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JSU BIOLOGY GRAD STUDENT STUDIES PROSTATE CANCER IN CHINA

(JACKSON, Miss.) – Melvanique S. Thomas, a graduate student in biology at Jackson State University, recently spent part of the summer in China conducting research on prostate cancer.

The Byhalia, Miss., native spent June 29-July 23 working with Professor Hangshan Wang in the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering at Guangxi Normal University in Guilin, China. Jackson State biology professor Dr. Stephen I. N. Ekunwe accompanied her on the trip.

While in China, Thomas learned techniques for isolating bioactive compounds in an edible Nigerian herb. “The research allowed me to gain the necessary skills to isolate compounds from the plant of interest, which will aid in the completion of my thesis and master of science program,” said Thomas, a 2002 graduate of Byhalia High School.

“The intense work ethics of the Chinese confirmed the statements made by my parents that it really is hard out in the ‘real’ world and only the strong survive. Experiencing that first-hand will definitely be advantageous to my future.”

Thomas’ trip was supported by the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement, or RISE, program in Jackson State’s College of Science, Engineering and Technology. The program focuses on minorities who want to pursue careers in biomedical sciences.

Thomas is the daughter of JoAnn (Polk) Owens and Robert Owens of Byhalia and Melvin Thomas of Coldwater, Miss. She is the granddaughter of the late Mattie B. Polk.

Photo of Thomas: <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/MThomas.jpg>

About Jackson State University

Jackson State University, founded in 1877, is a historically black, high research activity university located in Jackson, the capital city of the state of Mississippi. Jackson State's nurturing academic environment challenges individuals to change lives through teaching, research and service. Officially designated as Mississippi's Urban University, Jackson State continues to enhance the state, nation and world through comprehensive economic development, health-care, technological and educational initiatives. The only university in the Jackson metropolitan area, Jackson State is located near downtown, with three satellite campuses throughout the city. For more information, visit www.jsums.edu.