

Major Notes

A Poppy Pink House: A Millsaps grad discusses her new life in Afghanistan

At first glance, **Kaley Payne Nash**, B.A. 2005, seems to have an ordinary life. She's recently adopted two kittens named Juno and Tamalayne, has a promising career, is

in global politics. On the night she was out celebrating the completion of her dissertation, she met London native Richard Nash. Two months later, they were engaged, and a month later, they married in an Alabama courthouse.

After spending a little over a year in London, they were anxious to move. Their choice? Afghanistan.

"They say that once you have worked here people know you can work anywhere," Nash said about their decision. "We weren't ready to make the final move

back to Africa, and so we decided that Afghanistan had the most opportunity for us to make our start and get experience in the field. Besides, it's a fascinating place."

Growing up the daughter of American missionaries in Kenya, Nash never felt quite at home on American soil.

"I always knew sort of what I wanted to do, even before I started at Millsaps," Nash said. "I was always longing to go back

to my African soil, to any other soil."

Nash credits two Millsaps mentors, Dr. Iren Omo-Bare, a political science professor, and Tanya Newkirk, associate director for international education, for helping guide her through her undergraduate education and into a career that falls somewhere between social justice and gender-based violence.

In Afghanistan Nash has found what she calls, "a severe oldness mingled with extreme newness." On the highway from Kabul to Jalalabad, derelict wooden shacks are mixed with new bridges and street lights. The scars of war are seen

married to a young lawyer, and plans on planting a veggie garden in her backyard.

But yet, she doesn't walk outside without an escort, she's looking into personal security, and she's managing field operations in eastern Afghanistan for a non profit foundation that matches the operational needs of international agencies with local businesses and supports private sector development.

Since she graduated from Millsaps, Nash seems to be moving in fast forward. She spent two years in graduate school at the London School for Economics where she received a master's of science



Kaley Payne Nash stands in her rose garden outside her home in Afghanistan, a cheerful respite in the midst of the "dusty city" of Kabul.



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everywhere—private security guards hold AK-47s outside most buildings, and a daily security report informs her about what areas are, relatively, safe for travel.

“It’s not that I am not worried about security, because I am, and don’t find it rather debilitating, because I do,” Nash said. “The only way most of us can survive here is by putting most of our efforts into pretending that the way we live here is normal. It’s the only way to stay sane.”

Despite the safety issues, Nash’s experiences remind her of a wonderful childhood in Africa, and she’s found comfort and satisfaction in the Afghan people.

The hospitality of the Afghan people cannot be surpassed, she said. “They will welcome you into their homes with a smile and will always make you feel like an honored guest. The fact that so

many people here can still smile and be welcoming to foreigners is testament to their resilience.”

In a society stricken by war for 30 plus years, the effects on daily living appear in nearly every aspect of life. For example, Afghan food revolves around naan, a flatbread, and greasy rice with small amounts of meat and potatoes. Both foods closely resemble food found in refugee camps.

“Apparently, Afghans used to have amazing food influenced by all of Central Asia, but over the past 30 years, so many people have lived in refugee camps for so long that they have literally forgotten how to cook these foods.”

In May, the couple moved into their first house in Kabul. They have painted the outside poppy pink, and the walls a cheery yellow.

“I desperately needed to live somewhere bright and cheery to escape the pervasive brown that seems to fill this dusty city,” Nash said.

Since she started her new job running field operations in Jalalabad, Nash is commuting between Kabul and Jalalabad. During the week she stays at a guest house, and a couple of weekends a month, returns to Kabul either by a Red Cross or USAID flight, since the highway is considered too dangerous for driving.

“I’ve quickly discovered that Jalalabad is different from Kabul and abides by its own rules and I am, with complete certainty, breaking all of them,” Nash said.

—K. P.

Millsaps graduate wins prestigious Fulbright Fellowship



On her first trip to Albania two years ago recent Millsaps College graduate **Chelsi West**, B.A. 2008, saw a lot of the Eastern European country that was different from her hometown

of Jackson—the ornate mosques, the language, and the Mediterranean food—but on the radio she heard the familiar sound of hip-hop music.

The idea of hip-hop in a place so far from home led West to write her honors thesis about hip-hop music in Albania and Tanzania, incorporating ideas of globalization, cultural transfer, performance theories, and identity formation.

This research and writing, combined with excellent scholarship, is part of why she has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to Albania for this year.

“I expected Albania to be so different from home, and I found it was very



Alumna recognized for longevity

Hazel Hollingsworth Powell, B.A. 1938, visited with Dr. Frances Lucas, president of Millsaps College, after the Major Generals luncheon. She was the oldest alumna at the luncheon.

different in some aspects but I also found some similar things. I heard a lot of American hip-hop on the radio," West said. "Albanian hip-hop is very naturalistic and all about pride in the country and Albanian ethnicity."

West is spending this year living in the capital city of Tirana where she is taking classes in social science and Albanian at the University of New York, Tirana.

West first became interested in studying other cultures when taking an introduction to anthropology course at Millsaps. The summer after her sophomore year, she signed up to work with Millsaps associate professor of anthropology Dr. Michael Galaty on the Shala Valley Project in the northern Albanian high mountains. The international project, which Galaty directs, was designed to study the remote valley's cultural resources and the impacts of cultural isolation.

Since her first trip, West, an honors graduate in sociology-anthropology with a minor in Faith & Work, has traveled to Albania again and Tanzania with Millsaps College.

"Everyone stared at me because many Albanians have never seen anyone of African descent," West said about her first trip to Albania. "One girl got my autograph; people wanted to take pictures with me and asked me if I knew Beyoncé."

The Fulbright Program, sponsored by the Department of State, is the United States' flagship international exchange program. The program's goal is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the U. S. and those around the world.

Dr. Galaty said the honor of a Fulbright punctuates West's truly amazing undergraduate career.

"There are only two spots available each year for Albania, and she will occupy one," Galaty said. "Of course, she fully deserves this opportunity. She will make a wonderful representative of our city, state and country."

West is a 2004 graduate of Murrah High School in Jackson. At Millsaps she served as a student leader for One

Campus, One Community, president of the Black Student Association, secretary of the Student Body Association, and chair of the Campus Ministry Team, Midtown Community Partnership Taskgroup.

Other honors include being a member of the Senior Year Experience Steering Committee, a Ford Teaching Fellow, Homecoming Queen 2007, and Omicron Delta Kappa Freshman Woman of the Year. She is a member of the 2007-2008 Hall of Fame and a winner of the Frank and Rachel Anne Laney Award for her essay reflecting on the value of a Millsaps liberal arts education.

—K. P.

Transfer students eligible for Phi Theta Kappa scholarships

Heather Phillips, B.A. 2008, is a graduate student in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University who hopes to intern with the U.S. Government Accountability Office or at the

United Nations.

She credits a rich and rewarding experience at Millsaps with putting her where she is today, and a Phi Theta Kappa scholarship for making it financially feasible for her to attend Millsaps after graduating from Hinds Community College in Raymond in 2005.

"Without that scholarship I would have never been able to go to Millsaps. Millsaps was the kind of college I dreamed about attending," she said.

Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, headquartered in Jackson, is the largest honor society in American higher education with 1,250 chapters on two-year and community college campuses in all 50 states, Canada, Germany, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the British Virgin Islands, the United Arab Emirates, and U.S. territorial possessions.

Phi Theta Kappa students admitted to Millsaps receive special consideration for Phi Theta Kappa scholarships based on their level of student involvement and academic success at their respective community or junior college. "Phi Theta Kappa has a long history of counting among its membership



Millsaps political science assistant professors Ashleigh Powers, left, and Dr. Michael Reinhard, discuss the presidential election with Millsaps graduate Heather Phillips and associate professor Dr. Iren Omo-Bare.

the brightest and most academically engaged students at the community and junior colleges,” said Mathew A. Cox, dean of enrollment management at Millsaps. “For that reason, we at Millsaps have found that these students fit very well with us. They are motivated students who understand the value of hard work and a great education, so we’ve increased efforts to target Phi Theta Kappa students throughout our recruitment and enrollment process.”

Phi Theta Kappa members attending Millsaps can join the newly established Phi Theta Kappa alumni chapter on campus, become active in service, and help recruit fellow Phi Theta Kappa prospective students for Millsaps.

Chris Kelley graduated from a community college in Dallas and knew no one in Jackson when he learned about Millsaps College. “I could start fresh and have new experiences,” said Kelley, who received a Phi Theta Kappa scholarship to attend Millsaps.

Now a senior, Kelley is a political science major and philosophy minor and involved in the Speech and Debate Club, the Political Science Club, and the Millsaps Tennis Team. He is a resident advisor for Galloway Residence Hall, and a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

— N. L. F.

Research finds Millsaps delivers results

During the last year, Millsaps College completed a multi-faceted marketing research study to help effectively position itself among other leading institutions in the Southeast. Feedback collected from alumni, prospective students, parents, current students, faculty, staff, and high school guidance counselors as well as additional research reinforced the already-held belief that Millsaps College is a superior academic institution that delivers results with lasting benefits for alumni.

Alumni and students commented that support provided by faculty and staff fosters a learning environment that is challenging, yet personal. Here are some additional findings:

- Alumni believe Millsaps provides the education it claims to provide
- Alumni credit their success in a large part to their experiences at Millsaps
- Alumni remain in contact with Millsaps College
- 72.9 percent read the *Millsaps Magazine* or other publications
- 60.3 percent stay in contact with students from their class
- 57.9 percent visit the Millsaps College website

- 37.3 percent surveyed stay in contact with a professor(s)

Alumni surveyed note that the three areas in which they are most satisfied with the performance of Millsaps are:

- Supportive faculty
- Opportunities to strengthen critical thinking skills
- Strong academic preparation to attend graduate/professional school

High levels of overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend Millsaps were also major findings. Feedback showed:

- 97 percent of alumni surveyed report being satisfied with their Millsaps education
- 96 percent of alumni surveyed report that they would recommend Millsaps to a prospective student

Alumni are willing to be more active when asked and are interested in being involved in the student recruitment process. Nearly 400 of the 715 alumni who responded to the survey offered to help with student recruitment.

The research is being used to develop a brand position that expresses Millsaps College in a way that will draw students who thrive in our learning environment, interest donors in supporting the college, and reinforce alumni pride. The brand position will begin being used in 2009.

— Patti Wade

For information about participating in student recruitment activities, contact Stacy Sneed in Admissions at 601-974-1056.



Find Nemo and friends on campus

Magnificent displays of colorful fish, invertebrates, and corals are right here on campus thanks to the Roscoe and Bobbie Douglas Aquarium in the Olin Hall of Science. **Dr. Mark Douglas**, B.S. 1991, and siblings **Kevin Douglas**, B.S. 1992; **Jeff Douglas**, B.S. 2001; and **Stacey Douglas**, B.S. 2005, dedicated their gift to their parents in gratitude for their love, support, and prayers. Dr. James P. McKeown, professor of biology, admires the aquarium.

— Kathryn Buchan