

PRESS RELEASE

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Milford Resident Vanessa N. Rozier Earns Prestigious Pickering Fellowship

On April 27, Vanessa N. Rozier was selected as one of 20 *Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Fellows* following a highly competitive nationwide contest of over 300 applicants. The Pickering Fellowship, funded by the U.S. Department of State and managed by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, supports extraordinary individuals who want to pursue a career in the U.S. Foreign Service. With this fellowship, Vanessa is on her way to becoming a diplomat with the U.S. Foreign Service.

Vanessa, who was born in Winston Salem, NC and raised in Milford, CT, graduated from West Shore Middle School in 2001 and Jonathan Law High School in 2005. As an active Milford resident, she was awarded with the Milford Star of Respect Award in middle school, where she was a member of the band and the yearbook club. In high school she played tennis and varsity volleyball where the team earned regional and state-wide accolades. She was also the columns editor for the *Jonathan Law Advocate* newspaper. On her way to college, the Milford Chamber of Commerce awarded Vanessa and three other Jonathan Law seniors with scholarships. Vanessa received the

J. Bruce Eagleson Memorial Scholarship for \$2,000.

After high school, she went on to Howard University in Washington, DC where she graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications in 2009. At Howard on a merit-based scholarship, she took advantage of opportunities to blend communication and international affairs in ways that will benefit her as a Public Diplomacy Officer in the U.S. Foreign Service. She committed herself to academics by being an active member and eventually student council president of the Walter H. Annenberg Honors Program in the John H. Johnson School of Communications. There, she was required to write a thesis paper on a topic related to communications. She chose to examine the affects the news media has on African Immigrants' perception of African Americans. This research and involvement on campus attracted the attention of professors and peers. In November 2008, she traveled to Rwanda in Eastern Africa where she participated in a conference organized by Howard professors. In Africa for the first time in her life, she did more than research theory; she has face-to-face interactions with South Africans, Ugandans, and Rwandans about issues surrounding communication and international affairs. She took the perspectives she captured and the experiences gained and shared them with other academics in her thesis, as well as with the entire Howard community through the student newspaper.

As the Editor-in-Chief of *The Hilltop* – the only daily newspaper owned and operated by African-Americans and the only daily student newspaper in Washington, DC – she wrote about her time abroad and pledged that more international coverage would be within the pages of that historic publication. Her love for reporting led her to an



internship with the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund where she was sent to Naples, Fla. to report on local business-related stories. She also was a part of the inaugural mtvU Editorial Board cast that interviewed Former President Bill Clinton. Vanessa also interned with Bloomberg News in Washington, DC reporting on national business-related stories before graduating. At Howard University, she was also a member of the undergraduate chapter of the National Council for Negro Women and representative for The Center for American Progress's Campus Progress. In these capacities she volunteered her time and skills to mentor middle school girls – a responsibility she held and still holds close to her heart. She also planned two large events on campus; one event addressed HIV/AIDS in both the black community and the Howard undergraduate community, and the second that discussed the historic colorism problem within the black community from whence it began and as it still exists today.

"I am truly honored by the experiences I had while at Howard University. While I was not always on track to becoming a Foreign Service Officer, my four years on this campus gave me all the preparation I needed to begin this exciting career," Vanessa said. After graduating, Vanessa now volunteers at the Washington Middle School for Girls, which educates young girls who come from environments that normally do not allow them to take advantage of the education and experiences that Washington, DC has to offer. There, she has helped those interested to start the school's first student-run newspaper. Vanessa works full time at Howard University as a program assistant in the University's Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center. There, she recruits and manages a program that seeks to support and train young persons for the very career she aspires to begin. Working with past, current, and future diplomats reminds her everyday of her goals and aspirations. She was accepted to two schools in Washington, DC to study international affairs, as well as offered the Pickering Fellowship. "I am so humbled by these opportunities," Vanessa said. "The support and confidence that others have in me made all the difference and I plan to meet and exceed everyone's expectations."

The Pickering Fellowship will provide Vanessa with up to \$100,000 over a two year period to pursue a master's degree in international affairs and international economics at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). As part of the Pickering Program, she will work at the U.S. State Department in Washington, DC in the summer of 2011. The State Department will then send her overseas to work in a U.S. Embassy to get hands-on experience with foreign policy. Immediately following, she will then begin work in the Foreign Service as a diplomat.

Vanessa lived in Milford, CT from 1998 until 2005 when she graduated from high school. She now lives in Washington, DC. Her parents are Ricardo Rozier, Sr. and Veronica Carter. She has two siblings, Ricardo Jr. and Deborah.

About the Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship

The Pickering Fellowship is a joint initiative between the U.S. State Department and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation that aims to attract outstanding students who represent all ethnic, racial and social backgrounds and who have an interest in pursuing a Foreign Service career in the U.S. Department of State. Beginning in 1992, the Pickering Fellowship selects 20 outstanding young people each year from around the country who exhibit the ideal qualities of a Foreign Service Officer. The program develops a source of trained men and women who will represent the skill needs of the Department and who are dedicated to representing America's interests abroad. With the academic, professional and financial support from the program, Fellows now serve as diplomats around the world, contributing to a more diverse representation and effective execution of U.S. foreign policy.

More information can be found online at www.woodrow.org/fellowships.