

TTI Update

Gymnastic Dancer Wins International Crown

The Youth Development Foundation, Inc. (YDF) conducted its 31st annual Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International (HJTTI) Scholarship Competition week of activities July 22 - 29 2001 in New York City with the final competition held at Aaron Davis Hall on the campus of the City College of New York. The 2001 HJTTI winner is Della Hamby a 16-year-old gymnastic jazz dancer from Romulus, Michigan. There were 32 young ladies from around the world who flew in and competed for the international crown as well as scholarship opportunities. The contestants came from the Caribbean, West Africa, and Canada as well as across the United States.

The young ladies and the HJTTI Directors were taken on a world-wind tour of New York which started with a luncheon at Justin's, the restaurant owned by Sean (P. Diddy) Combs. On hand to welcome everyone was Brian McKnight who was the Chairperson for the week's activities. Mr. McKnight took photos with each young lady individually, gave words of encouragement to the group, and then sat and played the keyboard and sang for the group. The young ladies then went to radio stations WBLS & WLIB where legendary Hal Jackson broadcasts his highly popular radio program. Tuesday, everyone headed to their own private yacht where the Shooting Star Awards Ceremony was held. Awards were given to Sharon Heyward of the Trawick Group and Ray Harris of Ray Harris Productions. These two executives have been instrumental in the



Della Hamby and Hal Jackson

guidance of the careers of such individuals as Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Brian McKnight and a host of others. Wednesday was show day and everyone enjoyed the Broadway play "Blast". There was also a fashion show and luncheon in the young ladies' honor at Jimmy's Uptown in Harlem before they headed over to the Apollo Theatre for Amateur Night at the Apollo. Everyone had dinner at Londel's in Harlem where they were serenaded by Jesse Jackson's daughter, Sentita Jackson and they all were judges during the world famous Amateur Night at the Apollo. Meanwhile there were plenty of seminars, lectures and rehearsals as the young hopefuls got ready to compete for the contest.

One of the goals of the Youth Devel-

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Top 10 Winners at 30th Annual Contest

Antigua
Toni-Ann Meyer, 17

Connecticut
Danielle Lanston, 17

Michigan
Della Chablise Hamby, 16

New York
Christina Joy Sajous, 16

St. Kitts & Nevis
Jermul Amber Huggins, 16

South Carolina
Natalie Shevaun Keith, 16

Tennessee
Deaundrea Lee Walker, 16

Trinidad & Tobago
Turon Gems Roberts, 15

Washington
Meiko Jasmine Hall, 14

Wisconsin
Riyah Anne Shakoor, 17



Spring 2002

Meet our 2001 HJTII Winners



*Promoting Culture & Education
Through the Performing Arts*

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Hal Jackson

President
Debi B. Jackson

International Coordinators
Merdean Gales
Jane Jackson Harley
Claire Roker
Pinnie Ross

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The winner of the 2001 Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Competition is **Della Hamby**, a 16-year-old gymnastic modern dancer from Romulus, Michigan who says that Drama is her favorite subject in school because it is a fun form of expression. Upon graduation from Julliard School of Music in New York City with a degree in Performing Arts, Della wishes to become a professional dancer, actress or model. Della entered this contest to meet friends that share the same interests with her and has learned that the best way to approach success is being a Hal Jackson's Talented Teen. The



person who most influences Della is her mother because she represents strength and is 100% supportive of all that Della wishes to accomplish. Miss Michigan has won a \$5,000 scholarship.

The first-runner-up is 16-year-old **Natalie Keith**, a harpist, from Manning, South Carolina who is interested in many topics in academic areas. Because of her varied interests, it is difficult for her to select a favorite subject in school. Upon graduation from Duke University with a major in Journalism or Communications Natalie would like to become a Broadcaster. Natalie entered this contest to have the opportunity to showcase her talent, enjoy the talents of others, meet contestants and experience their cultural diversity. The most influential person in her life is her mother because she has instilled a desire to pursue her education and a strong work ethic in addition to promoting good strong family values and morals that will be with her for a lifetime. Miss South Carolina has won a \$2,000 scholarship.

Our second-runner-up is **Turon Gems Roberts**, a 15-year-old opera singer coming to us from Williamsville in Trinidad, West Indies. Her favorite subject in school is biology because in the future she would like to become a genetic scientist. She hasn't decided which college she would like to attend but does know that she will major in the field of chemistry. Turon has always wanted to be apart of a show instead of apart of the audience. She has learned how to work with others and how to carry herself as a young lady. Miss T&T has won a \$1,500 scholarship.

Deaundrea Lee Walker is our third runner-up and was chosen Miss Personality by the Talented Teen contestants. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee. This 16-year-old vocalist would like to become a Computer Engineer upon graduation from Tennessee State University with a major in Computer Engineering. Her favorite subject in school is Math because she finds it challenging and rewarding at the same time. Deaundrea's mother encouraged her to enter this competition and she has learned to welcome new experiences and set goals for herself. She says she enjoys showcasing her God-given talent. There is no doubt that her mother is the most influential person in her life. She is a single parent who always lets her know that she is somebody. She tells Deaundrea that she can do all things through God who strengthens her. Miss Tennessee has won a \$1,000 scholarship.

The fourth runner-up is **Christina Joy Sajous**, a 16-year-old singer who lives in NYC whose favorite subject in school is math because she finds it easy and knows it will be greatly useful in the future. Christina would like to attend Spelman College and pursue a degree in Entertainment Law or NYU where she will major in Musical Theater. She entered this contest because she knows how competitive the world will be in the future and has learned self-confidence as well as how to succeed. Christina's mother and grandmother have been great influences for her because whatever her dream may have been became theirs too. They always believed in her and guided her through all of her endeavors. Miss New York has won a \$500 scholarship.

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My Trip to Europe by Della Hamby

Exactly twenty-six days after my Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International 2001 victory I was off to Europe. I got really mushy with my friends at my senior high early registration because I knew that I would miss them the first day of school. After kissing my mom, family, close friends, dog and everything in my room goodbye, I cried my eyes out. I was afraid of all I looked forward to, such as my 10-hour flight, being away for a week, and visiting such memorable cities. It was like a dream. It seemed like seconds after I wiped my tears I was on American Airlines millions of feet above ground praying like I never prayed before. I arrived in London Friday afternoon. I was so happy to see Mr. and Mrs. Jackson's smiling faces in the Heathrow Airport. What a relief!

The moment Ms. Kim (my director and chaperon) and I checked into the gorgeous Hampshire Hotel in the center of Leicester Square, I fell fast asleep on the couch. I slept on the couch my entire stay. (I chose the couch over my bed only because I knew I'd never sleep on a more comfortable one ever again.)

That evening, thanks to Ms. Debi, I had my very first Starbucks' fappachino. Then we laughed and sat on the edge of our seats trying to obey the rules by not

taking pictures during "The Lion King" stage production. It was my favorite. Next, on Saturday after breakfast we toured the beautiful city of London where I saw the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. I could hardly believe I was in the home of the Spice Girls, who smothered my room walls last year. We also saw the stage production of my choice, "Notre Dame de Paris". The dancing was phenomenal. I loved it. After that I had nachos and cheese for dinner again. It's hard to believe no one mentioned how delicious they are and not to forget a "what to be sure to" list.

The next day the Nottinghill Carnival was full of excitement. Even though shortly before we got to the site I was crushed by the news of Aaliyah's plane crash tragedy. The carnival was so colorful and diverse I really enjoyed myself. Near the end of the carnival my white shoes had turned black and we were almost soaked from the rain. I left those shoes in London. I kept my whistle and raincoat to remind me of the guy we bought them from who broke the news about Aaliyah. I held my tears until I got to the bathroom of my hotel room so Ms. Kim wouldn't see me cry.

Bright and early Monday morning I slept on the train to Paris. Paris couldn't

wait to meet me. Touring the lovely Louvre Museum was so enlightening. All of the sculptures and artwork were beautiful. I finally got a chance to meet the real Mona Lisa. I took plenty of pictures with her. Rome, France, Greece and Italy filled this world famous museum. In France I also saw the Eiffel Tower.

The French class I have now would have been helpful if I would have had it a year earlier because when we ate dinner I couldn't understand anything on the menu. However, I recognized a cognate. It said ham and cheese in parenthesis under some big word with the world "les Frites" beside it. Yes! I ordered ham and cheese with fries. I thought my lunch was great and so did the pigeons smothering my food as if it belonged to them. That was so funny. It was really funny when a family of beggars asking for money approached us. We all shared. Ms. Kim cluelessly gave



them three dime-sized coins. Three dollars right? Wrong, thirty dollars! They kept coming back (now we know why). It was hilarious, or should I say amusing.

I had so much fun experiencing the foreign lands' way of life. Now that I've
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Connecticut Post

Stratford Teen Swings on Violin - Opening act for jazz legends at 18

By Steven Scarpa

Stratford—When Kersten Stevens (Miss Connecticut 2000—1st Runner Up Internationally) was a little girl, she pretended to play the violin, using a cardboard box with a ruler attached.

Now 18 and on her way to Yale University to study music this fall, Stevens has graduated to the real thing—and is playing violin as the opening act for jazz legends.

“She is tackling a jazz violin, which is a very rare type of music to be played,” said Jeff Fuller, director of the Premier Jazz Ensemble of the Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, where Stevens studies.

A Bunnell High School senior, Stevens recently opened for Ray Charles at the Palace Theatre in Stamford.

Stevens said she had “the shivers” right before she went on stage. Backed by three other musicians from New York City, Stevens played a 40-minute set of songs by Stevie Wonder, Duke Ellington and Miles Davis, among others.

“Everything on the outside was telling me I was doing well, but on the inside I wasn’t feeling anything,” Stevens said.

Fuller said Stevens stands out among his students as being a great improviser, demonstrated in performance at the Palace.

“She has the courage to stand up and play from her heart with nothing in front of her. With improvisation you either have it or you don’t and she has it ... an improviser appropriates the material and makes it their own,” Fuller said.

Stevens met (Ray) Charles briefly that evening. “He said he was very excited that I was 18 years old and opening for him,” she recalled.

And, perhaps more important for Stevens, Charles’ executive assistant said he loved her music and invited her



Kersten Stevens with Ray Charles

to send a demo tape to Los Angeles, where it could be forwarded to music producer Quincy Jones.

It was not the first time Stevens delivered in a pressure-packed setting. In 1999, she performed at an amateur night competition at the Apollo Theatre in New York City. Apollo audiences are known for being unforgiving judges of talent, booing and cheering lustily during the competition.

Stevens won second place in the Super Top Dog Competition—a breeding ground for up-and-coming performers.

“She is also very unusually self-motivated. She has a lot of natural talent and she is on her way towards realizing her dream of being a professional musician,” Fuller said.

Seeing Charles perform was yet another learning experience.

“From watching him, I noticed he was very frail, but inside he had a lot of soul and a lot of life,” she said. “You can see how much he really feels the music. That was inspirational to me.”

When Stevens plays, she prefers music that not only appeals to her technically, but

emotionally as well.

“It is more of a release of raw feeling. If there was an interpreter in the audience, they would see all the passion, pain, failure and frustration I have ever experienced in my life.

“If I don’t have emotions I can’t play the music. I release the emotions onto the strings, onto the violin and out,” she said.

Stevens’ intensity and feeling toward her music is genuine. “If I am looking for a type of passion in a piece of music, I can’t make it up or pretend I have it,” she said.

Although Stevens has been studying the violin since she was 3 years old, it was only about five years ago, when she began playing jazz violin, that music as a life choice took hold.

Asked what path she wants her career to follow, Stevens hesitated a bit.

“Ideally,” she said, “I would want to be a celebrated and known music performer, but I don’t want to put anything into words and jinx myself.”

Becky Abbott, a fellow musician and professor of communications at Quinnipiac University, things Stevens’ days of celebration are not far off.

“It’s a delight to be able to hear her impressive technique, inventive ideas and engaging musicality ... I’m looking forward to the day, not too long from now, when she’s famous and I can say, “I knew Kersten when...””



Let us know what is happening in your location and we will be happy to include it in TTI Update

Trinidad Guardian

T&T to Host Hal Jackson Teen Talent Contest

Submitted by Ann Marie James

Come May 2002, Trinidad and Tobago will once again be one of the host countries for the annual HJTII competition. TTI is a 31-year-old talent competition created by Hal Jackson as a platform for young women 13-17 years of age from around the world to showcase their intelligence and talent while networking with their peers and competing for scholarships to assist with their higher education.

Jackson is popular US radio and television personality and one of the most respected men in the communications industry. As a radio pioneer, he has experienced many "firsts" that have assisted in opening doors for other aspiring Black broadcasters, musicians and performers. Jackson was the first Black radio announcer in network radio, the first Black host of a jazz show on the ABC network, the first Black play by play sports announcer on radio in the US, the first Black to host an interracial network television show on NBC-TV, organized and owned the first Black team to win the World's Basketball championship and was the first Black host of an international network television presentation.

Jackson has for over 30 years been Executive Producer of the TTI Scholarship Competition which highlights the intelligence, creativity and talents of young minority women 13-17 years of age.

The ladies are given the opportunity of displaying their talents and competing for educational scholarships, trips abroad and the opportunity of networking with young women from around the world who are their peers.

The competition was originally started as "Miss Black Teenage America," and took place in Atlanta, GA during July 1971. The show was produced and syndicated internationally by Hal Jackson



Brian McKnight with Turon Roberts

Productions.

Hal Jackson Productions then became one of the first Black television production companies in the US. To be inclusive of all races the name was changed to "Miss US Talented Teen Pageant & Revue" in 1973. In 1976, due to the numerous requests to extend its benefits to teens in other countries, the name was changed to "Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International."

TTI is a talent contest, not a beauty pageant, created especially for young women of color. The competition is open to all races but focuses especially on minorities in order to foster their talents and give them encouragement and exposure to different aspects of the musical, dramatic and performing arts.

TTI helps to raise the academic achievements of young ladies and reduce dropout rates, pregnancy and drug abuse, by trying to encourage the youth to use their talents in a positive way. Its objectives are achieved by providing scholarships to assist in their education and through comprehensive workshops and seminars conducted by various professionals and role models.

The contestants are exposed to the music and film industries and are given the opportunity of meeting recording artists, movie stars, dancers, actors and actresses and other individuals from the performing arts as part of their training. Artists who have contributed their time to work with the girls include Stevie

Wonder, Michael Jackson, Denzel Washington and Bobby Brown.

The directors of the Trinidad & Tobago leg of the HJTII, Anthony James and Ann Marie Helenese James, are Trinidadians who have lived abroad for over 18 years. Searching for a way to give back to the nation, they got the vision after their daughter, Sian James, won the competition which was held in the Bahamas in 1997. Other local winners include Abeo Jackson, Patrice Inglesbirth, Ruton Roberts and Renee Solomon.

Solomon, who won the International competition in 1999, received a US\$5,000 university scholarship. Inglesbirth was the 2000 second runner-up and won US\$1500, plus a gift of US\$500 from Sylvester Wilson. She now attends Morgan State University. Turon Roberts was also a second runner-up this year, with \$US1500 won for university.

Although the event is a competition, every contestant is a winner, and will receive a trophy, certificate and a bag filled with gifts.

In 2002, the first five winners will receive cash prizes for higher education. The first place will receive a new wardrobe and \$5,000 plus airfare to attend the international leg of the competition which is scheduled for July 21 – 28. This will be the 32nd annual event.

The second placed contestant in the 2002 program will receive US\$2000, with third and fourth places each receiving US\$1000, and fifth place getting US\$500. There is a special US\$500 for the contestant that has the highest grades in school.

The fifth annual HJTII Competition of Trinidad & Tobago is expected to be held in May 2002 pending the finalization of a venue.

From the Eyes of A State Director

by Kimberly Johnson

July 28, 2001 will be one of the most memorable nights of my life! Okay, Della's too, but definitely mine as well. Hal Jackson's Talented Teens Week last year was an absolutely amazing experience for both Della and myself. The weeks leading up to the trip to New York were not only filled with shopping costume and dress fittings, but they were filled with this indescribable good feeling I had but couldn't understand why.

I now know what that feeling was.

I remember telling Ms. Roker (U.S. Virgin Islands) the year before that I wanted to be like her with all of the wonderful international winners U.S.V.I. has had over the years. The night of the competition, she told me I was on my way! I have asked a lot of questions over the last two years because the Michigan committee and I are so eager to rebuild the HJTTISC in Michigan and we're literally starting from scratch.

I couldn't believe the nervous feeling I had during the preliminaries and Della isn't even my child! We felt she performed her best that evening and felt she had a good chance of making Top 10 the next day. During Finals, I could finally breathe again after they called her name, but not for long. To me, the most difficult portion of the competition is Personality & Achievement. After learning that many of the girls, including Michigan, were slightly over the allotted 20-seconds the night before, everyone had to do some fast editing! Once we got past that segment, I could breathe again!

The entire competition was truly a joy to watch especially seeing the ladies perform the opening number that was so adorable! To this day, I'll find myself chanting "Hal Jackson's Talented Teens! Gonna show if you know what I mean!"



Divita Wright and Leslie Dockery have truly outdone themselves and I can't wait to see what they have for the 2002 delegates! Oh, what an entertaining production number. Although the majority of the girls weren't trained dancers, you could not tell at all! Now that's outstanding choreography! And then when Divita and Nicole Nicholas (Miss HJTTI 2000) came out to pay tribute to the Nicholas Brothers....words can't even describe their performance. Flawless...absolutely flawless and breathtaking! All of the contestants in the Top 10 were excellent and the gowns absolutely gorgeous. The competition definitely was not without flavor this year!

When the contestants did their final curtsy, I literally started to shake. Vilma (Nevada), thank you so much for trying to keep me calm. The excitement, anxiety and pressure was way too much for me to handle. During intermission, I invited Mama Della (Della's mom) up to sit with me, but I'm glad she declined. There wasn't room for two of us to be nervous! Once the Top 5 was announced, the pressure overtook me. I asked myself if making Top 5 was enough for me and I got my answer. When they called Michigan, the tears just started to flow because it was a personal goal of mine

just to see Michigan in the Top 5. Della kept looking at me in the second row and could see how much of a nervous wreck I was. She said I was balling like a baby! The reason I became a director was to give back what Thelma Osbourne, former Ohio Director, gave to me back in 1989. This was too much to handle. Just to make Top 5 after our second year in HJTTISC was enough for me. When they got

to Michigan and South Carolina, I put my camera down because I couldn't see straight anyway through the tears. Whoever took the photo of Della and I in that emotional hug during her walk, thank you so much. I still well up with tears and emotion when I look at the photo.

This has truly been an amazing year and unforgettable experience for all of us from Michigan. Bringing the title back to Michigan after 11 years will help us rebuild a wonderful legacy Mr. Jackson began over 30 years ago. A special thanks goes out to those who helped us groom a winner by supporting Della beginning with Talented Youth Development, Inc. (Michigan Committee) Erica, Tene, Dana, April and Stephanie; Nicole and Antanina from the Costume Shop who came up with the diva-esque "Hello Dolly" costume; La Contesse Boutique in Dearborn who can work wonders with a needle and thread by turning a sleeveless gown into a competition ready gown; Mindy (dance teacher) for choreographing such a fun routine; and to Della's family for the emotional (and financial) support you have given her. Thank you so much for giving her to us and trusting our judgment preparing her for competition. We might give her back to you in July 2002, but again, thank you for trusting us with your jewel.



HJTTI Contest Locations & Dates

Alabama	Carol Cheatham	6/2
Anguilla	Karl Woodley	5/25
Antigua	Gilbert Laudat	4/27
Arkansas	Marilyn Hill	6/1
Bahamas	Brenda Russell	2/02
Bermuda	Everard Davis	6/20
British VI	Luce Smith	6/2
California	Divita Dutton	5/25
Canada	Norma Heitner	5/5
Connecticut	Margie Evans	4/20
DC	Jane Harley	6/23
Georgia	Arlisa Bradshaw	3/3/01
Illinois	Verda Rodgers	5/17
Indiana	Verda Rogers	5/3
Louisiana	Michelle Winslow	TBA
Maryland	Pinnie Ross	6/9
Michigan	Kimberly Johnson	4/13
Minnesota	CeLois Steele	6/1
Missouri	Merdean Gales	5/01
Nevada	Vilma Farrar	6/1
New Jersey	Susan Warren	6/15
New York	Flora Haynes	5/18
N Carolina	Pearl Marshall	5/19
Ohio	Iva Farrow	TBA
Oklahoma	Alice Swain	6/2
Pennsylvania	Francine Daniels	TBA
S. Carolina	Wilhelmina Johnson	6/16
Trinidad	Anne James	6/1
US Vir Isles	Claire Roker	6/15
Virginia	Phillip Brooks	5/18
Washington	Maxine Jenkins	4/14
W. Virginia	Willeen Moore	TBA

Horner's Corner

Nicole Nicholas, Miss 2000 HJTTI will enter Stanford University in the fall of 2002. Congratulations Nicole. We knew you would go far with your 4.35 average. Oh, by the way, Nioole will receive a Jackie Robinson Foundation scholarship for the four years she attends Stanford and achieved the status of valedictorian of her graduating class. **Hal Jackson** was one of the honorees at the annual Broadcast and Cable Hall of Fame. He sat at the table with wife Debi and **Michael J. Fox**. Other inductees included **Mary Tyler Moore** and **Katie Couric** from the Today Show. I attended the black tie event along with Talented Teens staff members **Jane Harley**, **Jewell Jackson McCabe**, **Bernice White**, **Andrea Shell**, **Tonya Bolling** and **Tiffany Jones**. **Kersten Stevens**, Miss Connecticut 2000 and 1st runner up Internationally will be entering Yale University in the fall of 2002. Remember her? She played a mean "Poppa Was a Rolling Stone" on the violin! Our Hearts and prayers go out to **Claire Roker** who lost her mother, Wilhelmina Brown in November of 2001. Congratulations to William A. and **Pinnie Ross** on their appearance in the December 17, 2001 issue of Jet Magazine. They were recognized for celebrating their 50th year of wedded bliss. Congratulates to **Ebony Mack**, Miss HJTTI 1995 who was a finalist in the McDonald's Gospelfest held in NYC. Ebony is attending Montclair State College and maintaining a 3.6 average.



Michigan Gymnastic Dancer - International Winner



2001 HJTTI Delegates

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opment Foundation is to provide travel to foreign countries for the contestants and international winner where they will experience inter-cultural activities and meet young ladies their age from different locations around the world. Della Hamby, the 2001 winner will be flown to England courtesy of Apel Travel where she will have first hand experience of the history she has been taught in school. Della will go to plays in Piccadilly Circus and the West End of London and explore the English countryside. She will spend a day in Paris where she will visit the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and take a look at the Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum, and be able to taste Parisian cuisine. As part of her winnings, Della will also attend HJTTI contests in the British Virgin Islands and the U. S. Virgin Island as well as visit the Caribbean island of St. Martin in the French West Indies.

A preliminary contest was held in the Roosevelt Hotel ballroom where the contestants and their chaperons stayed during the week. The judges, who included producers, writers, performers and etiquette professionals, chose the top ten winners. The top ten winners are:

Miss Antigua - Toni-Ann Meyer, Miss Connecticut - Danielle Langston, Miss Michigan & International Winner - Della Hamby, Miss New York - Christina Joy Sajous, Miss St. Kitts and Nevis - Jermul Amber Huggins, Miss South Carolina - Natalie Shevaun Keith, Miss Tennessee - Deaundrea Lee Walker, Miss Trinidad & Tobago - Turon Gems Roberts, Miss Washington - Meiko Jasmine Hall, and Miss Wisconsin - Riyah Anne Shakoor.

Saturday everyone headed to Aaron Davis Hall on the campus of City College where the 31st annual HJTTI Finals were held. Finals night judges included world renowned dancer/choreographer Maurice Hines, Jeff Burns of Ebony Magazine, and Hilda Williams of Virgin Records

Della Hamby, the 2001 HJTTI International winner will be awarded a scholarship totaling \$5,000, a diamond ring, and other gifts and prizes. The 16-year-old harpist who is the first runner up from Manning South Carolina, Natalie Keith, receives \$2,000. The second runner up, 15-year-old Turon Roberts who is an opera singer, from Trinidad & Tobago receives \$1,500. Deaundrea Walker, a 16-year-old singer is the third

runner up and came to us from Nashville, Tennessee will receive \$1,000. The fourth runner up is another exceptional singer, Christina Sajous 16 years of age, from the New York City, New York who will receive \$500. The Michelle Thomas Scholarships are given to the colleges of the winners' choices. A scholarship in the amount of \$500 was awarded to Melina Soochan from Montreal, Canada, who was the lady with the highest grade point average of 96%.

Della Hamby is an energetic 16 year-old from Romulus, Michigan who aspires to become a professional Dancer, Actress or Model. Upon graduation from high school she would like to attend Julliard School of Performing Arts in New York City where she will major in performing arts.

Should you be interested in running a contest or know of a young lady between the ages of 13 and 17 with a performing talent who may be eligible to enter this contest, write to Hal Jackson's Talented Teens, 1230 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10128 or E-Mail us at HJTeens@aol.com or call 212-592-0413. You can also visit us on line at TalentedTeens.Org.

The 32nd Annual



**Will take place
July 21 – 28, 2002
In New York City**

The Week's Activities will Include:

***A Black Tie Dinner Dance at the Supper Club
Lunch at Planet Hollywood
A Broadway Play
Seminars & Receptions
Dinner at Sylvia's
Amateur Night at the Apollo
The HJTTI Preliminary Contest
at Aaron Davis Hall – July 26, 2002
The HJTTI International Contest
at the Hudson Theatre on Broadway – July 27, 2002***

My Trip to London & Paris

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visited Europe I have an advantage over the students in my French and history classes. Both cities were great, but if given another opportunity to explore Europe, London will be my first stop. Rooming with Kim only made things better. She's a wonderful director, chaperon and friend.

Thanks Ms. Kim for taking good care of me. Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Jackson for providing me with this unforgettable experience. I've never felt more like a Spice Girl/Queen in my life. Girl Power!



Tasha Smith Dixon

We are saddened to inform you that we have lost a member of our Talented Teens International Family. Tasha Smith Dixon, Georgia director of HJTTI left us February 14, 2002. Tasha leaves behind her husband and a daughter. Tasha started with HJTTI as a contestant in the Bergen County New Jersey system and was named Miss NJ in 1989. Our prayers go out to her family and friends.

Meet Our 2001 Winners

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The newly named Wilda LaBrie HJTTI Director's Scholarship in the amount of \$500 went to the young lady with the highest grade point average of 96%. That young lady is **Melina Soochan**, a 16-year-old pianist vocalist who lives in Montreal, Canada whose favorite subject in school is mathematics because she finds it easy and so very logical. She says it is the basis of all sciences and useful in the development of a reasoning and rational mind. Melina would like to become a recording artist after graduating from McGill University in Montreal where she will major in music. She entered this competition because she takes

every opportunity she can find to bring her closer to her goal in life...to reach out to people through music. The person who is most influential in Melina's life is her karate teacher who has shown her a new way of life and has inspired her in many ways.

Miss Creativity is **Shalette Briana Brown**, a 13-year-old singer who lives in our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C. Her favorite subjects in school are math and science because there is so much you can do with numbers and she likes to perform experiments in science. Upon graduations from George Washington University with a major in Website Design or Graphic Design she would like to become a Web Page Developer, Singer and Actress. Shalette entered the contest to display her talent and for the exposure. She learned that it takes discipline and determination to reach your goals. The most influential people in Shalette's life are her parents because of their love and tremendous support.



Miss Congenality was born in Japan. She is **Reshina Harris**, a 15-year-old vocalist who currently resides in Jonesboro, Georgia. Her favorite subject in school is Mathematics because it stimulates her into thinking. After finishing her education at Florida State University with a major in Child Psychology, Reshina would like to become a Child Psychologist. Reshina entered the contest to see how well her talent fared against others and she has learned nothing is worth having if it comes too easily. The person who is most influential Reshina's life is her mother because she has beaten the odds.

