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Marti Robinson: A Beckman Research Experience

Martha Robinson

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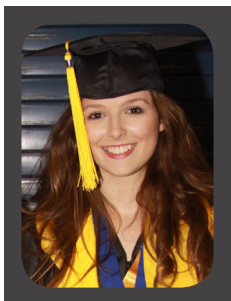
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Martha (Marti) Robinson

Mentor: Dr. Robin Cooper, Professor, Department of Biology

In 2007, The University of Kentucky offered me the coveted Singletary Scholarship Award. Honored and grateful, I agreed to turn my focus from Vanderbilt, Duke, and Emory and take a closer look at other opportunities within the confines of Wildcat country. After several interviews and campus visits, I discovered the prospects that undergraduates had for hands-on research in mentored laboratories, which would have been held beyond my reach at another university. I packed my bags and I moved north to Lexington.

In high school, I worked very hard and took every Advanced Placement course that my school would allow me to take. The result was that I started UK as a second semester sophomore with two of my first classes being Organic Chemistry and Cellular Biology. To that point in my life, I had never been so challenged, nor felt more in control of my future. The door that I had been waiting to open came with Dr. Bonner's invitation to meet with Dr. Robin Cooper and to lean on an old cliché, the rest is history.

My neurological undergraduate research work in Dr. Cooper's Lab led me to a Ribble Scholarship, the Beckman Award, and tremendous exposure to biological processes within the academic arena. I have presented my research on using heart rate as a bioindex to assess various sensory perceptions in sighted and non-sighted crayfish at local, regional, national, and international conferences from Southern California to Wisconsin to Washington D.C. to Chicago to Sardinia, Italy. I have met and discussed my research with undergraduates and post doctorates from around the world. The University of Kentucky, the financial support of The Beckman Foundation, and the dedication of the professors and instructors at this fine institution have made this experience possible for me. Presently, I am in my first year of medical college at the University of Kentucky and on a daily basis I discover that my knowledge and methodologies of research experience are invaluable to my progression of becoming a neurosurgeon.