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NEWS RELEASE

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PHS Graduate FVSU Valedictorian & Successful Scientist



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Kimberly Burgess, 2008 Perry High School graduate, graduated from Fort Valley State in December 2011 as Valedictorian. The Perry resident earned a degree in Biology and plans to attend graduate school to become a biology professor and researcher.

Burgess commented, “I think Perry High School set the foundation for my interest in science as a career. My science teachers Mrs. Conner, Guyotte, and Heath sparked the passion. Also, all of Perry High School's graduates that have gone to Fort Valley State are the top students in their departments, so that is proof that this school has raised some fine students.”

The young scientist spends time off from school conducting research. Burgess was accepted into several summer programs, but chose the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which paid \$5,000 in salary and additional funding to cover food, travel and accommodations. While working with the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Integrated Biological Sciences-Summer Research Program, she was part of a research team that developed a patented method to reduce water pollution. Their work decreases algal blooms, fish mortality and bacterial growth that produce toxic vapors. The team developed a vaccine to change the nutrient requirements of chickens and possibly reduce environmental pollution associated with animal agriculture. Mother hens that are vaccinated would pass the vaccine antibodies to their offspring.

The patent was approved and may potentially net \$200 million a year. Burgess presented her findings in October at the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science conference in San Jose, Calif. and at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in November in St. Louis.

If she attends a Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) school, Burgess could qualify for the program’s “Bridge to the Doctorate” program, which provides students with a two-year,

MORE

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PHS Graduate Earns Degree in Biology from FVSU / page 2 of 2

\$30,000 annual stipend. LSAMP is funded by the National Science Foundation, designed to broaden the participation of underrepresented minority students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

She is currently working at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in the Pharmacology and Toxicology Department in Dr. Jennifer King's Pharmacological laboratory. The lab focuses on the quantification of antiretroviral and antivirals to be used in configuring the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of these drugs to be used in clinical HIV trials, drug development, and toxicity studies. She will work there until she gets accepted into a Ph.D. program which begins Fall 2012. Burgess is currently interviewing with UAB, Emory, Duke, Indiana Univ., and University of Wisconsin-Madison for a Ph.D. program.

Perry High is located at 1307 North Avenue in Perry. Principal Dr. Darryl Albritton may be reached at 478-988-6298. Burgess may be reached at 478-957-3966.

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