

Press Release



Tribute to Dr. David Kearney McDonogh by Leroy Campbell, Commissioned by Daniel Laroche MD donated on August 13, 2020 to New York Eye and Ear of Infirmary during its Bicentennial Anniversary week where Dr. McDonogh was on physician staff for 11 years.

On November 3, 2021, National Medical Fellowships (NMF) held the **6th annual Dr. David Kearney McDonogh Scholarship in Ophthalmology/Otolaryngology Lecture and Awards Virtual Reception. The first physician was an African Imhotep (2600 BCE) and the first Ophthalmologist was African Iry (2400 BCE).** Dr. McDonogh was born and enslaved on a plantation in New Orleans, LA in 1821 and became the first African American physician in Ophthalmology/Otolaryngology in America. The Scholarship and Reception was created in honor of Dr. McDonogh's legacy by a committee of ten New York Ophthalmologists and Otolaryngologists who are dedicated to increasing the number of underrepresented physicians interested in Ophthalmology and/or Otolaryngology specialties. This Scholarship Fund annually awards at least two \$5,000.00 scholarships. Eligible candidates must be currently enrolled in an accredited medical school in the United States; identify as Black, Afro-Latino (a), or Native American; exemplify Academic Excellence, Research, Leadership, and Service, and have an interest in pursuing a career in Ophthalmology/Otolaryngology specialties.

The **2021 Dr. David K. McDonogh Scholarships in Ophthalmology/Otolaryngology** were awarded to the following recipients:



Rahilla Tarfa: A fourth-year medical student at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine (Pitt Med) with a passion academic excellence, advocacy and volunteerism.. In addition to medical school Ms. Tarfa also developed a passion for biomedical research, pursued a Ph.D. in Neuroscience through the Brown-NIH Graduate Partnership Program after college. At Pittsburgh University School of Medicine Ms. Tarfa is currently engaged in biomedical research, working on screening novel compounds that could alleviate the burden of tinnitus, a disease that disproportionately affects veterans. Ms. Tarfa continued her advocacy as a member of the curriculum committee and co-host of The Pitt Med Radio Hour podcast, promoting student voices. She volunteered with the

Guerilla Eye Service, promoting vision health among the underserved in Pittsburgh. As a volunteer with the Women's Clinic, Ms. Tarfa provided care to disenfranchised women, some of whom have escaped intimate partner violence. She also served as a first-year coordinator and member of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), contributing to fundraising efforts. As a second year, Ms. Tarfa served as a co-coordinator of the ENT student interest group, promoting visibility of the field among students. She currently serves as the Academic Affairs Co-Chair for SNMA Region VIII. In her spare time, Ms. Tarfa loves to watch movies and shows, spend time with friends and family, and write.



Fitz Gerald Diala: A fourth-year medical student in the UCLA-Caltech Medical Scientist Training Program at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine. Mr. Diala earned his BS in Biochemistry from UC Riverside, graduating with Phi Beta Kappa and Rosemary S.J. Schraer Outstanding Senior honors. He completed his PhD in Molecular Biology under the guidance of Prof. Patricia J. Johnson, studying immune response to *Trichomonas vaginalis* and identifying the protein targets of metronidazole in the parasite. Mr. Diala's commitment to mentorship and support of students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds is longstanding. As an undergrad at University of California, Riverside (UCR), he was involved in African Americans United in

Science, a student organization through which he organized tutoring at a local community center for K-6 children. Afterwards, Mr. Diala worked for the UCR Medical Scholars Program where he provided tutoring and mentorship support for pre-health students from underserved communities. At UCLA, his involvement has been most notable through the UCLA Premedical Enrichment Program and Re-Application Program, both of which cater to the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This year, Mr. Diala was selected for induction into the Gold Humanism Honors Society after completing his core clinical clerkships. His interest in ophthalmology has been affirmed by clinical and research experiences in the field, and he envisions a career focused on eliminating preventable blindness, especially in underserved communities. Mr. Diala is committed to continuing to mentor the next generation of aspiring physicians.

There were many talented underrepresented minority medical students identified as a result of this scholarship who are also applying for Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology residency this fall and they include:

Dennis Akrobetu	Duke University School of Medicine
Nicole Creppel	Meharry Medical College School of Medicine
Simisola Odusanya	University of Minnesota Medical School
Kayla Powell	Indiana University School of Medicine
Jose Sinon*	State University of New York Downstate Medical Center College of Medicine

*Past McDonogh Scholar

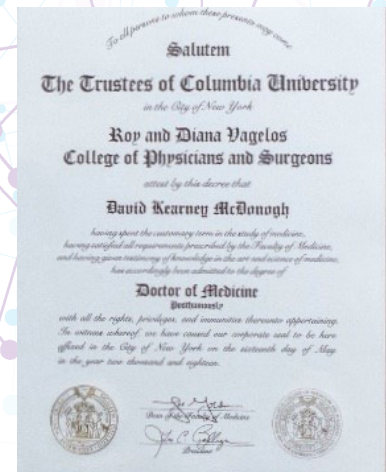
On behalf of the Board of Directors, NMF would like to thank all our supporters! A special thanks to the founding committee members: Karen Allison, MD; Ann Arthur-Andrew, MD; Nneka O. Brooks, MD; Jacqueline Busingye, MD; Benjeil Z. Edghill, MD; Rondai Evans, MD; Chaneve Jeanniton, MD; Daniel Laroche, MD (Founding Chair); John Mitchell, MD; Dwayne Rollins, MD

We would like to thank the 2021 New York Committee members: Karen Allison, MD, MBA; Ann Arthur-Andrew, MD; Nneka O. Brooks, MD; Jacqueline Busingye, MD; Benjeil Z. Edghill, MD; Tamiesha Frempong, MD, MPH; Chaneve Jeanniton, MD; Brandon Johnson, MD and Daniel Laroche, MD

We would like to thank the 2021 National Committee members: Barry E. Breaux, MD; David J. Brown, MD; Jeremiah Brown Jr., MS, MD; Ninita Brown, MD, PhD; Joseph M. Coney, MD; Oswaldo A. Henriquez, MD; Troy Woodard, MD and Academic Advisor Michael G. Stewart, MD, MPH, Chair of Otolaryngology at Weill Cornell Medical College.

A special thanks to our Corporate Gold Sponsor: Sight Sciences, Brandon Jean-Pierre and Michael G. Stewart, MD, MPH, Weill Medical College of Cornell New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Corporate Bronze Sponsors: Aerie Pharmaceuticals, Alcon, Ivantis, Inc., and Johnson & Johnson Vision. Our Benefactors for the event: Ann Arthur-Andrew, MD; Lauren Brown, MD; Ninita Brown, MD, PhD; Jacqueline Busingye, MD; Benjeil Edghill, MD; Rondai Evans, MD; Jonathan A. Feistmann, MD; Tamiesha Frempong, MD; Brandon Johnson, MD; Daniel Laroche, MD; James Tsai, MD and Troy Woodard, MD.

Finally, we want to thank all contributors for their heartfelt donations. Your contributions helped to make this happen.



Columbia University Medical Degree given to Dr. David K. McDonogh in 2018

Dr. David K. McDonogh Scholarship in Ophthalmology/Otolaryngology Lecture and Awards Virtual Reception was held on Wednesday November 3, 2021.

If you were not able to contribute yet, you can still contribute now, or to contribute for next year's Dr. David K. McDonogh Scholarship fund, [click here to donate](#).

Or send your check to:

National Medical Fellowships
ATTN: Dr. David K. McDonogh Scholarship Fund
PO Box 3875
New York, NY 10163