUN HILL RD)

HIGH SCHOOL: PRESTON HIGH SCHOOL

"The PTS Program has been a constant source of emotional support throughout my undergraduate career. The prayers I have received from my fellow scholars (and of course, Leah) have helped me deal with the stress of school in ways that no amount of psychological therapy could ever have. I hope my fellow scholars realize how blessed we are to have this program and the unconditional support it offers us at all times."

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: "I plan on taking a year off to work at my elementary school. Throughout the year, I will apply to graduate programs in Comparative Literature to continue my studies in French

Literature. My goal is to be a college professor and spread the myriad of knowledge I have received.")





CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES CLASS OF 2017



KWASI M.
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
(ALBANY, NY)
BS IN BUSINESS
PARISH: ST. HELENA'S CHURCH, BRONX
HIGH SCHOOL: MONSIGNOR SCANLAN HIGH SCHOOL

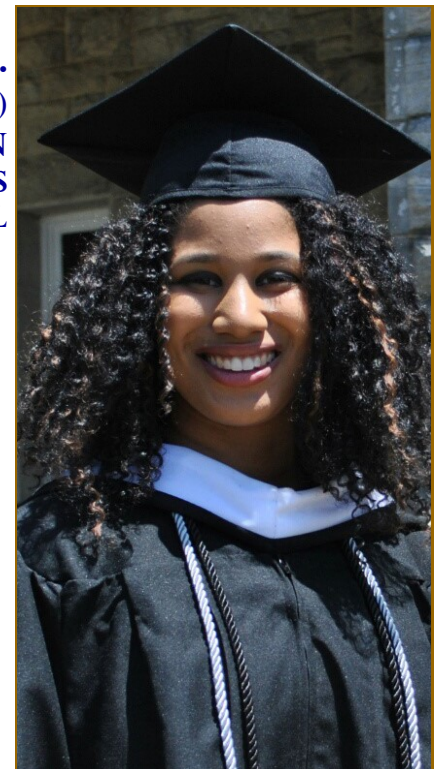
"The Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program has become a second family to me. It has helped me greatly emotionally and financially, as well throughout my college career. I feel that I have made life long friends, relationships that feel the same even if we haven't seen each other in a long time. Leah has been a great mentor to me, motivating me to do my best. I feel that without the support of Leah, Br. Tyrone and the scholars my college experience would not have been as great as it has been. Thank you!"

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: "I will be taking a year off, taking my LSAT on June 12th than pursuing law school for the fall of 2018.")

SARA S.
MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE (PURCHASE, NY)
BA IN DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCTION
PARISH: ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, WHITE PLAINS
HIGH SCHOOL: ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

"Being selected to be a Pierre Toussaint Scholar was truly a blessing and a privilege. Throughout my college career, I found assistance - financially, academically, but mostly spiritually. While participating in the program, I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by such dedicated staff, supportive mentors, and passionate and driven scholars. Each and every one of them has helped me push myself to do better, see things differently, and become a better person. I will forever be grateful to everyone who has made such a wonderful opportunity possible for me."

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: "I intend to work full-time, as well as pursue and exercise my creativity and passion for photography.")



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

CLASS OF 2017



OLIVIA R.

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY (MIDDLETOWN, CT)

BA IN ENGLISH & THEATER

PARISH: ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO, HARLEM

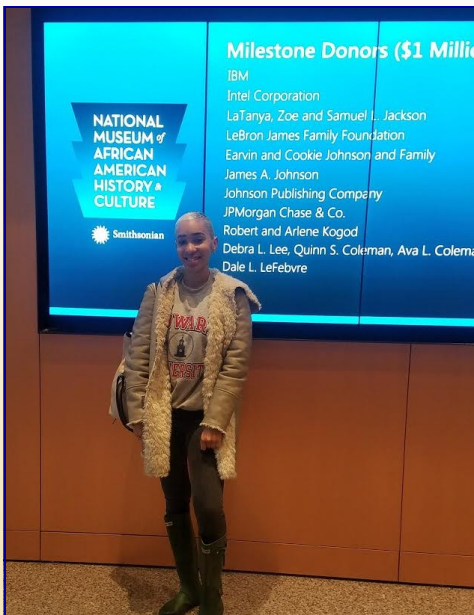
HIGH SCHOOL: MONTCLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

“This program was more than a check every semester, no matter how helpful that money was to me, I met so many amazing people through this program and received so much help, insight and advice over the past four years. I highly recommend that every eligible high school senior applies for this program. Along with the money, they’ll receive many friends, invaluable advice, and a great experience both with the church and outside.”

(POST GRADUATE PLANS: “I’m currently looking for work in the professional theater world. I will be returning home while I search and, hopefully, have something soon.”)

Father,
I have knowledge, so will You show me now,
How to use it wisely and find a way somehow
To make the world I live in a little better place,
And make life with its problems a little bit easier to face.
Grant me faith and courage and put purpose in my days,
And show me how to serve Thee in effective ways.
So my education, my knowledge and my skill
May find their true fulfillment as I learn to do Thy will.
And may I ever be aware in everything I do,
That knowledge comes from learning,
and wisdom comes from You.
Amen.

A TRIP THROUGH TIME by Maya Garrett



My trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture was one of remembering the past, living in the present, and the creating of a better future. The museum itself is made up of four floors with the bottom level having two additional floors hidden beneath it with access only by a single large elevator. The museum's Sweet Home Cafe sits on the bottom level at the center of everything. It serves up refined cuisine and home cooking making the staple dishes of African Americans by geographic regions across the United States. The floors each represent a time period in African American History, starting from the slave trade on the very bottom level, and moving up to Barack Obama. From the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance, the museum is like a time capsule capturing each story and event;

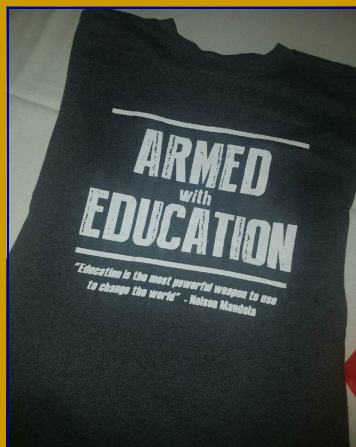
allowing you to truly live in that time. Each artifact is presented with a small excerpt that briefly explains the time period and the importance of the object or person, **even our beloved Venerable Pierre Toussaint has a place in the museum highlighting his support and efforts throughout black communities to help people reach a better standard of living.** When we typically think about black history we recall many stories from our childhood or from textbooks usually about slavery. Slavery is a part of our history, and many of our ancestors died so we could be where we are today and that should be remembered, but slavery is not the only history we have. I believe that the main purpose of the museum was to show and highlight all aspects of black history and culture; the pain and the triumph. This type of narrative is strongly needed to shape our black identity. For children especially, knowing who you are and where you came from helps you understand where you are going and where you fit in the world. In these times more than ever we need to uplift each other, we need to explore and learn about our culture so we are able to fight on in our long battle of justice and equality. I think the museum provided a great display of various aspects of our culture which was both interesting and informative. I do think some excerpts should have been longer and more thorough. The museum chose to highlight the more popular topics in history, giving them more space and providing more information but some of the small things, the victories unspoken of, needed to be shown more attention because these are the stories we do not know, the things we have not heard. **Overall I had a very pleasant experience; I learned a lot, cried a little, and was never more proud of my people.**





Leah & Devin with Lezlie McSpadden, mother of Michael Brown and author of the book, *Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil*.

The Institute for Black Catholic Studies at XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA hosted the second annual BLACK LIVES MATTER SYMPOSIUM on Oct. 21 - 22, 2016. The theme "Urban Education Matters" focused on the education disparities in our country's urban communities. Devin A., a PT Scholar and junior at Xavier, attended workshops and panel discussions with the Associate Director, and a NY delegation from The College of New Rochelle.



CUBA! by Deanna Giraldi

With the support of my family, the Pierre Toussaint family, and my Vassar family, I landed in the Aeropuerto Internacional Jose Marti in Havana with an idea of what would be on the other side of the doors. The pictures I had googled of Cuba had depicted colorful streets lined with palm trees, shiny old fashioned cars, white sand and turquoise water beaches. I did find these things in Cuba, but soon realized that the frames of the Google pictures were extremely limited. There is not a single picture on Google or in my camera roll that can fully capture the unique, colorful, revolutionary place that is Cuba. What I found in Cuba was much more than the preconceived, tropical image I had held on to before I arrived. I fell in love with Cuba's open plazas, art markets, expansive murals, galleries on every street, music at every meal, and



warm people. People I spoke to had an immense pride of Cuba's education, health care systems, art, and history.

I am attached to the idea of believing in something so deeply as a community that the passion is evident to people that have just entered a space.

These sentiments are not meant to erase the struggles Cuba faces or to further romanticize the idea of Cuba. Cubans were quick to state that "There are five problems in Cuba and we have money for two." This was stated in various ways throughout my journey. However, while

Cubans acknowledge difficulty in their country, they also take immense pride in having solved *their* problems on *their* own. One instance of this pride is evident in the way many older generation Cubans speak about the effects of the Literacy Campaign and its implications for the education of Cuba as a whole. Cuba has 1.2 million students and a literacy rate of 99.8%. Cuba has also created the first lung cancer vaccine, stopped mother to child HIV transmission, created the first synthetic vaccine, and is currently working on developing breast cancer and HIV vaccines.

I have been very blessed to be able to study Cuba's politics, religions, economy, and culture in school. As I traveled from Havana to Santa Clara to Camaguey to Trinidad to Cienfuegos, my deep interest in Cuba was further intensified as I conducted research on education and health care systems through interviews with medical professionals, teachers, families, and students. I will never forget my experience in Cuba or the intense pride, community, and artistic expression of Cuba's people.





Scholars & Alumni with the evening's Master of Ceremonies, David Ushery, Emmy Award-winning anchor and reporter for WNBC 4 NY



Pierre Toussaint Scholars & Alumni with honoree and Olympic Gold Medalist, Dominique Dawes.



The **Annual Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund Awards Dinner** was held on **Monday, November 7, 2016 at the New York Athletic Club**. The honorees were Olympic Gold Medalist and Gymnastics Coach, Dominique Dawes; and musician, composer and professor at the University of Denver, M. Roger Holland, II. Scholars and alumni supported by their attendance and assistance throughout the evening. Three alums serve on the Event Planning Committee. And a video presentation filmed and directed by, alumnus Gabriel Kerr, on "The Legacy of Pierre Toussaint" was one of the evening's highlights.

SAVE THE DATE

The 2017 PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARSHIP FUND
ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

TUESDAY, OCT. 10, 2017

Catholic Guild for the Blind, My Reflection by Daniel Afrifa

Graduation day was such a joyous occasion; I said goodbye to my beloved teachers, took selfies with my closest friends, and, most importantly, made a huge step towards beginning college. Still, a bothersome thought kept pestering me: how was I going to occupy my time this summer!? Luckily, Leah, with her uncanny ability to solve any problem, helped connect, my fellow scholar, Peter, and me with an internship working for the Catholic Guild for the Blind. As Job Coaches, we had the unique opportunity to work with teens dealing with varying visual impairments, both in our Manhattan location at Catholic Charities and at our Brooklyn location at Modell's. Interacting with these teens was both a challenge in learning how to help those with varying degrees of blindness and empathizing with those who "see" the world differently than most.

At Catholic Charities in Manhattan, Peter and I were tasked with aiding our coordinator, Ms. Jean Chun, present different programs to the visually disabled teens. Programs ranging from interacting with seeing eye dogs to trips to places such as NBC occupied a majority of our time. During our NBC tour, we saw the sets of a variety of hit shows such as "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" and, my personal favorite, "Saturday Night Live". At Catholic Charities, we even had the opportunity to meet a woman who, upon becoming blind after becoming a doctor, decided to go back to school and is now a clinical psychiatrist!

What always seemed the most interesting to me was not necessarily the programs themselves; rather, traveling to these programs was the true learning experience. While some of the teens had better eyesight than others, I had to continually, physically guide the teens while we ventured through New York. Under normal social norms, I would feel a bit uncomfortable having to hold the hand of a 15-18 year old boy to cross the street. As a Job Coach, however, I immediately disregarded that feeling in order to effectively do my job. But, many of the visually impaired teens struggled to do the same.

It initially struck me as odd that the teens would often choose to forgo their own safety in order not to have to hold my hand. Then, reality struck me: these visually impaired teens are, as one might guess, teens. They think, act, and feel as many teens do. I was forced to confront my own ignorance on how I view the visually disabled, and I am truly grateful to have

like all teens, disabled teens crave independence as well. They want their God-given right to autonomy; they want to have as much control over their lives as possible. Learning to empathize with a disabled person's need for autonomy was perhaps the most enlightening idea I learned all summer.

Working with the teens at Modell's was also enjoyable. Peter and I worked with three teens: Michael, Malik, and Yessie. These three were paid for working at Modell's, so Peter and I ensured that they always completed their work as effectively and safely as possible. A typical day working at Modell's involved the three of them tagging various clothes, restocking sneakers, and resizing racks and reordering sneakers. Pretty soon, the three of them were able to get a routine going and successfully finish their day's work quickly and, best of all, complaint free. Malik did such a fantastic job performing his other duties, that he was tasked with also greeting customers as they entered the Modell's. The three of them did an amazing job at that Modell's and I would not be surprised if they were called back to work there full-time!

I also had the opportunity on my last day working to work at a different Catholic Charities location: a food pantry in the Bronx. Working alongside another Job Coach, Luis, as well as three other teens (Katelyn, Lizbetty, and Gary), I took inventory of the food products at the pantry and replenished the quickly disappearing food to be given to the less fortunate. I watched in amazement as the three teens had already mastered an assembly line of sorts to distribute food to the needy.

Interning at Catholic Charities was a tremendous experience for Peter and me. While it was great to gain actual job experience, the lesson I learned interacting with the teens was what was truly invaluable. It seems like everyday young people are told that they take for granted all the luxuries that they have. While that can often be annoying to hear, I think we should occasionally mull over our own privileges and question how we can help those who do not have said privileges. Better yet, we should be willing to listen to those without our privileges on how we can more respectfully treat those less privileged than us. Over the summer, I listened with teens who did not let their visual impairments rule their lives, and their nuanced ideas have left me a better person.

Archdiocese of New York's Office of Black Ministry
Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund

Annual Winter Workshop

Presents: Mr. Hakeem Rahim of Live Breathe, LLC



I AM ACCEPTANCE

An interactive workshop for college students that explores and transforms mental illness, mental health, acceptance and wellness.

www.iamaacceptance.org

January 4, 2017
10:00am - 3:00pm

Catholic Center
1011 First Avenue
New York, NY 10022



The Annual Winter Workshop was held on Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at the Catholic Center in the Cardinal's Board Room. This year's workshop presenter was Mr. Hakeem Rahim, a mental health speaker and trainer of Live Breathe, LLC & I Am Acceptance. Mr. Rahim gave an excellent presentation on the importance of mental health awareness, and all in attendance received a copy of his book, *Magenta Your Conscience*.



On Friday, March 10th the Archdiocese Office of the Superintendent sponsored a Diversity Summit for archdiocesan high school students entitled, "**Diverse America: A Catholic Lens, A Conversation on Race & Diversity through the Lens of the Catholic Social Teaching.**" Amongst the esteemed panelists were two PT Scholars, Kayode E. of M.I.T. '17 and Mark A. of the University of Miami '19. Two additional scholars, Clarisa G. '17 & David L. '19 assisted throughout the day.



PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARS



RETREAT 2017

FRIDAY, JUNE 23 - SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2017

THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE

**ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK ~ OFFICE OF BLACK MINISTRY
PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

The Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Program application will be available this Fall,
please contact our office for an application.

The Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund (PTSF) and Program was established in 1983 and administered by the Archdiocese of New York, Office of Black Ministry. PTSF has provided scholarships to graduating high school seniors of diverse backgrounds from public, private and parochial schools throughout the Archdiocese of New York, to assist them with the educational fees and expenses associated with their college studies. Students selected into the PTSF are chosen based on their strong academic record, their active participation with their parish and school communities, and their demonstration of good character and sound leadership ability. Scholarship awards are renewable for subsequent, consecutive years of undergraduate and graduate studies, based upon their meeting certain academic and service requirements. PTSF also provides the scholars with ongoing mentorship and advisement: spiritually, professionally and personally.

To obtain more information regarding and /or to support the Pierre Toussaint Scholarship Fund
contact the office at 646-794-2681 or via email at obm@archny.org.

THE PIERRE TOUSSAINT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IS A MINISTRY GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY
THE BLACK & INDIAN MISSION OFFICE...
AND PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE CARDINAL'S ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL.
THANK YOU TO ALL THE SUPPORTERS OF BOTH, VERY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND APPEALS!