



BOSTON COLLEGE

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BC BIOCHEMISTRY STUDENT 'WUNDERKIND' RACKS UP FIFTH NATIONAL SCIENCE AWARD;

ASPIRING CANCER RESEARCHER ELIZABETH O'DAY ALSO DESIGNED PILOT PROGRAM TO ENTICE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS TO SCIENCE

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (4-25-06) – Aspiring cancer researcher Elizabeth O'Day of Boston College is well on her way to becoming one of the nation's most recognized female scientists -- and she hasn't even graduated yet.

O'Day, currently a senior, has achieved what no one at Boston College -- and few, if any, at other universities have done: she has won five of the nation's most coveted academic awards for her scientific research efforts. After earning Beckman and Goldwater fellowships as a sophomore and junior respectively, this year O'Day has received a Winston Churchill Scholarship to study at Cambridge University, a Fulbright grant and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.



The Braintree, Mass. native is studying cell enzymes that she hopes will contribute to the development of a new class of inhibitors that in turn may lead to a new class of anti-cancer drugs

And, in an equally passionate effort to debunk assertions of female inadequacies in the sciences and to encourage local female high school students to consider a science career, O'Day earlier this year launched at Boston College an initiative of her own design called "Women in Science & Technology." The month-long series brought students from three local high schools to Boston College for research, lectures, field excursions and the opportunity to meet both mentors and role models across scientific disciplines.



The program stems from O'Day's desire to share her own experience as a woman in science, which the BC senior says has been a source of both inspiration and opportunity.

"Last year when I was invited to speak about science at a local high school, I was disappointed to learn that many of the girls in the audience said they found science to be too boring or difficult," said O'Day. "So I decided that I wanted to do something to give

teenage girls a better understanding of the scientific process and ultimately to excite them about choosing science as a major and a career."

O'Day has found her own scientific work to be rewarding in more ways than one.

The Winston Churchill Scholarship, which she received in January, offers promising young American scientists the opportunity to establish international contacts while studying at one of Britain's premier science centers. It will support her graduate work at Churchill College of Cambridge University. Her Fulbright Scholarship offered similar opportunities for graduate study in India. In 2005, O'Day landed a coveted Goldwater Scholarship, considered the premier undergraduate science fellowship, and was chosen to present her research at the Euroregionale Conference of the American Chemical Society German Exchange Program in Berlin. The previous year, as a sophomore, she won a highly competitive Beckman Scholarship, which funds intensive research experiences for exceptional undergraduates.

Far from resting on her laurels, however, O'Day is now fully invested in her quest to promote science to younger women. "BC has also taught me that I'm not only responsible for myself and my research, but for society as well," said O'Day. "I am so grateful for what science has brought to my life that I want show others the opportunities it offers."

In her limited spare time, O'Day is also the captain and starting fullback on BC's women's rugby team where she has earned the nickname "The Brick Wall," for her fearless tackles.

Her passion for her scientific research prevails, however. "I'm grateful to be able to help develop research that is not only exciting but has real world application," said O'Day. "Like many people I have seen first hand the devastation when a loved one is diagnosed with cancer. By working on this project I have been given an opportunity to help combat this disease."

When she returns from graduate work in England, she plans to pursue a doctorate in chemical biology.

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