

2007 Malcolm Helm Memorial Endowed Scholarship Recipient

Rasheed A. Akando

In January of 2007, as I was walking down the hall of the University of Houston's Moores School of Music I walked passed a sign reading "2007 Malcolm Helm Memorial Endowed Scholarship" and I was immediately interested. However, before I felt qualified for applying for the scholarship I thought I should learn as much about Mr. Helm as I could. I attend the Moores School of Music and have the esteem pleasure of getting to learn from some of the greatest music educators on the planet. Two of those men worked very closely with Mr. Helm before his all-too-early passing in 1993. Through the wisdom of Mr. Tom Bennett, my wind ensemble director at UH and Mr. Eddie Green, the former conductor of the University of Houston Wind Ensemble, I was able to learn about the dedication and success of Mr. Helm and his invaluable contribution to music education in this state. After discovering more about Mr. Helm I felt it appropriate to move forward in applying for the scholarship in his name.

The task of completing the application process for the scholarship was no easy task. The process involved gathering three letters of recommendation from active members of TBA which I received from Mr. Tom Bennett, Ms. Debra Haburay, Director of Bands at Forestwood Middle School in the Lewisville ISD and Mr. John Benzer, Music Education faculty member at the Moores School. I also had to compose a letter to the TBA Board of Director expressing my future goals and aspirations and put together a resume of accomplishments.

I received an e-mail from Board member Mr. Gary Robbins telling me that I won the scholarship! Following that, I received a letter from TBA telling me that I was invited to the convention and would be honored at the Active Members Luncheon.

Upon arriving at the convention I was truly overwhelmed by the congratulations from the Board members and band directors I didn't even know. The atmosphere

at the convention is one that is truly humbling. Mr. Al Sturchio, his wife Jan and all the members of the Board of Directors made the event wonderfully enjoyable and an experience to remember.

Having received other honors and scholarships during my four years of college, I can easily say that the monetary value to the Helm Scholarship and the

convention experience make this scholarship particularly special. The opportunities that TBA offers college students are endless and invaluable to any future educator, and every collegiate student should find it necessary to take advantage of these opportunities. I would like to thank TBA and all its members who contribute to higher education through the Helm Scholarship. It truly does make a difference when a student can just learn and not have to worry about money. So again, thank you Mr. and Mrs. Al Sturchio, President Myers and all the members of TBA for doing what you do!

