

TTI Update

Georgia Peach Wins International Crown

Tatiana McConnico, a singer from Georgia is the 2003 winner of the Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Competition (HJTTI). Tatiana won the title at the Reichhold Center for the Arts in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. The 14 year old, four foot eleven inch native of Douglasville, Georgia with the tremendous voice wowed the audience and judges with her rendition of "I Am Changing" which brought the house to its feet.

One of the goals of the Youth Development Foundation which is a non-profit tax exempt organization governing HJTTI is to provide travel to foreign countries for the contestants and international winners where they will experience inter-cultural activities and meet young ladies their age from different locations around the world. Tatiana along with 30 other young ladies from across the United States and the Caribbean were a part of the 33rd annual HJTTI competition choreographed by off-Broadway sensation Leslie Dockery. The theme was "A



Tatiana McConnico

Talented Teens Carnival Tour", which featured some of the world's most talented teens from multicultural backgrounds wearing costumes representing different countries that celebrate carnival. The young ladies, all between the ages of 13 and 17, opened the show in St. Thomas with a parade of states and countries displaying their costumes and headpieces in a glorious blaze of excitement. This was the culmination of eight

days of activities including a luncheon hosted by Governor Charles Turnbull and Pamela Richards, the USVI Commissioner of Tourism, a beach party, lunch at Gladys' Café, a tour of St. Thomas including a visit to Drake's Seat and Coral World and load of workshops and rehearsals leading up to the finals night..

During the eye-opening visit which was co-sponsored by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, and ICBC Broadcast Holdings, Inc. there was the third annual Shooting Star Awards dinner saluting individuals who have assisted Talented Teens in past years. Recipients of the Shooting Star Awards include Addie Ottley radio station owner and radio/television personality in the US Virgin Islands, Tiffany Walker, the 1996 International winner of Hal Jackson's Talented Teens and famed gospel singer Cissy Houston, mother of R&B sensation Whitney Houston. Other sponsors for this year's event included Fashion Fair the HJTTI official cosmetic com-

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Top 10 Winners in the U.S. Virgin Islands

Delaware
Britney Aiken, 15

Georgia
Tatiana McConnico, 14

Michigan
Allyson Johnson, 17

New York
Cherelle Davis, 15

North Carolina
Paris Cooper, 16

Ohio
Katie Jordan, 16

Oklahoma
Helen Washington, 16

Trinidad & Tobago
Mia Gormandy, 14

US Virgin Islands
Kmisha Counts, 14

Washington
Jamelia Payne, 14



Winter 2003



*Promoting Culture & Education
Through the Performing Arts*

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Hal Jackson**

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Meet Our 2003 Winners

The winner of the 33rd annual Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Competition held in St. Thomas, U. S. Virgin Islands is 14 year old **Tatiana McConnico** who comes to us from Douglasville, Georgia where she attends Sandy Springs Middle School. She enjoys singing, reading and cooking and her favorite subject in school is Chorus because it allows her to do what she loves most – singing. Although she is quite young Tatiana is looking forward to attending a performing arts college where she will strengthen her vocal ability. The persons who are most influential in her life are her mother, Mary, sister Angela and brother, Alphonso. Tatiana says she would like to be remembered as a revolutionary woman. As the winner, Tatiana has won trips to London, Paris, the US Virgin Islands,



the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla. Tatiana won a \$5,000 scholarship to the college of her choice and a full tuition Perry Watkins Scholarship at the State University of New York at Buffalo – Department of Theatre and Dance for 4 years. She also had the highest scores in the Talent Segment of the competition and has won a \$1,000 scholarship for that achievement. After winning the competition, Tatiana said she was looking forward to going on the trips associated with winning.

Mia Gormandy is a 14-year-old pianist from Trinidad & Tobago where she attends St. Joseph's Convent in Port-of-Spain. Mia is the 1st runner up, and her favorite subject in school is math because the subject comes naturally to her and she loves calculating sums. Mia likes tennis, music, drama and computers. She is a member of the NEAL & Massey Trinidad All Stars Steel Orchestra. She would like to attend Northern Illinois University and ultimately looks forward to receiving a Ph.D in music. Mia entered Talented Teens for the opportunity of showcasing her talent internationally. She has learned the importance of self-discipline, interaction with her peers and healthy rivalry. Her parents are most influential in her life because they have encouraged her to believe in herself and have helped her realize her dreams. Miss Trinidad & Tobago Talented Teen has won a \$2,000 scholarship.



Our 2nd runner up is sixteen year old **Katie Jordan** who hails from Toledo, Ohio. Her favorite subject at St. Ursula Academy is English because she loves poetry and how authors use it to express their feelings. Katie is a member of the Music Ministry Teams at school and her church, as well as a member of the NYI Council, the Zonta Club and the Spanish Club. Her choices for college are Mount Vernon Nazarene University or Traveca Nazarene College where she will major in pre-med or music. She would like to become a physician or physician's assistant. Katie entered Talented Teens to make new friends and for the experience. She has learned she can do anything she sets her mind to and with God's amazing love and strength anything can be accomplished. Katie says her parents are very important in her life. They have taught her right from



wrong – how to love and live like Jesus did. Miss Talented Teen Ohio has won a \$1,500 scholarship.

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My Trip to Europe by *Tatiana McConnico*



Tatiana ate ice cream while visiting Stone Hedge in England

As the reigning HJTT International 2003 winner, the first five months of my reign has been like a world wind and I've got to share it with someone, so here is! The night before I was to go to London, my mom and I were up all night packing. Well, I turned in around eleven and my mom finished for me. Thank God I did turn in when I did because I was up before dawn the next morning to go the airport. I didn't care though, I was wide awake. We met Ms. Vickee, my state Co-Director and Chaperone, and after about a hundred kisses between my mom and I, it was just me and her. We waited in line to get checked in and to get everything squared away; while we shuffled along I went over my essentials in my head. Homework, check, my CD player, check, pumps, platforms, sneakers, platform sneakers, brown open toe sandals, brown close toe sandals, black strappy sandals, and black flower sandals, check, oh yeah, and passport, check. I was more than ready to go.

First, we flew from Atlanta to Chicago, and from there we were on our way. The flight from the states to Europe was long, probably because I was so anxious to get there. But, luckily for me I had more than enough to do to kill time. I did some of my homework, watched a movie or two, and impatiently waited for dinner. I don't know what I expected. I'd never been on a flight long enough for them to serve a meal and I wasn't disappointed. The food was actually pretty good, so good I wanted more. After a bit I figured I'd go to sleep. I found an empty row of seats and stretched out. It seemed as if I'd been lying down for only five minutes before light was shining in through the window.

I couldn't sleep anymore so I got up for breakfast, which was just as good as dinner. Very soon after breakfast we were there. At last, we'd arrived.

We weren't in the airport long before we got on a shuttle with a couple of other people and were off to our hotel. I caught up on any sleep I missed in the van, so when we pulled into the hotel I was rested and ready to head out. Our hotel seemed as if it was built and then the city was then built around it. We were right in the middle of everything, so I couldn't wait to go out and explore the city. On the way in I noticed a Pizza Hut so, that was the first thing I ate in London. After our trip to Pizza Hut, Ms. Vickee convinced me to

wind down and take a nap. Adrenaline was pumping through me so I didn't feel tired, but I was. As soon as I hit the pillow, I was out like a light when nobody's home. Mrs. Jackson called and woke us up to let us know we were going out. And boy was I happy to hear that. Ms. Vickee and I got up and got ready for a night on the town, and that was just what we were in for.

We met Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. White (Mrs. Jackson's mom) and their grand daughter Tiffany (who I became best buds with immediately after that night), in the lobby. I was bubbling over in excitement. I didn't know where we were going, and I didn't care! I was just ready to see the beautiful city at night. When I found out we were going to see a play, a real play, I was ecstatic. I'd only been to school plays, never a real play with real actors. We went to see "Fame" and it was amazing. The singing, the acting, the dancing, I'd never seen anything like it. My school could take some pointers from these guys. My mom used to love the show when it was on so when I told her I saw the play, she wanted me to tell her all about it, and I did. After the play, we rode back to the hotel in a human powered carriage. Really, a man on a bike peddled us through the square. Oh so



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The Ebony Tribune

Oklahoma Places Top Ten - In Her Own Words

By Helen Washington, Miss 2003 Oklahoma Talented Teen

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – A learning experience is the MAX! An opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Fun! Exciting! Talent on a whole new level! There are not enough words, expressions, phrases, or explanations that can accurately describe all that I experienced in my ten-day duration on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands as a Hal Jackson Talented Teen International participant. It was so fun, so fulfilling, and it all went by so fast. I had an extremely busy week that usually started around six in the morning, and it didn't end until twelve or one in the morning. My daily agenda usually ran a little something like this: Get up at 6 a.m., and get dressed for dance rehearsal ~ Go downstairs for breakfast at 7 a.m. until 8 a.m. when rehearsal started. At 8 a.m. until about 12 or 1 p.m. we had dance rehearsal. In rehearsal, we practiced the four production numbers we were to perform for the competition, i.e., the opening carnival number, the parade of states and countries, the evening gown number and the top ten specifics.

After rehearsal we cleaned up and did things like, eat lunch at the government house (Capitol Building), have lunch at St. Thomas' special restaurant, Gladys' Café, who catered to our every need. We also went on a tour of the most beautiful St. Thomas Island. That was so much fun, it's so beautiful there. We had a beach party on the hotel's beachfront. My room was beautiful also. We (Mrs. Gaddis and I) had a patio, that when you stepped out on it, you got a wonderful view of the ocean, and some of the city, along with a view of their beautiful swimming pool. The beach was...great. We had so much fun at the beach party. We played silly games, had contests, and of course played around in the ocean. It would however suggest that if you do not favor salt water, you should keep your mouth closed when the waves come

and overtake you! We weren't the only people in the ocean; our directors were splashing around too. Mrs. Gaddis was out in the water a little bit too...that was until a huge



wave came over her head and took her shoe. But we all had fun.

After all that fun, at 7 p.m....more rehearsal. Yes, yes, another rehearsal. It would last from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. We had at least two rehearsals a day. They weren't always fun, and it was a lot of work. Getting girls that don't know each other to pull off an entire production in one week might seem impossible, but the two choreographers we had stepped up and in the end we looked great. Leslie Dockery and Keisa Parrish I love you all so much. Thank you for working me to death. It was fun. Working with choreographers from New York was exciting. All the girls were friendly, goofy, and cool. So we all got along quickly. There were girls from all over: California, Minnesota, Virginia, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and St. Maarten. Everywhere! Such a huge culture mix. I loved every second of it. All of the different accents, everywhere we went it was like we were celebrities. This is something I will look back on for the rest of my life. All the friends

I made. Wherever I go, United States or not, I will always be able to get in contact with someone from that state or country. It's like I gained another family.

For a week we helped each other with dance steps, hair, makeup, projecting, smiling, secrets, everything. We were all close to each other in some special way. Now we are all connected. We have each other's addresses and numbers, so we can keep in touch. I've been home for one day, and I have already received e-mails from my friends from Trinidad & Tobago, and Colorado. I want to thank all of you who supported me while I was on this endeavor whether it was through prayer, financial gifts, or emotional uplifting. I want to thank you all for getting me to the Virgin Islands with faith, confidence in myself, and...spending money! I want to thank the Lord for letting me have six worry free flights to and from the Virgin Islands. For granting me the opportunity to meet so many gifted people. I want to thank Mr. Waymon Gaddis for all of your support and advertising for me. You let people know I was out there. I feel like I'm a celebrity when I see myself in your newspapers. Mrs. Gaddis, you are the best director/sponsor/chaperon that I could ever ask for. Thank you for keeping up with me and making me go to bed when I wanted to go swimming at 12 o'clock in the morning. Thank you for the mirror and the prayer coin. That's special to me.

I'm your first Miss Talented Teen Oklahoma that you have directed. I promise next year is going to be off the hook! I'm going to help you get the word out, help you groom and shape the girls and everything. Watch! Next year is going to be done right, and it's going to be tight. Of

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The Fayetteville Press Newspaper

Paris Cooper Wins \$500 Scholarship



Paris Cooper, 16, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, Miss Hal Jackson's Talented Teen International – North Carolina – 2003, was the recipient of a \$500 scholarship at the 33rd annual Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Competition held in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands in July, 2003. She represented the state of North Carolina in the International Competition. Her talent was a dramatization of an originally written monologue.

Paris made "Top Ten" semi-finalist on Saturday night and won the \$500 scholarship, sponsored by Right On! Magazine, when she was selected "Most Photogenic". Other scholarship categories that were available were Most Talented and Academic. Last year at the 32nd annual competition, 13 year old Atilah Claiborne, Miss Hal Jackson's Talented Teen – NC 2002 won the \$500 Academic Scholarship in New York City.

Paris currently holds the 2003 state title which she won a \$2,000 scholarship. Winning the title was the pride of her grandparents, Clifton and Mel Johnson of Fayetteville, NC. They had attended every state contest looking forward to the day their granddaughter would be in it. May 18, 2003, they saw her win the state title. She lost her grandfather about a week later, but she carried her grandmother's love and best wishes, and his "watchful" spirit with her to St. Thomas, USVI and she made them proud.

Through the Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Contests, Paris has earned a total of \$2,500 in scholarships. She is currently a senior at Seventy-First High School and is the daughter Mrs. Kim Cooper-Gibson.

The North Carolina State Talented Teens Contest is open to young ladies 13 to 17 years of age with a performing talent. The other categories are Talented Junior Miss, ages 10 to 12. The 2003 Talented Junior Miss is Brittany Wilson. She is a student at Luther Jeralds Middle School and is the daughter of Mrs. Lynda Wilson. Her talent is playing the viola.

Younger ladies, age 7 to 9, can enter the Talented Little Miss Contest. Two Talented Teen Queens were winners in the Talented Little Miss Contest years before they won the State Title. They were Atilah Claiborne – 1997, (2002), and Blayr McClellan in 1996 (2001).

All interested North Carolina contestants for the 2004 Contest can contact Mrs. Pearl Marshall, North Carolina State Director at 910-630-1671.

In Her Own Words - Cont'd from Page 4

course, Ms. Sandra Richards, hats off to you for raising a talented yet grounded young lady in the Lord. You know I was taking care of people while I was down there. I guess you were put here on earth to ship me off to different places, so I can perform for everyone. You have let me experience so many things in the past 15 years. It's amazing. I love you so much for it. Thank you so much for raising me to be who and what I am today. I hope you're proud. To my friends who wished me good luck and all – I was lucky, and everything was all good. Top Ten in the



nation... wait!, Top Ten INTERNATIONALY, - that's right!

Classen SAS, I represented you as

well. Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Trait-Lira, Mr. Johnson, and Mrs. McFarland, you all helped me give my talent form, thank you. I love all of you, everybody.

Where to go from here? ... Nowhere to go but up! As I told St. Thomas, "Achieving my ultimate best in life is my claim, for the sky is the limit, and this is my aim." I'm still reaching for my aim is still the same. Hopefully, one day, everyone will know my name.





HJTTI Contest Directors

Alabama	Carol Cheatham
Anguilla	Fitzroy Tomlinson
Antigua	Gilbert Laudat
Bermuda	Emilygail Dill*
British VI	Luce Smith
California	Divita Dutton
Canada	Norma Heitner
Colorado	Sheila Butler
Connecticut	Margie Evans
Delaware	Lorraine Burrell*
DC	Jane Harley
Florida	Sherrie Mattis*
Georgia	Arlisa Bradshaw
Illinois	Verda Rodgers
Jamaica	Nydia Brown*
Maryland	Pinnie Ross
Massachusetts	Kitty Ferguson*
Michigan	Kimberly Thomas
Minnesota	CeLois Steele
Missouri	Merdean Gales
Nevada	Vilma Farrar
New Jersey	Susan Warren
New York	Flora Haynes
N Carolina	Pearl Marshall
Ohio	Iva Farrow
Oklahoma	Alice Swain
Pennsylvania	Victoria Pena*
S. Carolina	Wilhelmina Johnson
St. Lucia	Shernel Choulette*
St. Maarten	Ann Meyers
Tennessee	Wiley Morton
Texas	DeAnda Bruce*
Trinidad & Tob	Anne Marie James
US Virgin Isles	Claire Roker
Virginia	Nina Chandler
Washington	Maxine Jenkins

*New Director - Welcome to the HJTTI Family

Horner's Corner

Dateline New York...Nicole Nicholas, the 2000 tap dancing International Winner from California, is attending Stanford University... Nykia Mathis Miss HJTTI 1998 graduated from Temple University Magna Cum Laude May 2003... Kersten Stevens, the 2000 first runner up from Connecticut who played the violin, is attending Yale University, and is in the process of completing her first CD. She will make her Lincoln Center Debut in 2004...Lori Warren Williams, a finalist with the competition in 1983 and New Jersey Union County Director had her first child, Jaden Erica, in June 2003 - that makes our New Jersey Director, Susan Warren a grandmother... Kimberly Johnson Thomas a former contestant from Ohio and current director of Michigan married in April 2003 and has moved to New York City... Delise Jones Nelson, the 1983 International Winner has been appointed Principal at a middle school in New York City...Nayanna Holley our jazz singing 2002 first runner up is attending Western Michigan University and has been traveling extensively singing for her college...Nadine Shaw Miss New York 1982 is the Director of Media Production and Technology at Essex County College in New Jersey...Ebony Mack Miss HJTTI 1995 graduated from Montclair University May 2003... Keisa Parrish, Miss California 1995 and assistant choreographer for HJTTI graduated from Fordham University May 2003...Ayesha Faines, prima ballerina and Miss NJ 2000 will enter Yale in the Fall of 2004.

And what's going on with you?

Georgia Peach Wins

Continued from page 1

pany, Right On! Magazine, and General Mills.

A preliminary competition was held the night before the final competition in the ballroom of Marriott Frenchman's Reef. The judges, who included producers, writers, record company executives, performers and etiquette professionals, chose the top ten winners. The top ten winners chosen during the preliminary competition are: a modern dancer Miss Delaware, Britney Aiken; a singer Miss Georgia, Tatiana McConnico; a singer Miss New York, Cherelle Davis; a jazz singer Miss Michigan, Allyson Johnson; an actress Miss North Carolina, Paris Cooper; a gospel singer Miss Ohio, Katie Jordan; a modern jazz dancer Miss Oklahoma, Helen Washington; a steel pannist Miss Trinidad & Tobago, Mia Gormandy; a singer Miss US Virgin Islands, Kmisha Counts; and a singer Miss Washington, Jamelia Payne.

Once all the scores were tallied during finals night Michelle Thomas Scholarships were awarded to the colleges of the winners' choices. The winners are 4th runner up – Miss US Virgin Islands 14 year old Kmisha Counts who sang "Wind Beneath your Wings" won a \$500 scholarship; 3rd runner up - Miss Michigan is 17 year old jazz singer Allyson Johnson who sang "God Bless the Child" won a \$1,000 scholarship; 2nd runner up – Miss Ohio a 16 year old gospel singer who sang "I Love To Sing Your Praise" won a \$1,500 scholarship; 1st runner up - Miss Trinidad & Tobago is 14 year old Mia Gormandy a pannist who played "Flight of the Bumblebee" has won a \$2,000 scholarship; and the 2003 HJTTI Winner, Tatiana McConnico who sang "I Am Changing" won a \$5,000 scholarship as well as other gifts and prizes. Other Talented Teens winners include: Miss Personality is 16-year-old Katie Jordan Miss Ohio; Miss Congenality is 17-year-old Dyamond Daniel, Miss California; Miss Creativity is 16-year-old Miss British Virgin Islands, Leilani Stevens; the highest talent score and a \$1,000 schol-



Hal Jackson with Teena Lugo and his 2003 HJTTI Delegates

arship went to Miss Georgia, 14-year-old Tatiana McConnico; the highest grade point average of 4.28 and a scholarship of \$1,000 went to Miss South Carolina, 16-year-old Danielle McPhadden; and 16-year-old Paris Cooper, Miss North Carolina won a scholarship of \$500 as Miss Photogenic. The Youth Development Foundation will award scholarships directly to the colleges of their choices.

Tatiana McConnico said, "I can't wait to start going on my trips!" As the 2003 winner Tatiana will be flown to England with air travel courtesy of Alken Tours. There she will have first hand experience of the history she has been taught in school. Tatiana will spend six days in London where she see plays in Piccadilly Circus and the West End and explore the English countryside. She will spend 3 days in Paris where she will visit the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and take a look at the Mona Lisa in the Louvre Museum, as well as be able to taste Parisian and intercultural cuisines. As part of her winnings, Tatiana will also attend HJTTI contests in the British Virgin Islands courtesy of the BVI Tourist Board, U. S. Virgin Islands, courtesy of Claire Roker, the British West Indies the country of Anguilla courtesy of the Anguilla Tourist Board and take a trip to

New York to attend the 34th annual Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International Scholarship Competition. Miss McConnico has also won a \$5,000 scholarship to the college of her choice, a full tuition scholarship to the State University at Buffalo and a diamond ring.

Virgin recording artist Dwele, lead vocalist for Slum Village, performed songs from his latest CD entitled "Subject," during final competition the first runner up from 2002, Nayanna Holley, sang her jazzy rendition of "Blue Skies". International finals night judges included Pamela Richards the Commissioner of Tourism for the US Virgin Islands, Jeff Burns of Ebony Magazine, Cynthia Horner of Right On! Magazine, Chuck Sutton of Showtime in Harlem, Hilda Williams of Virgin Records and Elinor Tatum of the Amsterdam News.

Should you be interested in directing 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 the competition, 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 at www.TalentedTeens.Org



What a Week In America's Paradise the US Virgin Islands



We met Pam Richards, Commissioner of Tourism and Lt. Gov Vargrave Richards



Who will be the winner?



Aren't they lovely?



What a beach party!



We met new friends from around the world



Is that Leslie Dockery in the middle?



We actually touched star fish



Mr. Jackson & his court include Sheryl Piland, Debi Jackson, Delise Jones, Kim Brooks, Cissy Houston, Tiffany Walker, Nayanna Holley & Nadine Shaw

Meet Our 2003 HJTTI Winners

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A 17-year-old singer, **Allyson Johnson** comes from Detroit, Michigan where she attends Frank Cody High School is the 3rd runner up. English is her favorite subject because she loves literature and is an excellent writer. Allyson would like to attend Howard University where she will major in Business Management and Vocal Performance. Upon graduation she would like to become a professional vocalist and owner of an upscale salon and spa. Allyson entered Talented Teens to have fun and to become a well rounded, educated young lady. Her mother, Amanda Johnson, is the most influential person in her life because she is a woman of virtue and integrity. Her price is far above rubies (Proverbs 31:10). Miss Michigan Talented Teens won a \$1,000 scholarship.



Our 4th runner up is **Kmisha Counts** who is a member of the National Honor Society, the VI Institute of Performing Arts, a winner of the Laws of Life Essay Contest, Black History Poetry Contest and a Math national finalist from Charlotte Amalie High School. Her favorite subject in school is Spanish because she enjoys learning foreign languages. In the future she would like to attend New York University and major in music and business management. This will allow her to fulfill her goal of becoming a singer/songwriter and music producer. Kmisha entered Talented Teens because she saw it as a great way to showcase her talent and has learned that it is not just about competition, but also learning new things and meeting new people. The most influential person in her life is her mother because she has taught her to be a strong and confident person. Miss US Virgin Islands Talented Teen won a \$500 scholarship.



Danielle McFadden is a 16-year-old actress who lives in Lamar, South Carolina. Danielle is Miss EnSpirit, Vice President of the Student Council, Editor of the Yearbook Staff, and a member of the National Honor Society at Lamar High School. English is her favorite subject because she feels correct grammar is an important asset to have and without it one may not go very far. She would like to attend Winthrop University and major in English because she would like to become an English teacher. Danielle entered Talented Teens because she felt it would be a great opportunity to expand her horizons and meet new people. The most influential person in her life is her father because he has supported her through everything and has taught her to put God first. Miss Talented Teen South Carolina had the highest total grade point average (GPA) of 4.28 and received a Wilda LaBrie Scholarship totaling \$1,000 to the college of her choice.



Paris Cooper is a 16-year-old author and actress from Fayetteville, North Carolina. Her favorite subjects in school are Journalism and Theater Arts. Paris also enjoys swimming, dancing, writing and talking. Her goal is to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or New York University after which she would ultimately become an actress and/or television personality. The person she admires the most is her brother because he looks at the world through innocent trusting eyes. She says her participation in the competition has been a wonderful learning experience and she is happy to be a part of the program's history. Paris has won the Right On! Magazine Miss Photogenic scholarship of \$500.



Miss British Virgin Islands
Leilani Stevens, 16
Miss Creativity 2003



Miss California
Dyanmond Daniel, 17
Miss Congeniality



Miss Ohio
Katie Jordan, 16
Miss Personality 2003



My Trip to London & Paris

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very cool. I've never seen anything like that in Georgia.

It was pretty late when we got back but we were hungry so we went out to eat. The cuisine was Italiano and it was delicious. European food in Europe, I never thought that day would come. Fallisimo, the food was so filling and much better than some of the local restaurants in the states. We rolled out of the restaurant and we were ready to hit the hay. After the first day everything happened so fast. We visited so many places I'd only heard about on T.V and in books, West Minister Abbey, Buckingham Palace and The Queens House. We saw Big Ben, London Bridges, and a larger than life Ferris wheel. I was in awe at all the wonderful things there are in London to see. And to imagine that the people who live there see these things everyday.

The highlight of my time in London was the second play we saw. "The Lion King." My nephew loves the movie and so do I. It was wonderful. I couldn't believe my eyes. The set was so elaborate and realistic. I cried twice. Once because I wanted my nephew to see it so bad and the other time, because Mufasa died and that gets me every time, even though I've seen the movie more times than I can count. We rode another person powered carriage back to the hotel and it was even more fun than the first time, I'd ride those everywhere if I could.

Our time in London flew, but that was ok because from there we were headed to Paris, "The City of love," and when I got there I felt the Love, particularly from Ms. Vickee, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. White and Tiffany as we started to bond and develop a closer relationship. The Eiffel Tower was just as beautiful as I'd dreamed.

It practically glows at night. It looked like a star right here on earth. I went back to the hotel and I had a dream about it. I dreamed that it was 50 years later and I'd bought the Eiffel Tower and built a house out of it, and I lived there until my dying day. Quite a dream!

While we were in Paris we also went on a tour of the Louvre, a huge museum in France. The paintings were by Leonardo Da Vinci, Van Gogh, and other phenomenal artist. We also saw the world famous "Mona Lisa." Yes, I saw the "Mona Lisa," in person. I'd only seen it on T.V and in books. It was mind blowing to be standing right in front of it. The only thing I knew to do was take a picture and that's exactly what I did.

Before I knew it, it was time to head back to the states. I did miss my folks a few days into the trip, but I started to miss



Tatiana met Alicia Keys

Europe while I was waiting in the airport. The flight back didn't seem as long. I didn't really have anything to do because my homework was done and we didn't get movies galore. I got souvenirs for everyone in my family and all of my friends; I wanted them to feel like they went themselves. I don't think they did, but it's the thought that counts.

It wasn't long before I was off to the beautiful island of Antigua. We had to change planes a few times so it was pretty late when we got there so I was surprised to see the Prime Minister there waiting to greet me. I felt so important, like a true queen.

I was born in Massachusetts and I thought the weather in Georgia was hot.

It's nothing compared to the islands. Luckily for me, I love the heat. Most of the time it rained so, I didn't get to enjoy the beach. But, it didn't matter because all the other fun things I got to do, more than made up for it. On Tatiana McConnico's Day, no I'm not making this stuff up, I got to get my hair done at one of the island's best salons, and I went to a boutique and the owner gave, yes gave, me a beautiful pair of shoes, as if I need anymore pairs of shoes.

I had lunch at the Galley Bay Resort, right on the beach. Every time I tore my eyes away from the beautiful scenery on my plate, I got to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the ocean. And to top it all off, there was an in house fashion show that I got to be a last minute part of. The designer introduced me as one of her future models and I sang for everyone in the restaurant. The "National Song Fest," was terrific. All the contestants were so talented. I don't know how the judges only picked one. Well, they did and they picked the right one. A beautiful Antiguan singer who's voice was just as mesmerizing as her appearance. I had a great time. Thank you Antigua, you sure know how to treat a girl.

Not too long ago, one of my dreams came true. I got to sing at Madison Square Garden for the 20th Anniversary of Mr. Hal Jackson's Sunday Classics. I was truly, as my mom would say, "stomping with the big dogs." Just thinking about it, I get all antsy inside. I couldn't believe I was actually sharing a stage with Kool and The Gang, Frankie Beverly and Maze, Freddie Jackson, Alicia Keys and so many more. I met so many famous people and I also got to take pictures with them. It was a dream come true.

So many of my dreams have come true thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Jackson. I've been places I never thought I'd get a chance to go to and seen things I've only dreamed about before. And I just want to say, to the queen that is to come, this is the year for your dreams to come true and please, don't take it for granted. Thank you so much Mr. and Mrs. Jackson!