

JUDAH WEATHERS

NIH-Oxford Scholar 2007

Degree: Northeastern University, B.S. Behavioral Neuroscience, 2004

Research Area: Neuroscience



Judah Weathers graduated from Northeastern University with honors in Behavioral Neuroscience in 2004. As an undergraduate, Judah worked in the Stellar Neuroscience Laboratory, where he studied drug seeking behavior in animal models of cocaine addiction. An abstract on his work was presented at the 2004 New England Science Symposium at Harvard Medical School, where he received the Ruth and William Silen MD Award. Judah spent the summers of 2003 and 2004 working at the National Institutes of Health, first in the laboratory of Dr. Wendy Fibison as a student in the Intramural Research Opportunities Program, a summer program at NIH committed to helping underrepresented minority students interested in exploring careers in research. His second summer at NIH was spent in the laboratory of Dr. Craig Blackstone, NINDS, sponsored by the Office of Intramural Research and the Undergraduate Scholarship Program. There he determined that DJ-1, a protein with previously unknown function that had been found mutated in certain forms of familial Parkinson's disease, was involved in a cell destruction cascade, particularly in sumoylation. Since 2004, Judah has attended the Yale University School of Medicine, where he worked in the laboratory of Dr. Murat Gunel, in the Yale University Department of Neurosurgery researching the correlation of genotype and phenotype in patients with familial cerebral cavernous malformations; specifically, whether patients with particular types of genetic lesions fare worse clinically than patients with other genetic mutations. In 2004, Judah was awarded the prestigious Biomedical Sciences Careers Scholarship from Harvard Medical School for his commitment to research and medicine. At Yale, Judah serves as Treasurer to the Student National Medical Association, and is also a member of the Student Interest Group in Neurology. As an Oxford Scholar, Judah has developed novel computer based neuropsychological tasks to test differences in decision-making, particularly studying choices made when the probability, magnitude of gains, and magnitude of losses, are varied. These tasks will subsequently be used in neuroimaging studies to elucidate the neural pathways implicated in adult and pediatric forms of bipolar disorder. Judah is "encouraged to do research in cognitive neuroscience by the breakthrough discoveries made everyday in the field". More importantly, however, he is "empowered and committed to the science because of its potential to help people afflicted with psychiatric disorders."