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Chicagoan Jessica Brown Wins Prize National Council of Negro Women, Aunt Jemima Brands

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Local
Central
Chicago
Minority

Chicagoan Jessica Brown Wins Prize

**National Council of Negro Women,
Aunt Jemima Brands of Quaker Oats Co.
Confer Community Service Award on IWU Student**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and Aunt Jemima Brands of the Quaker Oats Co., have recognized an Illinois Wesleyan University senior from Chicago with a community service award.

Jessica Brown, an English and political science double major, received the Tribute to Black Women Community Leaders award. Brown, the only student among the Chicago award recipients, received \$500 and a trophy.

Brown was among five black female community leaders to receive the Chicago award. Other recipients were named in Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and New York between April and July.

"I feel really good about receiving the award," Brown said.

Brown's mother, Ethel, a special education teacher at Chicago's Dunbar Vocational High School, nominated Jessica for the award.

"She didn't tell me about it," Brown deadpanned, referring to her mother's action.

Brown was interviewed by telephone about her community service activities as part of the selection process.

"We registered quite a few people," Brown said. "On Election Day, we joined with other clubs on campus and took people to polling places."

Over the years, Brown has volunteered in an adult literacy program, where she was a reading tutor. As a college student, she volunteered at Halloween and Christmas parties sponsored by Bloomington-Normal Boys and Girls Clubs.

Asked why she volunteers, Brown simply said: "It's important. I like to help people."

Among Brown's extracurricular activities at IWU are: opinions editor of *The Argus*, the university's weekly newspaper; urban music director of WESN, the university's FM radio station; and a member of the Ambassador Club, a group of student volunteers who host campus visitors and serve as tour guides.

Brown received the community service award at a breakfast last June at the Chicago Hilton attended by more than 100 business people and friends of the recipients.

(more)

IWU Student Receives Community Service Award/2

Following graduation next May, Brown intends to attend graduate school.

Brown is a graduate of Chicago's Kenwood Academy high school. Her home is at 1212 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

Residents in seven states were invited to nominate black, female community leaders and students--who serve as positive role models and who have made notable contributions to their communities--for the Tribute to Black Women Community Leaders award. Following a local judging process, four honorees in each state were selected for their community service. The awards were presented at an NCNW leadership breakfast fundraiser.

NCNW distributed nominating ballots to churches, community centers, civic and social organizations, professional associations, and other community agencies. Nominees in seven participating states were judged on community service and leadership, family ideals and dedication, church activism, career development, and an essay on the nominee's service.

As president of IWU's Black Student Union (BSU) last year, Brown played a key role in a voter registration drive targeted to low-income Bloomington-Normal residents.

The Chicago-based Quaker Oats Co., is a diversified and international food products company with more than \$5 billion in annual sales.

The National Council of Negro Women, Inc., was founded in 1935 by the noted educator and human-rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune. NCNW, which reaches 4 million women, advances opportunities and quality of life for African-American women, their families, and communities.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,900 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and its Schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletic center, a \$25 million science building, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million liberal arts center. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching ranks Illinois Wesleyan a "Baccalaureate I" institution, a classification that places it among the 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges. IWU won the 1997 NCAA Division III men's basketball championship.