



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

M E D I A R E L E A S E

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UWinnipeg and Collegiate Graduate Awarded Rhodes Scholarship: Alana Lajoie-O'Malley

WINNIPEG— University of Winnipeg graduate and environmentalist Alana Lajoie-O'Malley will become one of the newest Rhodes Scholars at Oxford University in England next Fall. She is one of three students from the Prairie region named as winners of the prestigious scholarship this year—one of two from Manitoba.

Lajoie-O'Malley, 24, has already had a distinguished academic career at The University of Winnipeg. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Spring 2006 with a major in Science as a Catalyst for Social Change. Her efforts earned her a gold medal and the honour of serving as valedictorian at the Spring Convocation ceremony. She is now completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics.

"I never would have thought I could become a Rhodes Scholar coming from a small town in Manitoba," said Lajoie-O'Malley, who was born and raised in Ste. Anne, Manitoba and is fluently bilingual in French and English.

Through her studies, Lajoie-O'Malley has also made time to contribute to the University community and to make a positive difference in the world around her. Active in SUNSET (Sustainable University Now, Sustainable Earth Tomorrow), she led a group of environmentally-conscious students who spearheaded an initiative to have UWinnipeg become more socially and environmentally responsible. Since then, the University has committed to becoming a Kyoto-compliant institution and has passed a sustainability policy. She was also active on the University's Sustainability Task Force which produced a campus sustainability policy that was adopted by the Board of Regents on October 3, 2006.

"Alana is truly a remarkable student both academically and personally," said UWinnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy. "Her intellectual rigour and her passion for environmental and sustainability issues are exemplary—areas of particular importance to the future of The University of Winnipeg. She is a model for other students and this opportunity to study at Oxford will benefit Alana's development as a scholar and as an activist for change." Recognizing her talents and abilities, Axworthy recently hired Lajoie-O'Malley as a research assistant in his office.

Lajoie-O'Malley attended The University of Winnipeg's Collegiate maintaining an exceptional academic record, winning numerous awards and scholarships. These included the O.T. Anderson Award for distinguished academic and extra-curricular achievement and the Dr. and Mrs. Roderick Hunter Scholarship—an awarded granted on the basis of academic excellence, outstanding leadership qualities and significant extracurricular involvements.

When she entered The University of Winnipeg, Lajoie-O'Malley says she felt strongly about following an interdisciplinary course of study. "I had a question that I wanted answered when I began university—the relationship between quantum mechanics and Eastern mysticism—and no one subject could answer it," she said. Lajoie-O'Malley practices Hatha yoga on a daily basis and also teaches it.

Eventually, Lajoie-O'Malley began looking at broader issues related to how politics and scientific theory can enlighten and sought to define the inter-relationship between science and social action. This led her to pursue a Bachelor of Arts honours degree majoring in Science as a Catalyst for Social Change, a program she designed combining the study of History, Physics and Politics.

Lajoie-O'Malley participated in a Canada World Youth Exchange Program in 2001/02, traveling to India and British Columbia, instilling in her a sense of responsibility to social justice issues and sustainable living. Additionally, Lajoie-O'Malley has volunteered as a tutor to elementary and high school students, with Frontier College and with the Manitoba Eco-Network.

Lajoie-O'Malley has worked as a researcher in UWinnipeg's Departments of History and Physics and as a Teaching Assistant in the University's Department of Politics. As well, she was the recipient of the Associated Medical Services/Hannah Students, for which students are selected from universities across Canada to complete a 12-week research project in the history of medicine. She presented her research findings at the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine during the 2005 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, held at the University of Western Ontario.

At Oxford University, Lajoie-O'Malley intends to pursue another Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Physics—an area of longstanding interest to Lajoie-O'Malley that will involve the study of the theoretical components of physics in conjunction with the philosophical considerations of scientific knowledge and development.

Each year, the Prairie Region, which includes Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, is allotted three Rhodes Scholarships for study at Oxford University in England. This year, Lajoie-O'Malley will be joined by fellow Manitoban Michael Urban, 23, a graduate student at Carleton University, and Travis Murdoch, 22, a third-year medical student at the University of Alberta.

Students from UWinnipeg, home to approximately five per cent of the Western Region student population, have received five out of the 30 Rhodes Scholarships allotted to the prairies in the past 10 years. Overall, The University of Winnipeg/United College family of alumni has 29 Rhodes Scholars within its distinguished membership.

Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their "Entire Educational Experience" (Maclean's Graduate Survey, June 2006). The Globe & Mail 2006 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall 'A' grade in the areas of quality of education, teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit www.uwinnipeg.ca

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