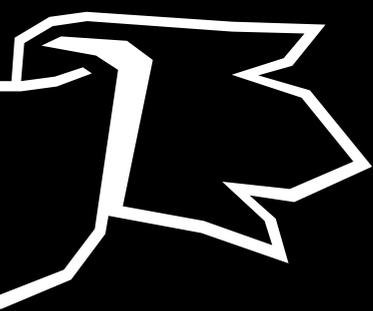


HONORS

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Summer 2012



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Did You Know?

(fun facts about Honors@Iowa)

- 1** Around 6,500 of the UI's undergraduate students are in the Honors program.
- 2** 1,060 incoming freshman were admitted to the UI Honors program for the Fall 2011 class.
- 3** The Blank Honors Center is the world's only building entirely dedicated to talented and-gifted education from pre-kindergarten through college.
- 4** In Spring 2012, the Honors Program sponsored an Honors Class about the Harry Potter series of novels.
- 5** The Honors Program advises four honor societies: Phi Eta Sigma, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Mortar Board, and Omicron Delta Kappa.

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Murray and Huit Awards Honors Exemplary Faculty

Jennifer Brooke

We've all had one: the professor who can make any subject interesting, the instructor who inspires your best, and the teacher who genuinely enjoys students coming into their office hours. The University of Iowa as a learning community is only as good as the instructors it employs, and those who make this University a place of exemplary education deserve to be recognized. Enter, the Murray-Huit Awards.

This year, the recipients were Angela Onwuachi-Willig and Omar Valerio-Jimenez. Professor Onwuachi-Willig was the recipient of the 2012 Huit award. A professor of law, she has been honored for her service to minority groups, in addition to being a finalist for the Iowa Supreme Court and elected into the American Law Institute in 2010.



Professor Onwuachi-Willig,
recipient of the 2012 Huit Award.

Omar Valerio-Jimenez is an assistant professor in the department of history at the University of Iowa. In addition to receiving the Murray Award this year, he is a previous recipient of the

Huntington-WHA Martin Ridge Fellowship and the Summerfield Roberts Postdoctoral Fellowship, among many other awards.

Both awards are designed to honor faculty members who create an excellent classroom learning experience. Any member of the University of Iowa community can nominate a faculty member for either award, and students are encouraged to collaborate with their nominee in the application process.



Professor Omar Valerio-Jimenez,
recipient of the 2012 Murray Award

The Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society established the Murray award in 1985 to honor one exemplary tenure-track faculty member each year. The award honors the long tradition of University of Iowa professors set forth by James N. Murray, past chair of political science at the University of Iowa.

Mortar Board Honor Society presents one Marion L. Huit Award each year to a tenured faculty member. Established in 1978, the award is named in honor of the past dean of students and his dedication contribution to the UI community.

The Williams Award: a Promise Kept

Erin Marshall

Thirty years ago, as student Brett Williams walked out of Dr. James Van Allen's office, a promise began to form in his mind. Feeling deep appreciation for his education, he vowed that he would someday repay the University of Iowa's physics department.

Mr. Williams, now a physicist, worked hard to keep his word and created the Guy D. and Betty J. Williams Scholarship in 2009 to honor his parents and the University. Brett stated that this scholarship guarantees "students of the highest caliber get the recognition they deserve and allows me an opportunity to return a favor."

Like most parents, Brett's father and mother supported him while he attended the University of Iowa to become a physicist. Although Guy and Betty Williams could not attend college after World War II, they regarded a college education as extremely significant. They believed that with perseverance and hard work, a student who attended a university would have the proper set of skills needed to solve dilemmas throughout life.

Aside from honoring his parents, Mr. Williams created the award to honor the University of Iowa, the physics department, and Dr. Van Allen, his undergraduate advisor.

Due to his support network at home and at the University, Williams has been privileged to have "worked on some of the most exciting programs at some of the most respected institutions, and traveled the world engaged in that kind of work."

In 2009, Brett Williams donated \$25,000 to establish the award fund, and the Lockheed Martin Gift Matching program generously matched this monetary gift, creating a total of \$50,000.

Kenneth Heitritter, named this spring as the first recipient of this prestigious award, recently completed his first year at the University of Iowa. A physics and astronomy major, Heitritter is currently conducting research on supernova remnants and pulsar wind nebulae with Dr. Randall McEntaffer. "[The Williams Award] gave me an opportunity to attempt to connect my current research to solving an environmental problem," Kenny stated.



From left: Professor Mary Hall Reno, Brett Williams, Betty Williams, and former Honors Director John Nelson with commemorative Williams Award plaque

Honors students majoring in the natural sciences are encouraged to apply for the Williams Award, although preference will be given to physics majors and minors. The scholarship is renewable as long as said student remains eligible. Students looking to make an environmental application of their education are preferred in order to honor Guy Williams's interest in balancing environmental concerns with human need. Examples of such problems include the reduction of greenhouse gases and water pollution, new efficient energy sources, and the removal of pollution from the environment.

Applicants must submit an inventive essay addressing an environmental problem facing the world today, obtain a solid recommendation from a member of the University of Iowa's faculty, and demonstrate a strong academic record.

Even though thirty years have passed, Brett Williams never forgot the promise that he made to himself as an undergraduate physics student. "This is my first step in that direction," said Williams. The Guy D. and Betty J. Williams Scholarship has given Brett Williams a chance to repay his parents and his alma mater while giving dedicated students an opportunity to continue to work hard toward their goals.



Brett Williams presents the winner of the 2012 Williams Award, Kenny Heitritter.

Honors@Iowa Welcomes New Editors

The University of Iowa Honors Program is pleased to welcome Hannah Bruntz and Dylan Todd as Honors@Iowa co-editors for the 2012-2013 academic year. This position is filled by talented and motivated students who in conjunction with Honors Advising Director Holly Yoder and the Honors Professional Staff publish three issues annually of Honors@Iowa.

Hannah Bruntz is a senior Journalism and mass communications major with an english minor and certificate in fundraising and philanthropy communication. She is involved in several organizations on campus including Hope 4 Africa, UI Dance Marathon, Greek life, and employment at the UI Office of Risk Management and the UI Press Office. She hopes her editorial experience will serve her well while directing the publication.



Dylan Todd is a senior neurobiology major with minors in chemistry and statistics. He is currently an Honors Writing Fellow, an Honors Peer Advisor, and the creative director of the Aberrant Parade literary magazine. A self-professed typomaniac, he plans to put his eye for design to good use.



Honors@Iowa is more than a newsletter; it is a lifeline that connects the vibrant Honors community to the Friends of Honors at Iowa. Inside are carefully curated accounts of the outstanding students, faculty, and staff that enrich the educational experience at the University of Iowa daily. Honors@Iowa owes much of its present form to the hard work and sharpened acumen of Maggie Brigl.

Brigl, who graduated this May with a BA's in english and psychology as well as a minor in mass communications, served as an Honors Editing Fellow from 2010-2012. During her tenure as editor, Honors@Iowa has metamorphosed into an online publication filled with engaging content and spacious layouts. In addition to her work with Honors@Iowa, she has written for CONTENT Magazine and Salty Inc. She hopes to pursue a career in publishing or marketing for a non-profit company. She loves NPR, has a long standing interest in human rights, and plans to volunteer for Obama's campaign during the 2012 election.

Bruntz and Todd realize they are standing on the shoulders of an outstanding editor, but are confident they can maintain Honors@Iowa's skyward trajectory; in fact they have already folded interactive features and a fresh coat of paint into this summer issue. Bruntz and Todd are excited to continue Honors@Iowa's tradition of excellence and look forward to sharing Honors with the world at large.

Hands on Learning: Students Curate the Complex World of Harry Potter

Colleen Theisen

Dragons, mandrakes, and potions temporarily took over the cases outside Special Collections & University Archives this spring. Students in Donna Parsons' Honors Seminar titled "Harry Potter and the Quest for Enlightenment" curated a magical exhibit using materials from Special Collections. The exhibit was one part of a semester long project utilizing Special Collections materials for research. The students chose one item to represent their research and worked together to fit their items into themes for display.

Parsons' seminar had students closely read the texts and analyze their themes, as well as investigate the influences from the literary canon and the effects on popular culture in the US and Britain. She envisioned the collaboration with Special Collections as an exciting opportunity to enhance student learning.

"The Harry Potter series is filled with extensive references to science, literature, mythology, and history," Parsons says. "Partnering with Special Collections supplied my students with the resources needed to trace a specific reference and discuss its relevance to a particular scene, character, or plot line. The partnership also provided the context for a deeper understanding of the series and its appeal to a diverse audience."

Greg Prickman, Head of Special Collections & University Archives, welcomed the collaboration. "The idea to have the students create an exhibition was Donna's, and we quickly agreed to it." Rather than showing or telling, Special Collections gave students the chance to do their own showing and telling which resulted in a unique learning opportunity that could only be experienced with access to original historical documents.

Kelsey Sheets, a student in Parson's seminar, loved finding out how complex the world of Harry Potter really is. "In the past I have read books about how J.K. Rowling draws inspiration from a wide variety of historical and mythical sources and incorporates them into the series, but my own research [on links between the study of Potions and the muggle study of Chemistry] really solidified this point and made me appreciate the depth of the wizarding world."



Parsons and students enrolled in the Harry Potter seminar.

A Journey into Special Collections

Rachel Stevenson

This May, I graduated from the University of Iowa. Graduation is already a life-changing step—but it was made all the more memorable by the Honors Commendation ceremony held the night before. This more intimate ceremony celebrated the above and beyond work of students who found their scholarly niche in undergraduate work. For me, the journey started in Special Collections.

In the spring of 2010, I took a class which focused on early modern text technologies which explored the history of print from its beginnings roughly one hundred years before Shakespeare. I found myself drawn to the personal perspective this study lent to literature. The most intriguing and life-altering part of this class was the discoveries I could make on my own while looking through our own large collection of early modern books in the Special Collections library here at the University of Iowa.

This small spark of interest compelled me to work closely with my Renaissance professor, Adam Hooks. The following spring, we applied for an Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU) grant and were accepted. For the past year and a half—partially funded by this grant—I examined and cataloged the 320 early modern texts in English we have in the library. I wrote a few case studies which Professor Hooks

posted on his book blog, *Anchora*. In the summer of 2011, the ICRU program hosted a poster conference, giving me a chance to share my amazing findings and demonstrate the importance of humanities research—I was the only participant from the humanities out of 150.

This past February, Professor Hooks and I presented a joint conference paper at the Past, Present, and Future of the Book conference in Mt. Vernon, Iowa at Cornell College. This paper was a distillation of my Honors Thesis. In it, I discuss the implications of a woman reader's notes in an edition of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.

I used a portion of my thesis as my graduate school application writing sample. I owe my success in research to the generous support of the Honors Thesis Workshop, the ICRU grant, and my adviser. My findings will help future professors and students in the English department enliven their work with primary sources. Working towards graduating with Honors has helped me personally and professionally, and I am so blessed with my experience.

EDITOR'S NOTE: ICRU is directed by Bob Kirby and is housed on the fourth floor of the Blank Honors Center.



Stevenson presented her work in special collections during the summer research festival.

How an Honors Seminar Made Me a Beatlemaniac

Chloe Brigl

I was immediately struck by the small class size as I walked into my first Honors Seminar. First of all, it was less than twenty people. Secondly, it definitely was not all freshmen. Somehow I had missed that fact when signing up for classes. Lastly, my professor's accent was something I'd never heard before. It sounded like mix of British and American dialects. More impressive was that within the first few classes, she had everyone's name memorized.

Donna Parsons is easily the most knowledgeable person on all things Beatles that I have ever met, and probably will ever meet. Her Beatles expertise spans from early childhood facts, to stories about their touring, to intimate facts about their lives. Her teaching is superb. Originally, I took the Lennon-McCartney Honors Seminar because, yes, I liked the Beatles, but more importantly, it was once a week, three credit hours, and the professor was highly recommended. I had no idea that the class would be so extremely fascinating. While the course information was interesting on its own, it's the class style that made it more fascinating. Donna Parsons is a ray of energy. She's so excited about the Beatles that it makes learning the information from her a natural process. It almost rubs off.

There were no tests in Lennon-McCartney, only papers, attendance, participation, etc. Literally hundreds of books have been written on one song, album, year, or Beatle. After doing all my research I found that I had to narrow my paper topic even further than I'd imagined, since I'd gathered so much information. Our papers were read carefully by Donna, and she left notes on each page and paragraph. Not just the letter grade I receive in other classes.

A wonderful teacher, combined with a room full of engaged learners, is what makes a class. Based on my experience, I'd recommend taking any Honors seminar, whether it's on the Beatles, Harry Potter, socks or seagulls. Just as in Lennon-McCartney; two and a half hours somehow will not be enough time. Every week, time flew by and I found myself excited to come to the classroom.

EDITOR'S NOTE:
Honors offers a variety of general education seminars for 3 semester hours of credit in addition to 24 first-year seminars targeted to incoming freshmen, for 1 semester hour.



Donna Parsons, lecturer in music and honors at The University of Iowa

Honors Primetime Workshop: Launching into Honors

Mary K. Baker

The Honors Primetime workshop is a three-day workshop for incoming first-year Honors students at the University of Iowa. It allows these students to choose an area of focus in which to immerse themselves for the three-day period. They attend workshops, meet new friends and even create a presentation to share with their peers. It is an excellent opportunity for incoming Honors students to build community, interact with faculty members, and launch their Honors experiences. Students have the opportunity to choose from a variety of workshop topics that vary from art and performance to science, culture and politics. They listen to lectures, interact with other students and collaborate to create a presentation that they exhibit at the end of the three-day experience.



Students participating in an Primetime seminar

The goal of an Honors Primetime workshop is not only for students to have an enjoyable experience learning, but also to prepare students for their first semester at the University of Iowa. Andrew Willard, Honors Experiential Learning Director at the University of Iowa, described

Honors Primetime using the expression “priming the pump.” He explained that Honors Primetime is a way to prepare students for the “main event” – their first semester of college.

“Honors Primetime is a special kind of orientation for academically oriented students,” Willard explained. The number of participating students has varied from year to year to between 200 to 300 students. This moderate number of students has allowed for more close and intimate workshop experiences in small groups of about 12 to 25 students.

Taylor Bradley, an undergraduate who participated as a teaching assistant for the theater department, said “Connections between students are incredibly important, and Honors Primetime can help establish a safe and easy environment for friendships to be made between students with similar interests.”

The University of Iowa has been hosting Honors Primetime since 2009, making this coming fall 2012, their fourth year. As such, the Honors Primetime workshop is a fairly new addition to the University of Iowa’s Honors program, but it is already receiving a very encouraging response from students. Bradley stated “Every student that I talked with really cherished the experience. They were grateful for the connections they made because it makes the first day of college much less intimidating.”

Honors First-year Seminars: Options for Inquiring Minds

Aubrey Bierwirth

Incoming students to the University of Iowa have the opportunity to participate in what's known as a First-Year Seminar—a one semester hour class reserved for students in their first semester. Capped at around twenty students, these classes value active participation and allow students to meet with faculty and peers in close settings. Topics vary across the board so that students can almost always find something of interest. For Honors students, there are even more options.

“Of the over one hundred First-Year Seminars that will be offered next fall,” says Honors Director Art Spisak, “twenty-four of them will be Honors sections.” Nearly one fourth of the available seminars in fall 2012 will consist solely of Honors students. In Honors-only First-Year Seminars, the students will be able to closely interact with other Honors students and with faculty that elected to teach them.

“Whenever I teach Honors students, I expect them to be better readers than non-Honors students – on the whole. I expect students in First-Year Seminars



University of Iowa Honors
director, Art Spisak

to be more engaged in the class than students who are signed up for required general education courses that I teach (Rhetoric and Interpretation of Literature) because they've elected to take the course,” says Professor Mary Trachsel, who has taught the seminars “Introduction to Academic Culture,” “Humans and Other Animals,” “Animal Homelessness,” and now this fall, “Dogs – Inside and Out.”

Student Ali Borchers agrees, “I felt the best aspect of the seminar was that it challenged me.”

Honors First-Year Seminars utilize papers, projects, classroom participation, and other interactive assignments, but stay away from exams and quizzes, expecting students to take initiative if they would like that additional challenge. The seminars carry less work than a regular three semester hour course, but Honors First-Year Seminars still aim to be intellectually engaging on every level.

However, challenge isn't the only thing Honors students can expect from these seminars. Director Spisak explains, “In Honors First-Year Seminars all students will be Honors students. This very likely means higher levels of interaction and certainly more opportunities to make Honors friends



Ali Borchers, a
participant in an Honors
First-Year seminar

in your very first semester.”

Joining an Honors First-Year Seminar is a great way to get involved in the Honors community, where students make valuable connections with peers and faculty. Honors First-Year Seminars provide the settings necessary to get to know professors and students. “I found out how fun it could be to make connections and to do things I wouldn’t normally do while sacrificing very little of my time compared to the rest of my schedule,” explains Ali Borchers.

Professor Trachsel also remarks that First-Year Seminars are a great way for students to get to know each other and to make contacts with faculty, pointing out that “These faculty contacts are useful to students later on when they need recommendations for scholarships, internships, graduate school, jobs, etc.”

Getting involved in an Honors First-Year Seminar is easy, too. Because the seminars are only one semester hour, they easily fit into a schedule, and there are plenty of options for interested students. “The range of topics cuts across the major disciplines,” says Director Spisak, and one look at all that’s being offered next semester confirms that. From “Physics: The Law or Just a Good Idea?” to “History through the Novel,” new Honors students will have a myriad of options should they decide to take an Honors First-Year Seminar.

Ali Borchers notes that when she signed up for her Honors First-Year Seminar, it had nothing to do with her major, but instead simply related to an interest

she had in performing arts that the seminar let her explore. This interest grew for her as a result of the seminar.

“My Honors First-Year Seminar actually affected my choices in later semesters. After thinking more about performing arts, I realized that it was something I was very passionate about and talking to my professor for that seminar helped guide me into becoming a theatre major,” says Borchers.

On the whole, those who are involved in Honors First-Year Seminars greatly enjoy them. The classes offer an intellectually engaging challenge for those involved, help students make connections within the Honors community, and allow students to explore their interests with a wide variety of topics across the board. For incoming Honors students, The question becomes less “Why join an Honors First-Year Seminar?” and more “How many can I take?” (the answer, by the way, is two).

Honors First-Year Seminars Offered 2012-2013

Tim Barrett – Intro to Book Arts

Anny Curtius – Caribbean Cinema: Cuba, Haiti, Martinique, and Trinidad

Carol Severino – Bicycles, Kayaks, and Snowshoes: Writing about Travel

Tom Casavant – DNA, Genomes and Society

Jeff Murray – Personal Genetics in Health, Culture and Ancestry

Karen Heimer (and Joseph Lang) – CSI: Crime Statistics Investigations

Rachel Williams – Coming of Age: An exploration of growing up in comics

Jeffrey Ohlmann – Sports Analytics

Lou Messerle – How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Global Suicide! Scientific, Moral, and Cultural Perspective

Art Spisak – Leadership via Classical Myth: Homer's Concept of a Leader in the Odyssey

Chris Squier – The Black Death, Smallpox and the Ghost Map, – Historical and Contemporary Approaches to Global Health

Mary Campbell – Learning about the Social World from Fiction

John Doershuk – Archaeology

Glenn Storey – Egyptian Hieroglyphs

Barry Butler – Engineering and Society – Wind Energy

Brian Lai – Politics of Terrorism

Ken Gayley – Physics: the Law or Just a Good Idea

Jeff Cox – History Through the Novel

Rene Rocha – Analyzing the 2012 Election

Mary Trachsel – Dogs, Inside and Out

Thomas Keegan – Drugs and Television: The Rhetoric of The Wire

William Hedgcock – Decision-Making and the Brain

Craig Just – Explorations in Sustainable Campus Living

Amnon Kohen – Evolution on the Molecular Level

Farewell from the Editor

Maggie Brigl

On May 12th, I walked across a stage at Carver Hawkeye arena. I threw my hat, I waved at my parents—I even got a stuffed graduation puppy! But with that short walk and hat throw, I realized that four years had passed by me quicker than I ever believed they would. I am now an adult—in charge of bills, finding a job, and mowing my lawn. I have learned many invaluable life lessons from my years with the Honors Program here at the University of Iowa, but as I pass off my editorial duties to Hannah Bruntz and Dylan Todd, I leave with these few words of advice:

- You're not alone in this. The Blank Honors Center is full of people who want to help you choose classes, find study partners, and will be there—you just have to ask for help.
- There are opportunities out there—you just have to get them. The Honors Program has helped me to find an internship and a fellowship, with a combined four years of professional experience under my belt already. If I can do it, you can do it.
- Savor your time on campus. My friends and I still reminisce about the days when we were all together in Daum. Don't let this time slip by.

- Go visit your mother. Why? Because you should, and I'm your elder now so just do it.

My sincerest thanks go out to all of the kind people, professors, and mentors who have led me through my life at Iowa, especially Holly Yoder. Editing the newsletter has been a challenge, a vision, and a life-changing experience that I will never forget, and will value the experience for the rest of my life. I leave it now in good hands.



Maggie Brigl is a recent graduate from the University of Iowa and holds degrees in English and psychology and a minor in mass communications. She hopes to get a puppy and find a job.

Meet the Writers!

Erin Marshall is a freshman English major from Rosemount, Minnesota. Aside from loving to write, Erin is a member of Phi Beta Chi National Sorority. She volunteers through the Iowa Youth Writing Project and as an international student conversation partner. Erin enjoyed participating in a plethora of new experiences while at Iowa, including Dance Marathon and Women's Chorale.



Jennifer Brooke is a junior linguistics and music major at Iowa. She enjoys reading and writing poetry, playing the piano, and travelling. She hopes to share her faith overseas after graduation.



Brittany Phillips is a junior studying political science and journalism. She is originally from Madison, Wisconsin but is a diehard Hawkeye fan!



Aubrey Bierwirth is a twenty-year-old student majoring in English with a minor in theatre arts. She enjoys books, travel, live music, vegetarian food, and British television. She dabbles in everything Honors, from courses to extracurriculars, and you can usually find her frequenting the Blank Honors Center, although there's no guarantee you'll always find her awake.



Mary Kate Baker is a freshman at the University of Iowa. Hailing from Chattanooga, Tennessee and she has made her way Iowa City, Iowa in order to participate in the incredible creative writing program that the University of Iowa has to offer. Mary Kate is a huge fan of Audrey Hepburn, pie, laughing, music, and being outdoors.

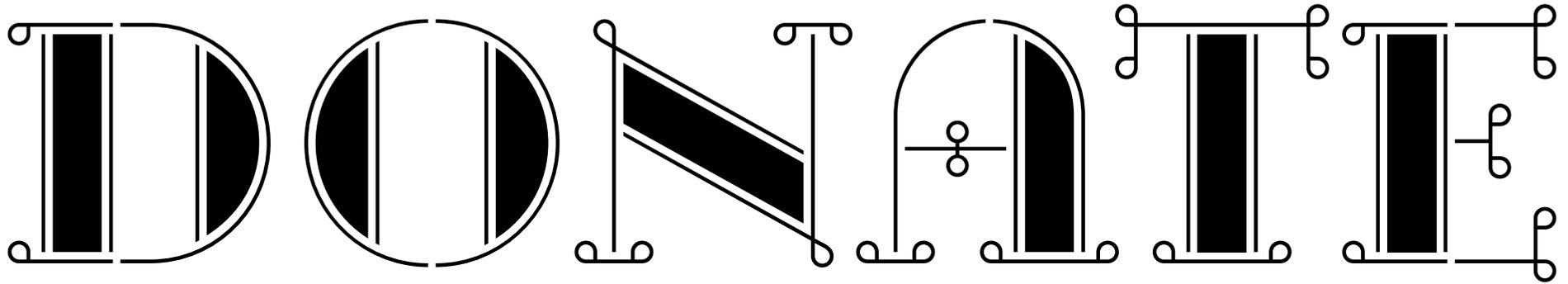


Rachel Stevenson will be attending the M.A. in Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Columbia University in the Fall.



Chloe McGuire Brigl is a sophomore at the University of Iowa. She is a psychology and philosophy double major who enjoys long walks on Coralville Reservoir, watching the sunset from the Old Capitol and is a dog person, not a cat person.





Would you like to give back to Honors at Iowa? There are many ways you can support our program, including scholarships to students, funding for students to present at professional conferences, and stipends for Honors study abroad. It's easy to give back – just click the star to visit our Foundation website!