

## Howard's Courtney Smiley, Team's "Glue," Is MEAC Woman of the Year

Contributed by Z'Kera Sims - Black College Wire  
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Graduate successfully balanced academics, athletics

It is expected that a woman standing 5' 11" would demand attention on and off the basketball court. Courtney Smiley, former forward for Howard University's Lady

Bisons, is no exception.

Smiley, a team leader on and away from the court, was named 2007 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Woman of the Year for

her overall presence as a student and member of the basketball team.

"Courtney is a great person all around, and well deserving of this award," said Jasmine Lipford, a junior marketing major and former

teammate. "She is never selfish and [is] one of the hardest workers I know."

The ceremony took place in Virginia Beach, Va., where one deserving senior student-athlete is awarded the title annually, after the July 26 announcement. Awardees

historically have distinguished themselves academically, athletically and through their commitment to service and leadership away from the games as well as during them.

"She was the glue that held our team together," said Lipford.

During her tenure at Howard, Smiley was a four-year letter winner (2003-07 seasons). She averaged 7.3 points and five rebounds per

game, and was inducted as a member of the MEAC Commissioner's All-American team each year.

Smiley also had a class load that would be heavy for most non-student-athletes, majoring in clinical laboratory science-pre-med and

maintaining an overall grade point average of 3.89.

"Courtney is a fine representation of the female student athlete body we have at Howard," said Athletics Director Dwight Datcher.

"Anytime we can showcase our athletes is a great thing."

According to the coaching staff, Smiley's achievements rubbed off on her teammates.

"She had a tremendous impact on the team," said Daisha Hicks, team assistant coach and former Bison teammate of Smiley. "A lot of

things she learned in basketball transferred off the court. Her light shines around other people. It is a great honor for a person from

Howard to receive this award."

Smiley is modest about the volume of praises and accolades, yet is proud of her achievements.

"It's a big accomplishment," she said. "To me, MEAC Woman of the Year is the person who finds that balance between academics

and athletics."

Since graduating from Howard, Smiley plans to attend the University of South Florida's Medical School in Tampa, Fla. She has

aspirations to become a pediatrician or oncologist and hopes to own her own practice one day.

As Woman of the Year, Smiley will represent the MEAC at the NCAA Women of the Year luncheon in September.

Although her term at Howard University has ended, Smiley says this is not the end of her love affair with basketball.

"I plan to always play," she said.

Z'Kera Sims, a student at Howard University, writes for the Hilltop.

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