

# reaching *for the* stars

*examples of* African American  
and Latino IMSA Graduates



# *forward*

Searching for the secrets in the heart of the atom, or in the genetic code that makes each of us unique, IMSA's African-American and Hispanic alumni are extending the frontiers of science. They are achieving and contributing in many fields, engineering Illinois products, researching disease, teaching Illinois students, and improving Illinois technology.

The vignettes give an extended look at several alumni, and the snapshots give a glimpse of more. Here our underrepresented alumni tell how IMSA prepared them for academic and personal life, and gave them opportunities to develop tools for success.

Series Editor Cathy Veal, Vice President for Advancement, had the concept and excellent counsel to bring this project to fruition. Her knowledge and insight were invaluable. Jean Bigger of the Furnas Information Resource Center created title, concept and montage, and with Angela Richardson, provided day-to-day consulting. Thank you for information to Britta McKenna, Juan Bustamante and Kathleen Long of the Office of Advancement; Keith McIntosh of Student Life; Principal Eric McLaren; Dr. Steve Cordogan, Jill Mosshamer and Jay Thomas of the Office of Research and Evaluation; Dr. LuAnn Smith, Babs Cleary, and Joe Prieto of College and Academic Counseling; and Dr. Peggy Connolly of the Mentorship Office. Thanks most of all to the alumni who made the work a pleasure.

This work was compiled from the results of the IMSA Alumni Survey by the Alumni Office, records in the IMSA Archives, personal communications, phone and email interviews.

I am proud and happy to help showcase this sampling of the achievements of our African-American and Hispanic alumni, and look forward to their future contributions.

*Marti Guarin, Editor  
IMSA Charter Librarian and Archivist  
January 2001*

*Cover photo of Andrea Holmes '90 by Robert Boston of the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.*

*Cover photo of Greg Veramendi '94 by Reidar Hahn of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory.*

*Page 12 photo of Andrea Llenos '00 and Keny Ruffin '99 by Doug West*

# dear IMSA shareholder

We are proud to highlight some of the many accomplishments of successful African American and Latino IMSA alumni. Stimulated and nurtured in IMSA's unique learning environment, these young men and women are achieving and leading in various professions.

The enrollment of our country's institutions of higher education and the work force in the fields of mathematics, science and technology do not adequately reflect the diversity of our society. IMSA provides an opportunity for Illinois to develop and utilize the talents of its young people of diverse backgrounds. This is especially important in light of changing demographic trends in our state and nation.

Attracting and retaining historically underrepresented minority students continues to be a high priority of the Academy, as we strive to narrow the access and achievement gap. Pre-admissions enrichment programs for students in grades 7-9 and retention programs for IMSA students support and develop their abilities. Our African American and Latino graduates serve as outstanding role models of success and excellence in mathematics, science and other fields.

Founded in 1985 by the Illinois General Assembly, IMSA has two statutory charges: to offer a uniquely challenging education for students talented in mathematics and science; and to stimulate further excellence for all Illinois schools in the areas of science and mathematics.

As a pioneering educational community, IMSA models and helps others develop a learning environment that engages the fullness of each student's potential; honors and celebrates learners' questions; stimulates curiosity, risk, exploration, and adventure; and asks students to contribute to the creation of a compassionate and sustainable world that works for everyone.

We are and will remain committed to increasing the representation and achievement of African Americans and Latinos in mathematics, science and technology. The alumni in our vignettes and snapshots are making significant contributions in their chosen fields and in their communities, using their goodness and genius for the betterment of all. I hope you enjoy reading their stories and I invite you to join us as advocates and partners in developing and nurturing talent in all its remarkable forms.

Sincerely,



*Stephanie Pace Marshall, Ph.D.*  
President





# IMSA alumni reaching for the stars

## Thandeka Chapman

*DeKalb, DeKalb County*



Thandeka Chapman '89 is implementing her research for her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She earned her BA in English at Spelman College and taught English in the Rockford Public Schools. Her thesis will focus on multicultural English education—how teachers construct meanings from literature by both white and non-white ethnic authors and how students interpret the same meanings through their own lenses.

Chapman says, "IMSA did many things well. The way that I have constructed my own philosophies on education and on what teachers should and shouldn't do come from IMSA. English should be enacted and not just read; without IMSA, I would not be able to see and visualize it. Going to IMSA was the best thing I ever did for my education."

Chapman also enjoyed coaching girls' basketball in Rockford and keeps in touch with the girls. "When I talk to them I realize why I'm in education and love it so much. It's an ongoing conversation," she says.



*Montage by Jean Bigger*

## Rachel Burrell

*Rockford, Winnebago County*

Rachel Burrell '90 studies in the School of Public Health at the University of Texas at Houston, working toward her MS and PhD. Her special interest is epidemiology, the transmission and spread of infectious diseases, with a focus on community health. Her Master's thesis is on "Prevalence of V.R.E. in the Spinal Cord Injury Service" at the Houston Veteran's Administration Medical Center. She earned her BS at Vanderbilt University in Health and Human Services in 1998.

Burrell was inspired by Dr. Ed Goebel's Pathogenic Microbiology course at IMSA. "That course gave me a direction. From then on, I knew I wanted to specialize in infectious diseases and epidemiology," she says.

Burrell cites Mentorship and Dr. Peggy Connolly's support as crucial in her development. Burrell completed a mentorship each year at IMSA, at Northern Illinois University, Children's Memorial Hospital and Northwestern University. While at IMSA, she presented "Investigation of Molecular Mechanisms of Neuroblastoma Differentiation" at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.

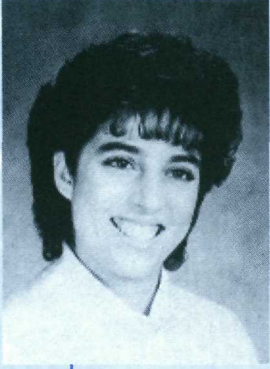
"At IMSA nobody told me I was different. IMSA is a place that really teaches you to celebrate your differences. I learned from Southern Illinois people, and from Chicagoans. Diversity was not just ethnic but in our world views. That's important to learn at a young age."

—*Cynthia Morales '92*



## Diana Rios Liz, PharmD.

*Aurora, Kane County*



Dr. Diana Rios Liz '89 followed family tradition to become a pharmacist. She attended Northern Illinois University and graduated from Creighton University with a Doctorate in Pharmacy. Rios took the initiative to found the Creighton University Latino Student Association and was its president; she also served on the University Committee for Cultural Diversity. Today, she is a pharmacist in Aurora, and she is also a certified diabetes specialist.

Rios Liz sees IMSA as a place to help students shape their ideas, become leaders and develop leadership skills. She says the faculty and staff are supportive of many kinds of ideas and if students want to develop something, there are many volunteers to help them. "The environ-

ment had different people from different places who became like brothers and sisters because you spent so much time with them," she adds.

Rios Liz continues, "IMSA teaches you more than just getting an A; it teaches you to look at things from a different perspective, to balance your activities and to make a difference. Don't just take but make a contribution yourself, wherever you are."

## Andrea Holmes

*Edgemont, St. Clair County*



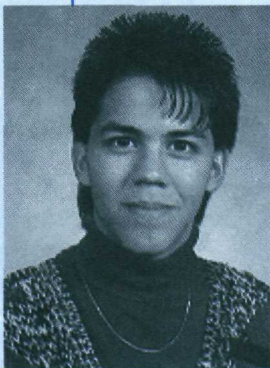
Andrea Holmes '90 works on the Human Genome Project at Washington University in St. Louis. She puts the information together and arranges it before sending it to the public database. "The genome has a complicated DNA structure and sometimes the data is inverted or repeated," she says. "I organize everything into the same format. I'm really enjoying this project. It's a way to fight disease and help people get well."

Holmes graduated with a BS in Biology and a BA in Spanish from Washington University in 1994, as an Ervin Scholar. She says, "My IMSA Mentorship at Northern Illinois University is why I'm in research now." In college, she continued laboratory research, on drosophilia protein.

Holmes' future plans include a possible MBA and work with a pharmaceutical company for practical applications of knowledge from her research. She is an active volunteer at her church.

## Gabe Suarez

*Bensenville, DuPage County*



Gabe Suarez '90 works as a Network Performance Supervisor at AT&T Wireless Services. After college, he was a Systems Engineer at Motorola. He graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1995 with a BS in Electrical Engineering. He won a LULAC Scholarship sponsored by General Motors. He also studied at the University of Illinois with a President's Scholarship.

"I realized that my life is filled with so many highs I need to take the time to reflect on them and appreciate them. I've traveled all over the US and Canada and have had the privilege of meeting and keeping in contact with many great people," he says. "I have learned to appreciate the people and opportunities I have to try new things, which makes nearly every day a high point."

About IMSA, Suarez says, "One of the best things I got out of it was the friends I made there. It's a good experience for a lot of people to go through together—a good bond."



*Diana Rios Liz*

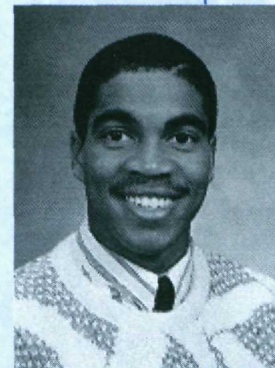
## Lonzell Wilson, J.D.

*University Park, Will County*

Lonzell Wilson '90 earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Chicago in 1999. As an attorney, Wilson chose front-line work with UPS where he investigates issues such as employee disputes leading to arbitration and missing materials. "It's not the same every day. I react to situations with thinking on my feet and quick decision-making. Although I didn't go into math or science, my IMSA preparation still helps me, with skills in analysis, thinking things through step by step, and processing a lot of information," he says.



*Lonzell Wilson*



Wilson graduated with a BA in Psychology from Northern Illinois University in 1995. He then served as the DUI Task Force Project Coordinator for DeKalb County. "I like law enforcement more than the legal work of a court attorney; I can make more impact on the front lines," he says.

He volunteers as a coach of junior high school boys' basketball.

- [Marcie Edwards Hawkins](#) '89, from Chicago earned her JD from the Ohio State University College of Law and her BA in Finance from the University of Illinois. She is a Lawyer for CT Corporation. She gave the 1999 Convocation Address at IMSA.
- [Michael Rodriguez](#) '89, from South Holland, Cook County, is a Senior Engineer at Motorola, having earned a BS and MS from the University of Illinois in Electrical Engineering. He volunteers with the Les Turner ALS Foundation and the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation.
- [Alvia Romious](#) '89, of East St. Louis is a Corporate Finance Associate for Bank One Corporation in the Energy and Utilities Division. After graduating with a BS in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University, she worked for five years as an engineer for a food company, CPC International, and then pursued an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management.
- [Steven Roman](#) '89, of Aurora, Kane County, graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Illinois, with a BS in Psychology. His interest in English, inspired by the quality of English teaching at IMSA, led to a career change. He earned an MA in English from Northern Illinois University to become a teacher.
- [Dion Steele](#) '89, from Markham, Cook County, teaches religion and African-American history at Hales Franciscan High School. He earned an MA in Divinity and a BA in history from the University of Illinois.
- [LaShanya Aikerson](#) '90, from Aurora, Kane County, is a Mobile Consultant for IBM Management Consulting. She earned a BSEE in Electrical Engineering from Bradley in 1995 and a Master of Management from Northwestern University in 1999.
- [Dr. Matthew McLean](#) '90, of Macomb, McDonough County, is specializing in orthopedic surgery at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He graduated from Washington University in 1998 with an MD and from Cornell University with a BA in 1994.

## Aishania Hopkins

*Chicago*



Aishania Hopkins '91 is pursuing a PhD in Agriculture at the University of Minnesota, where she earned her MS in Soil Science and BS in Human Physiology. She plans to begin law school next year while writing her dissertation.

Hopkins is researching denitrification of tile and ditch-drained fields. The goal of her thesis will be to examine the construction design of culverts and ditches to reduce the amount of ammonia and nitrates entering the water system, especially the Mississippi River. The goal is to keep more of this waste in the landscape and reduce it to gaseous form. She will examine what percentage of incoming nitrates is moving into gaseous form and how much into the water system, since the majority of molecules in the atmosphere are nitrogen.

"IMSA was wonderful!" Hopkins says. "Everyone could be himself or herself. Our instructors knew their field and encouraged us, were flexible, happy that we were motivated, explained things to us, were willing to discuss it and wanted to teach. If they didn't know something, they helped you get the information. If I have kids, I want them to go to IMSA."

## Asa Flanigan

*Kankakee, Kankakee County*



Asa Flanigan '92 is a MD/PhD student in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Illinois. He holds a scholarship from the Illinois Minorities Graduate Incentives Programs (IMGIP). He earned a BS in Biology with a minor in English at Washington University.

Flanigan's research interest is infectious disease, especially salmonella, an international problem in developing countries. He studies protein expression and salmonella-type bacterium. When protein is overexpressed in bacterial cells, it can produce toxicity that can overcome large amounts of pharmacological substances. Flanigan also works on the basic question of how bacterial cells coordinate expression of protein with other cell processes.

"IMSA was the first time I had to be around students of different cultures. It opened opportunities in terms of my future interests in international studies. I'm studying foreign language. I learned Spanish at IMSA, and now I'm working on Arabic. I'll attend a medical conference in Egypt this summer on infectious disease," he says.

## Cynthia Morales

*St. Charles, Kane County*



Cynthia Morales '92 is working toward her JD at the School of Law of Tulane University. She chose Tulane for its Environmental Law program, combining her science background with law in a way that can help people. She earned a BS in Plant Biology at the University of Illinois.

Morales is the senior managing editor of the Tulane Environmental Law Journal and a member of Phi Delta Phi national law honorary society. She won a Merit Scholarship to attend Tulane.

As a student attorney in the Law Clinic, Morales has her own clients and cases. "The Clinic represents people who live below the poverty line from the area on the Mississippi River called 'Cancer Alley' because of pollution. I like taking big problems like a puzzle and using the law to help other people," she says.

"I wouldn't be where I am or the person I am without IMSA. I feel because of the environment I was in I succeeded," she adds.



## Charletha Talley

*Chicago*

Charletha “Charlie” Talley ’92 earned a BA in Spanish Literature from Knox College in 1996. She now is the Information Systems Manager at Foote, Cone & Belding. Previously she was the Creative Process Coordinator at DDB. While in college she worked at FCB as an Information Systems Analyst. “I’ve come full circle, from using my technical skills to working on the creative arts side and back to the technical side,” she says.

Talley is creating her own community program—Project Imagine, a center in Roseland. The goal is to take young children, ages 6 to 16, help them keep away from the distractions of urban life, and help them re-prioritize for studying. “The two-year plan is to use students who need community service hours. A minister and I started with a series of workshops on chemical abuse and will have other programs in place in early 2001,” she says. Talley also volunteers as a crisis counselor for a sexual assault group called Rape Victim Advocates in Chicago.



- **Dr. Tuwanda Williamson** ’91 of Bolingbrook, Will County, is doing her Residency in Family Practice at the Ventura County Medical Center. She graduated from the University of Michigan School of Medicine in 1999. On entering Hope College, she won the Biomedical Scholarship, and she graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa, majoring in chemistry, biology and Spanish.

- **Dr. John G. Davis** ’92 of Chicago graduated from Washington University with a BS in Pre-medicine. He earned an MD from the University of Illinois Medical School at Peoria and is doing his residency there in Medicine/Pediatrics.

## Carey Moreno

*Waukegan, Lake County*



Carey Moreno ’93 is in her third year at the University of Illinois College of Medicine (UICMP) at Peoria, considering specialization in obstetrics and gynecology or emergency medicine. At Michigan State University, she earned a BS in Microbiology in 1997, specializing in health and humanities. Moreno was awarded the Distinguished Minority Scholarship and a Spartan Scholarship. After MSU, she worked at Abbott Laboratories in Northfield as a toxicology technician.

Moreno volunteers through UICMP in Talks for Tots, going to schools and giving talks on health-related topics to students. She also runs for various causes, like the American Heart Association. A racing high point was running the Chicago Marathon two years ago and getting engaged at the finish line! Her fiancée raced with her so he could be there at the finish line.

“I loved IMSA! Attending IMSA was probably the best decision I ever made,” she says.

## Katherine Ashford

*East St. Louis*



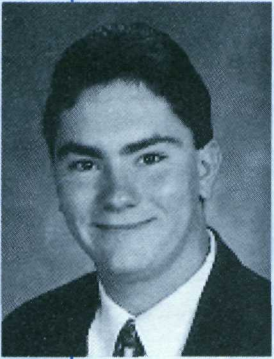
Katherine Ashford '93 of East St. Louis is a systems engineer at TALX Corporation in St. Louis, with a recent promotion from senior developer. She has been awarded Developer of the Month three times and was the Exceptional Performer of the Year in 1999. She plans to earn her Master's in Business Administration at Washington University next year, as well as her MSCE certification.

Ashford graduated with a BS in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where she held the merit-based, four-year Powers-Knapp scholarship. A believer in getting involved, she was vice-president and treasurer of her coed professional fraternity, Kappa Eta Kappa.

Seeing IMSA as good preparation for life, Ashford cites learning to work with groups of people with different racial and cultural backgrounds and to deal with their issues. Continuing the community service she began while at IMSA, Ashford volunteers in her church's food pantry and hot meal program.

## Joseph Arias

*West Brooklyn, Lee County*



Joseph Arias '94 plans to graduate from Law School at the University of Illinois in 2002. He was 7th in his class the first semester, winning a Harno Scholarship. He had high honors in law writing and is a teaching assistant. Arias earned his BA in Biology and Society in 1998, attending the University on an academic Lincoln Scholarship. After his BA, Arias worked a year as a claims adjuster in investigative liability, deciding to focus on law and politics. He served as a law clerk for the City of Champaign, learning how the city works.

"IMSA taught me how not to get too tied up in the boundaries between disciplines. I was well prepared for law school and those who can argue by analogy," he says. "In Mentorship, I learned research science. My science background helps me learn and talk intelligently."

Arias volunteers at Urbana Middle School, teaching mathematics, science and writing.

## Lynnette Galloway

*Country Club Hills, Cook County*



Lynnette L. Galloway '94 earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from Northwestern University in 1998. She is a technology consultant at Accenture's (formerly known as Andersen Consulting) Technology Park in Northbrook, IL. She began at Andersen Consulting as a technology analyst in 1998 with a focus on database programming. This includes developing, reorganizing and revamping databases. Galloway's current project involves Domino interfacing, between Lotus Notes and the web, and working with the client/server issues of the internal web-site.

Galloway won a scholarship from the National Action Council for Minorities In Engineering when she began her four years at Northwestern. She also was a Motorola Academic Scholar, an inductee into a freshman and senior honor society, and a recipient of awards in engineering and community service.

"I think IMSA definitely prepared me academically and even more than that, helped me to expand my thinking and learning in trying to go beyond the surface of understanding different ideas," she says. "Socially, IMSA taught me about living in a community, community service, and leadership of organizations."

## Daryl Shorter

*Dolton, Cook County*

Daryl Shorter '94 earned a BA in Sociology at Rice University and will graduate with his MD from Baylor College of Medicine in 2002. He plans a residency in Chicago, and anticipates specializing in urology or surgical oncology. He enjoys working with cancer patients.

Shorter chose a medical career while at IMSA, with Counselor Babs Cleary's support. He was one of 15 students chosen, out of 700 applicants, for the Rice-Baylor Medical Scholars Program. His advanced coursework at IMSA and his research experiences in Mentorship helped his application. In Mentorship, Shorter conducted research at the Department of Physiology at the University of Illinois-Chicago during his junior year at IMSA. That summer and his senior year, Shorter researched genetics at Loyola University. During college summers, Shorter pursued cancer research at Columbia-Michael Reese.

Active on campus at Rice University, Shorter was elected president of the 2600-member Student Association. He also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.



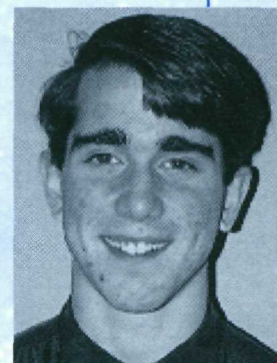
## Gregory Veramendi

*Evanston, Cook County*

Gregory Veramendi '94 is working at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory toward his PhD in Physics as part of his studies at the University of California at Berkeley. His area of specialization is high energy and particle physics. He has a full fellowship from the University for graduate school. He was awarded his MS in physics at Berkeley, after earning a BS in physics from the University of Rochester in 1998.

Every summer as an undergraduate and graduate student Veramendi has worked at Fermilab. Current research includes the search for the Higgs Boson.

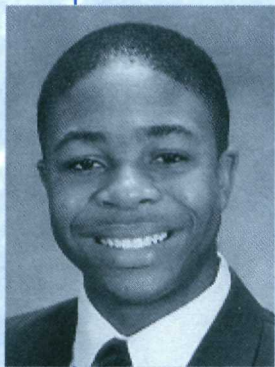
Veramendi says he attended IMSA because he wanted to do physics to answer the philosophical question, "How does everything work?" He adds, "IMSA's extraordinary educational opportunities put me way ahead of everyone as an undergraduate. Being with brilliant students in the IMSA environment encouraged inquisitive thinking. I was really challenged."



- [Sharnique Nichols](#) '93 of East St. Louis earned a BA in finance and investment banking from McKendree College.
- [Leticia Setrini](#) '94 of Morris in Grundy County is in her fourth year of medical school at UIC, planning to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology. Her BS in 1997 from Northwestern University was in molecular and cellular biology.
- [Jennifer Chapin](#) '94 of Sugar Grove, Kane County, earned a BA in psychology from Oberlin College in 1998. She is a permanent employee for Manpower and plans to earn a PsychD to work with adolescents.
- [Rita Kingsbury](#) '94 from Lindenwood, Ogle County, earned her BA in marketing in 1998 at the University of Illinois. She works as business systems support for a pharmaceutical company, Advanced Medicine, in Mountain View, CA.
- [Tanya Reddick](#) '94 of Justice in Cook County earned a BS in human communication sciences at Northwestern University and now is working toward her MD degree in 2002.
- [Lynn Sosa](#) '94 of Chicago is in Medical School at Harvard University. She graduated Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Loyola University with a BS in biology. Her goal is a medical career in infectious disease.
- [Kara Yokley](#) '94 of Chicago earned a BS in applied mathematics and a BA in economics from Harvard. She is a workstation research analyst for International Data Corporation in Framingham, MA.

## Areto Imoukhuede

*Matteson, Cook County*



Areto Imoukhuede '95 earned a BA in economics from Northwestern University, with a minor in political science. He was president of his Residential Business College and Associated Student Government vice president. Now he studies at the Georgetown University Law Center, is vice-president of the Student Bar Association, and plans to graduate with his JD in 2002. His summer internship was in the US Department of Justice Antitrust Division.

Imoukhuede is a Congressional Fellow in the Office of U.S. Representative Jesse Jackson, Jr., of the 2nd District of Illinois. He works on the Responsible Fatherhood Act, a bipartisan initiative, and how to counteract inequities in the legal system from a structural perspective.

Last year he volunteered with the DC Workers' Rights Clinic, in client intake, doing referral for low income people and finding a lawyer to take their case. Says Imoukhuede, "IMSA really fosters public service and volunteering." He also says IMSA taught him how to think critically, with a post-modern perspective on academics, school and life. "It freed my mind to see things from a new perspective."

## Tiy Martin

*Country Club Hills, Cook County*



Tiy Martin '95 earned a BA in international relations with a double minor in African studies and African-American studies from Stanford in 1999. She is learning about different aspects of business in her 15-year plan to begin a successful business with her family. Her focus is entrepreneurship training. Currently she is with Pacific Agenda, doing event planning, with speakers, team building and tours. She had a successful year volunteering as an Americorps Fellow with a business incubator, Start-Up: East Palo Alto Micro-Business Initiative, where she recruited 100+ volunteers, many from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Martin did an internship in Kenya her senior year in college, in a non-profit run by women, researching women and law in East Africa, and learning Swahili.

"At IMSA, I developed such a valuable support network of friends with a will-do spirit—people tell you that you can do things. It's not will I make a difference, but how? It's such a life-changing place. I came out with my own mission," she says.

## Dorothy Pleas

*La Grange Park, Cook County*



Dorothy Pleas '95 is a validation engineer at Abbott Laboratories in North Chicago. She initiates and executes protocols which provide documentation for equipment and process conformance to Abbott specifications per FDA guidelines. She also provides division support for validation of equipment, products, commodities and utilities at Abbott Pharmaceutical Products plants in North Chicago.

Pleas is pursuing a Master's Degree in chemical engineering at Northwestern University, with a GEM fellowship for Minorities in Engineering. Her research focus is controlled release of DNA drugs for wound healing. She graduated from Vanderbilt University with a BE in chemical engineering in 1999. As an undergraduate, she held a Chancellor's Scholarship and a National Achievement Scholarship. She was a Research Intern in Oak Ridge, TN, for Lockheed Martin Energy Research in the summer of 1999.

Pleas has always been interested in chemistry and biochemistry. "IMSA gave me a really good preparation for college, academically as well as in lifestyle, with a strong basis in math and science," she says.

- **Kerri Lockhart** '95 of Chicago earned a BA in psychology from Northwestern in 1999. She works in a pediatrician's office while completing the pre-medical track to apply to medical school this winter.
- **Justus Morris** '95 of Hanover Park, Cook County, graduated with a BA in economics from Amherst in 1999. He is a client service associate with the Leo Burnett Agency in Chicago.
- **Mila Verdugo** '95 of Chicago graduated from Cornell University in 1999 with a BS in biology. In 2001, she has a Rotary Scholarship to study in Australia to pursue a Master of public health. Verdugo is now an executive assistant to CEO Philip Jackson of the Chicago Housing Authority.
- **Amanda Vina** '95 from Maywood in Cook County, graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2000 with a BS in biology. She plans to work with the Department of Agriculture or the Environmental Protection Agency.
- **Carmen Gerdes** '96 of Lisle, DuPage County, is in the final year of a five-year Architecture program at Pennsylvania State University.
- **Michelle Anderson** '97 of Matteson, Cook County, is finishing a BA in psychology at Northwestern University and choosing a program to earn her PhD in clinical psychology.
- **Tiffany Gholar** '97, of Chicago majors in English, psychology and art at the University of Chicago. "The whole technological environment at IMSA has helped me a lot, like doing web sites and graphic software design for different organizations," she says.
- **Dwan Prude** '97 of East St. Louis will earn his degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Missouri at Rolla.
- **Natasha Rodgers** '97 of East St. Louis is at Washington University, double majoring in marketing and in human resource management. She plans on law school but first will spend time playing professional basketball, either with the WNBA or in Europe.
- **Derek Houston** '98, of Tamms in Alexander County, is majoring in actuarial science at the University of Illinois, planning to become an actuary.
- **Nalo Jackson** '98 of Rock Island in Rock Island County majors in English at Williams College. Currently she is studying abroad at the University of Melbourne, Australia.
- **Marcia Van Brunt-McMillan** '98, from Oak Park in Cook County, studies at Scripps College. At IMSA, as her Mentorship, Marcy founded CYCLE (Community Youth Creative Learning Experiences), an after-school program designed to help children in Cabrini-Green become strong learners despite physically threatening environments and severely limited resources.
- **Andrew Torres** '98 of Tinley Park studies at Harvard. At IMSA, while performing his Mentorship at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Torres developed a technique for measurement in immune cells. Researchers there named it the "Andy Technique" after him.
- **Abidemi Adebaje** '99, of Dolton in Cook County, is at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, majoring in biomedical engineering and electrical engineering. He also works on computer programming.
- **Jorge Reyes** '99 of Chicago is majoring in computer science at Stanford University. He was a leader in developing the "Real Science" CD-ROM magazine, written by IMSA students for elementary schools.

- **CO3 Kenyatta Ruffin** '99 of Maywood, Cook County, studies at the United States Air Force Academy. CO3 Ruffin's goal is to have a career in the Air Force and to become an astronaut. He earned his pilot's and instructor's licenses while still at IMSA.
- **Donielle Newell** '00, of Woodridge, DuPage County, majors in biomedical engineering and management at Stanford, as a National Achievement Scholar and a Ron Brown Scholar. She was elected president of IMSA's Student Council and represented Illinois at the American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Conference. Newell was a charter member of IMSA's Science Explorers program, teaching science to elementary school students.
- **Andrea Llenos** '00 is majoring in engineering at Brown University.



*Andrea Llenos and Keny Ruffin.*

“Let us use our open and analytical minds, our knowledge and creativity, to make our own contributions, to write our own stories. When we see injustice, racism, sexism, classism, hunger and all of the other problems that come with the human experience, let us not turn our heads. IMSA has taught us that they are only problems to be solved.”

—*Tiy Martin '95*  
*Commencement Address 1995*

“Now, especially after my ten year reunion, I realize how much IMSA meant to me, how it shaped my life, how the people I met while here were some of the most committed and loving people I would ever encounter, and how the opportunities to make the difference I'd always wanted to make were always right here in front of me, in every face I saw and in every open door.”

—*Marcie Edwards Hawkins '89*  
*Convocation Address 1999*



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