

Mortar Board

National College Senior Honor Society

Scholars... Chosen for Leadership... United to Serve



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 15, 2011

ERINA AOYAMA AWARDED NATIONAL MORTAR BOARD FELLOWSHIP

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Mortar Board National Foundation Chair Sally Steadman, Ph.D., announced that Erina Aoyama is the 2011 recipient of the Mortar Board GEICO Fellowship, a \$5,000 award.

Erina graduated in June 2009 from the University of Washington in Seattle, earning a B.A. in international studies with a minor in Japanese. In the fall, she will attend Sciences Po, Paris School of International Affairs in Paris, France to obtain her master's degree in international affairs and international communication. She attended Roosevelt High School and is the daughter of Lori and Masaru Aoyama of Seattle, Wash.

Initiated into Mortar Board in 2008, Erina served on the membership committee for the Tolo chapter. In addition to her Mortar Board involvement, Erina co-created and facilitated a student-run course on the subject of mixed-race identity in popular culture and literature. She also volunteered as secretary for the University of Washington Mixed Club and tutored students in Japanese at a local elementary school. Erina's efforts in and out of the classroom earned her numerous awards and scholarships, including the Library Research Award for Undergraduate Thesis, the Mary Gates Research Scholarship and the Seattle Japanese Queen Scholarship. Erina was also named to Phi Beta Kappa and the University of Washington Honors Program.

Erina's academic pursuits have been inspired by study abroad experiences in Japan, France and Italy. Specifically, she conducted fieldwork in Tokyo to inform her undergraduate honors thesis about popular culture and Japanese identity. She also traveled as a member of the University of Angers (France) orchestra to the Czech Republic and Spain, participating in rehearsals and concerts with local orchestras in those countries. This unique opportunity sparked her curiosity about the role that music can play in cultural exchange. Describing her aspirations as a graduate student, Erina stated, "I am interested in cultural and public diplomacy for its use as a practical tool to promote cross-cultural communication and facilitate intercultural relations."

This year, the Mortar Board National Foundation awarded a total of \$40,000 in fellowships to 10 exceptional Mortar Board members. Fellowship recipients are chosen based on academic excellence, strong recommendation, scholarly promise, financial need and Mortar Board involvement. Since the establishment of the Mortar Board fellowship program in 1941, more than \$600,000 has been awarded to assist members in pursuing further study in graduate or professional school.

Congratulating this year's Mortar Board fellows, Dr. Steadman remarked, "The Mortar Board National Foundation is honored to recognize these remarkable scholar-leaders and to support them in achieving their future academic and professional goals. This exceptional group truly exemplifies Mortar Board's ideals of scholarship, leadership and service."

Mortar Board is the premier national honor society recognizing college seniors for outstanding achievement in scholarship, leadership and service. Since its founding in 1918, the organization has grown from the four founding chapters to 229 chartered collegiate chapters with nearly a quarter of a million initiated members across the nation.

Mortar Board provides opportunities for continued leadership development, promotes service to colleges and universities and encourages lifelong contributions to the global community. Some notable Mortar Board members include distinguished politician Condoleezza Rice, Super Bowl MVP Drew Brees and Suzy's Zoo creator Suzy Spafford. Learn more about Mortar Board at www.mortarboard.org.

-30-

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