

Local Student, Daren W. Miller, Named One Of The 2008 Ron Brown Scholars

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Ron Brown Scholar Program, the nation's leading scholarship program for African-American youth, announced that four Florida high school students have been selected as 2008 Ron Brown Scholars. They are Kani Keita (Miami) of Miami Killian Senior High School, **Daren W. Miller (St. Petersburg) of St. Petersburg High School**, Desiree C. Montgomery (Lakeland) of Kathleen Senior High School, and Bradley D. Pough (Deltona) of Deland High School. Chosen from more than 5,600 high school students, they are four of only 20 African-American students from across the country awarded this honor.

Graduating in the top one percent of her class, Keita also exhibits a profound commitment to her community by logging more than 350 hours of community service. She volunteers with several events including Race for the Cure, Relay for Life and Waterford 5K. A founder of the Junior Statesman, she is active in many school activities such as Florida Mock Trial, Asian Club, and the Math and English Honor Societies. She plans to double major in Politics and Economics.

Winner of the Kodak Young Leaders Award and the Bank of America Youth Leader Award, Miller's commitment to his community is evidenced by his work with the Florida state legislature to pass a bill regarding voter registration and education among youth. He also serves as Youth Representative for Parks and Recreation. In addition to being elected senior class president, he participates on the Youth Advisory Committee, NAACP Youth Council, 4-H Youth Development Grant Board and the Ebony Scholars Academic Club.

Never afraid to challenge herself, Montgomery will graduate as the salutatorian at Kathleen Senior High School, where only 15 percent of the students will attend a four-year college. As well as taking a challenging curriculum, she serves as senior class senator, president of the Inter-Club Council, secretary of the National Honor Society, and secretary of the Key Club. Committed to helping improve her local community and peers, she is self-publishing a cookbook with her sisters to benefit teenagers transitioning out of foster care.

As senior class president, Pough is dedicated to demonstrating his capacity for leadership through youth government. Organizer of a community outreach project, the John Knox Senior Citizen's prom, he also participates in YMCA Youth in Government, Deltona's MLK Day Committee, Boys State, Junior Statesman, Volusia County Tomorrow's Leaders, and the Academic Team. Pough will graduate in the top three percent of his class at Deland High School.

"I am continually impressed by the thousands of students who apply to become Ron Brown Scholars," said Michael Mallory, executive director of the Ron Brown Scholar Program. "Kani, Daren, Desiree and Bradley all share a remarkable commitment and desire to use their knowledge and passion outside the classroom. They are part of a tremendous group of gifted young people who all bring their unique backgrounds and personal experiences to benefit the Ron Brown Scholar Program and their communities as a whole."

Founded in 1996 and named in honor of the first African-American secretary of commerce, the Ron Brown Scholar Program provides students with the financial resources to attend some of the finest colleges and universities in the country, in addition to promoting outstanding service opportunities for the next generation of promising African-American leaders.

Ron Brown Scholars are selected on the basis of demonstrated academic excellence, leadership potential, social commitment and financial need. Some key highlights of the program include:

- More than half of Ron Brown Scholars attend Ivy League universities.
- Two Ron Brown Scholars were elected to be the First Marshals of their Harvard University graduating classes, considered the highest honor bestowed upon an undergraduate.
- One Ron Brown Scholar has been selected as a Truman Scholar and two Ron Brown Scholars have been selected as finalists for the Rhodes Scholarship.
- Ron Brown Scholars dedicate themselves to enriching lives in their local communities and worldwide. For example, nine Ron Brown Scholars have conducted AIDS research and community service with the Institute of Human Virology.
- With a 100 percent graduation rate, Ron Brown Scholars go on to succeed in a variety of leadership positions. From finance executives and top lawyers, to award-winning playwrights and Supreme Court Justice clerks, they have published books and documentaries, appeared as expert guests on radio and television, and been invited as speakers to numerous international conferences.

Applicants must proceed through a highly competitive selection process against thousands of other qualified candidates, culminating in an invitation to spend a weekend in Washington, D.C. for the final round of interviews. Up to 20 winners are chosen at the conclusion of this weekend where they are formally introduced as lifelong members of the Ron Brown Scholar Program family.

Keita is the ninth Miami student admitted to the Ron Brown Scholar Program since its inception in 1996, while Miller, Montgomery and Pough are the first students of their respective communities admitted to the program.

For biographical information on Kani Keita, Daren Miller, Desiree Montgomery, Bradley Pough and all 20 scholars, or for more information about the Ron Brown Scholar Program, visit www.ronbrown.org.