



EMPOWERMENT Through Activism

Libraries' Morse Scholarship allows student to reach out and encourage Ghanaian women to get involved.

BY: TIFFANY RONEY

Last summer, Madison May, senior in political science and international studies, worked with Ghana's National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to empower young girls and women of all ages.

May's internship was made possible through the Marjorie J. and Richard L.D. Morse Family and Community Public Policy Scholarship administered by K-State Libraries.

The scholarship was established to honor the Morses, who were educators, activists and devoted supporters of K-State Libraries. Since 2001, \$60,000 has been awarded to 20 students who conducted summer projects focusing on public policy development and community service.

In Ghana, May visited churches, schools and outdoor gatherings to speak about the importance of voting and of avoiding teenage pregnancy; conducted a research project through the Kansas State University honors program; developed curriculum for and assisted at an elementary school; and co-founded the first soccer team for girls in central Ghana.

May's research project examined the connection between religious beliefs and political participation in Ghana, which became a democratic republic in 1960. She interviewed Ghanaians with a wide variety of backgrounds, including Christians, Muslims and followers of indigenous



**MADISON MAY,
SENIOR**

beliefs, to assess connections between religion and democracy.

The country is considered a model for successful and stable democratic transition because some other African countries' shifts to democracy have ended with corrupt elections and violence, according to May.

"If progress can be made toward uncovering the source of Ghana's transitional success, then that knowledge can be applied to other countries," May said. "I hope to continue to build this research project to uncover patterns between civic participation in government, gubernatorial stability and religion."

Outside the classroom, May's goals were to communicate to Ghana's

of women's empowerment through athletics.

"My hope is that this team has empowered the girls to be more confident and continue to strive

Ghana, a nation on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, is considered a model for its successful transition to a democratic republic.



The scholarship allowed May to continue on the path of her dreams: to promote women's leadership in politics and government.

"I am grateful to the NCCE for the opportunity to learn about the politics of Ghana, the problems they face and the history of their state,"

May said. "This experience renewed my interest in finding the most sustainable solutions to international issues."



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During her time in Ghana, May conducted a research project to assess the connection between religious beliefs and political participation.

citizens, especially women, the value of becoming involved in democracy and running for office.

Starting the girls' soccer team was a rewarding experience for May, who hopes her action might ignite a trend

for traditionally male-dominated positions," May said. "I desire to see opportunities for women extend beyond sports and into civic and business leadership."

