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Myron Rolle named Rhodes Scholar

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla.- High academic achievement? Check. Integrity of character? [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#)

Check. A spirit of unselfishness, respect for others, potential for leadership and physical vigor? Check, check, check and check.

Florida State University student-athlete Myron Rolle, 22, is seemingly the living embodiment of the criteria established more than 100 years ago for the Rhodes Scholarship - one of the oldest and most prestigious awards for international study. The Rhodes Trust agreed, and today named Rolle one of 32 U.S. Rhodes Scholars for 2009 - the first time in nearly 25 years it has awarded the scholarship to a prominent college football player.

"I feel very fortunate to have been selected as a Rhodes Scholar," Rolle said. "I've learned so much just by going through the process of application and interviews, and I am a better person for it. The interview process requires candidates to evaluate their long-term goals and plans, and it has made me think about how I can make the most impact in terms of service to society. The whole experience has been inspiring, and I appreciate the assistance of so many faculty and staff at Florida State as well as the encouragement and support of my football coaches."

Rolle is the fourth Florida State student ever to be named a Rhodes Scholar. He follows in the footsteps of former Student Body President Joe O'Shea (2008), student-athlete Garrett Johnson (2006) and Caroline Alexander (1976). The scholarships provide all expenses for up to two or three years of study at the University of Oxford in England.

"Florida State University's most treasured values of strength, skill and character live in Myron Rolle," said President T.K. Wetherell. "He is a remarkable young man and a tremendous example for all of our students. The entire Florida State community joins me in congratulating him on this wonderful accomplishment."

The Rhodes is a crowning achievement for the student-athlete who aspires to both the NFL and medical school. Graduating in just two-and-a-half years with a 3.75 grade point average, Rolle completed all the necessary pre-medical requirements and earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science from Florida State in August. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in public administration.

Along the way, Rolle founded Our Way to Health, a fifth-grade curriculum that addresses diabetes and obesity for students at a charter school run by the Seminole Tribe of Florida; conducted research on the metabolic profile of stem and cancer cells; tutored at-risk eighth-graders; studied abroad; and played the position of safety - he's one of the best in the nation - for the Florida State Seminoles football team.

He also racked up numerous academic, athletic and leadership awards. Among them: Florida State's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Award, which provides \$4,000 for undergraduates to pursue research in their field of study.

> o Vires Award, given annually to one FSU student who best represents "intellectual and moral strength."

> o Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society, inductee.

In addition, Rolle has held several leadership positions since arriving on Florida State's campus as a freshman in spring 2006. He currently serves as a student representative on the University Athletics Committee and the Equity and Student Athlete Welfare Committee and is a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference Student Athlete Advisory Council. He previously served as vice president of the Student Athlete Advisory Council and as a member of the executive board for the Seminole Student Boosters.

"We are extremely proud of Myron Rolle," said Director of Athletics Randy Spetman. "This is a tremendous honor for Myron and reflects the outstanding academic environment our students have at Florida State University. To accomplish what Myron has academically and with his commitment to community service while handling the sometimes-overwhelming demands placed on someone playing football in such a high-profile program is remarkable. We are proud that he represents this university and college football so well."

Rolle, who hails from Galloway, N.J., began receiving national attention while still in high school. He was rated the No. 1 high school prospect in the country by ESPN and in 2006 received the Franklin D. Watkins Memorial Trophy Award, which is awarded to the top African-American high-school senior student-athlete in America.

At Oxford, Myron will enroll in a master's degree program in medical anthropology that examines the sociocultural aspects of medicine. After completing his studies there, Rolle hopes to play professional football - many analysts project that he will be a first round pick - before going to medical school. He would like to practice medicine in the United States as well as assist medical efforts in developing countries, especially the Bahamas, his parents' native country.

"Myron is a determined and focused leader who is an excellent student, a superior athlete and a compassionate humanitarian," said Jamie Purcell, director of Florida State's Office of National Fellowships. "I'm delighted that Myron will have the opportunity to join the distinguished community of Rhodes Scholars, which includes our own Garrett Johnson and Joe O'Shea. To know that Joe and Myron will be studying at Oxford together next year is an absolute thrill."

For any university to have three Rhodes Scholars in four years is no small feat, according to Karen Laughlin, dean of Undergraduate Studies. The selection process is highly competitive with more than 1,000 nominees seeking 32 scholarships. Two scholars are chosen from each of 16 regions across the United States.

"We are tremendously proud of what Myron has achieved," Laughlin said. "His commitment to research and to serving the community has enriched his work in a very demanding pre-med curriculum and has prepared him well to be someone who can continue to make a difference in the lives of others. It is truly inspiring to see how he has maintained his academic focus while also performing at a high level in his sport."

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