



News Release

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Public School Teachers are in Good Hands

Houston (April 27, 2007) University of St. Thomas student Kim-Thoa Nguyen is one of 25 college juniors from 16 participating institutions to be named as a recipient of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's 2007 Fellowships for Aspiring Teachers of Color. Each fellow receives up to \$22,100 over a five-year period that begins this summer and ends after completion of three years of public school teaching.

As part of the interview process, Nguyen wrote a winning essay describing her passion for teaching. "I believe that being a teacher is the noblest profession. A teacher lays a meaningful foundation that affects the rest of her students' lives. Thus, the role of teacher is invaluable to the development of each individual in the community." said Nguyen. The essay along with her vibrant personality won her a coveted spot on the roster.

"This award is very competitive," said Dr. Ruth Strudler, dean of UST's School of Education, "and Kim-Thoa is very deserving. The primary goal of the RBF program is to increase the number of teachers of color in American education. This is our fourth year as a participating university and Kim-Thoa is our fifth student to receive this fellowship," said Strudler. Past UST recipients are Juan Perez, Luis Saenz, Alejandra Mendoza and Joycelyn Harris.

Nguyen will use the money to pursue a graduate degree at the school of her choice. As an incoming fellow, Nguyen is required to complete a summer project between her junior and senior year with her faculty mentor, Dr. Regina Boulware-Gooden, assistant professor in Education.

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Nguyen's decision to become a teacher was influenced by her mother Minh Tan Le. "My desire to teach begins with my mom's wonderful experience as an elementary school teacher in Vietnam," writes Nguyen. The Nguyen family moved to the United States when Kim-Thoa was six years old. "I didn't speak any English and I was enrolled in an ESL program," said Nguyen. "My elementary teachers helped me advance to my fullest potential," says Nguyen. She graduated from Jersey High School and chose University of St. Thomas after she toured the campus. Nguyen cites UST's small classes, friendly campus, accessibility to her professors and the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities as the reasons she has blossomed into a campus leader. Nguyen currently serves as a presidential ambassador, vice president of Kappa Delta Phi, an education honor's society, and vice president of the student chapter of the Association of Texas Professional Educators.

In 2001 the University of St. Thomas became a select institution eligible to participate in the New York City's foundation's Program of Fellowships for Students of Color Entering the Teaching Profession. This recognition added University of St. Thomas to a select group of universities and colleges nationally. Also on the list for 2007 are students from Swathmore College, University of Chicago and Duke University.

University of St. Thomas, dedicated to building leaders of faith and character, is a private institution committed to the liberal arts and to the religious, ethical and intellectual tradition of Catholic higher education.

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