

Alpha Phi Alpha Rho Chapter annual awards scholarships

Posted: Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:00 am

Patricia Clifford



Dr. Thomas H. Watkins Sr. Oratorical Contest winners, third from left, Jaheem Sanders, Pierre-Julien Agudze and Simion Mason, with Sterling T. Grimes, far left, coordinator; R. Bruce Hill, coordinator; and Darrell L. Tiller, chapter president, far right.



The Rho Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and the Rho Education Foundation presented the annual Dr. O. Wilson Winters Scholarship Awards: the Dr. Thomas H. Watkins Sr. Oratorical Contest and the Paul F. Frost Memorial Book Awards recently at The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. In 1920, the fraternity established the Commission of Graduate Work and Public Affairs that launched a movement to influence African-American students around the country to go to high school and college. This was the active beginning of the fraternity's, "Go-to-High School, Go-to-College" movement.

"Rho Chapter continues to heed the call to promote education as a valuable tool in making the difference in the success of young African-American men, given that school completion is the single best predictor of future economic success," said **Dr. Ronald Jackson**, co-chair of Rho's Education Committee.

The chapter has numerous educators at all levels of the academic spectrum from principals, teachers and professors to presidents, vice presidents and deans. **Chapter President Darrell Tiller** said, "Rho Chapter knows first-hand the challenge in educating youth of today, and we are poised to reverse the negative trends that have come to represent African-American males nationally.

"The Dr. O. Wilson Winters Scholarship and Awards Program is just one way that Rho Chapter demonstrates its commitment to encourage and support Black males to commit to complete both their high school and college degrees and to assist them in removing barriers that may prevent them from discovering the possibilities afforded to college educated men."

This year's recipients are **Kenneth Anderson**, a student at the University of Richmond, and **Fred Waters**, a student at St. Augustine University.

Rho Chapter Awards are given to brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Recipients are currently enrolled in college and have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale. Recipients have demonstrated excellence in extracurricular and community service activities as well as demonstrated progress toward achieving their scholastic and career ambitions. Recipients receive a \$1,200 monetary award.

The Watkins Family Memorial College Awards are given in honor of the Watkins family. Recipients are currently enrolled in college and have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale. They have also demonstrated excellence in extracurricular and community service activities as well as demonstrated progress toward achieving their scholastic and career ambitions. Recipients receive a \$1,000 monetary award. This year's recipients are **Thomas Bednar**, University of Pittsburgh; **Moussa Guindo**, King's College; **Michael D. Hall**, Lincoln University; **Khalil A. Payne**, Howard University, and **Mark Robinson**, Vaughn College.

The Whitney Family Memorial High School Awards are given in honor of the Whitney family. Recipients are 2015 high school graduates who have been accepted to a college or university. Recipients have achieved a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale and have also demonstrated excellence in extracurricular and community service activities.

Recipients receive a \$1,000 monetary award. The 2015 recipients are **David Raphael Bakali**, the Shipley School; **Isaac Breese**, Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter School; **Marco A. Campos-Rivera**, Kensington Creative & Performing Arts High School; **Omar Elhajmoussa**, Kensington Creative & Performing Arts High School; **Brandon Anthony Freeman**, Cheltenham High School; **Quadrese M. Glass**, Imhotep Institute Charter High School; **Skyler Glover**, Haddon Heights High School; **Corey Hammond**, Mastery Charter School; **Timothy A. Martin**, Imhotep Institute Charter High School; **Charles L. McNeil Jr.**, Girard Academic Music Program, and **Jibreah Mutan**, Northeast High School.

The Dr. Thomas H. Warkins Sr. Oratorical Contests mirrors Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's Belford V. Lawson Oratorical Contest, named for and honoring the 16th general president of the fraternity, who was an attorney, civil rights activist and the first African-American man to win a case before the Supreme Court. He was also the first African American president of the Young Men's Christian Association. The purpose of the oratorical contest is to identify problems or special topics of interest within society and determine how the problem or topic relates to the goals and objectives of the fraternity. Rho Chapter's Oratorical Contest is geared toward college-bound males in Philadelphia and the surrounding areas in grades 9 through 12. Watkins was an active member of Rho Chapter and served as its 8th President.

This year, the theme of the oratorical contest was "Modern Media and its Effects on Black America." Contestants were charged with creating speeches with original content that addressed the theme in no longer than seven minutes. All were judged on speech development, effectiveness, speech value, voice, manner, appropriateness, correctness and physical presentation. Winners received monetary scholarships. Winners of the 2015 Dr. Thomas H. Watkins, Sr. Oratorical Contest are: 1st-place medal: **Jaheem Sanders** of Imhotep Institute Charter High School; 2nd-place medal: **Pierre-Julien Agudze** of Eastern University Academy Charter School, and 3rd-place medal: **Simion Mason** of Bodine High School for International Affairs.

Congratulations to the men of Rho Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. for their contributions to our community, all awardees and participants.