

Emily Smith

2021 Benjamin McAllister Research Scholar

The Benjamin McAllister Research Scholarship in pharmacogenomics is a specialized training program developed to provide the most talented young scientists with critical clinical research experience. Holders of the Benjamin McAllister Research Scholarship participate in and lead components of a research project as part of the lab team led by Peter H. O'Donnell, MD.

We are excited to announce this year's McAllister Scholar: Emily Smith.

Emily is a 21-year-old student scientist from Maryland whose career interests are exceptionally aligned with Dr. O'Donnell's research. A current senior undergraduate at the University of Chicago, Emily is majoring in Biology (specializing in genetics) and minoring in Latin American Studies. She is passionate about genetics and plans to pursue a career in pediatric oncology. In fact, she enjoys working with patients so much that she is also a volunteer tutor at the University of Chicago's Comer Children's Hospital.

Last year, Emily was admitted to the University of Chicago's highly competitive Collegiate Translational Medicine Program, which provides undergraduates an immersion research experience during the academic year. It was through this program that Emily chose to join Dr. O'Donnell's laboratory. Since working with Dr. O'Donnell, Emily has begun a clinically-oriented research project that is highly relevant to cancer care. She has been analyzing a nearly 1000-patient dataset to better understand pain management outcomes, including why some patients may not experience pain relief with standard medications. Now, with support from the Benjamin McAllister program, Emily is thrilled to be able to continue work on this project and dive deeper into this research. She is looking forward to presenting preliminary findings from her research early next year at the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics conference (to which her abstract has been accepted).

Emily credits her experience in the O'Donnell lab with strengthening her presentation skills, learning how to write scientifically, acquiring clinical research skills, and the invaluable exposure to exciting research inquiries that have expanded her horizons.

As a Benjamin McAllister Research Scholar, Emily is grateful to have support from the McAllister family and to carry on Ben's legacy. She is excited to generate new discoveries that will improve patient care, with a particular focus on oncology. Dr. O'Donnell and his team are grateful to continue the McAllister Scholarship Program, and look forward to more opportunities to help develop, train, and inspire the most talented scientists of the next generation.



The generous support from the McAllister family is providing me the opportunity to grow as a young researcher, a scientist, and as a student.



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