

SONYA WESTON

Ambassadorial Scholar 2010-2011

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A native of Macomb, Illinois, Sonya Weston graduated from Macomb High School in 2001. She spent the following academic year as a Rotary Youth Exchange student to Belgium. Upon returning, Sonya attended Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Government with honors in 2007. She pursued an interest in international affairs and attended study abroad programs in France, Austria, and the UK. In her senior year, Sonya investigated the role of referendums on the political process of European integration, resulting in her thesis entitled "Why the French and Dutch said 'Non' and 'Nee' to the EU Constitution: Explaining the disconnect between voters' preferences and mainstream political parties."

At Lawrence University, Sonya also worked as a Residence Life Advisor, played the violin in the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra, held several leadership positions with her sorority Kappa Kappa Gamma, and was an active member of Habitat for Humanity. In the summer of 2003, she accompanied a Lawrence professor to Haiti, where she taught music lessons to young children, and in the summer of 2006, she interned at the US Embassy in Guyana.

After graduating from Lawrence University, Sonya worked for one year as a trainee at UBS Investment Bank in the UK. She then accepted a fellowship from the US-based International Foundation for Education and Self-Help to work with the Ministry of Education in Guinea to expand educational opportunities for girls. While working in Guinea, Sonya also taught English to Francophone students at a teacher-training college. Sonya is currently working as a Research Assistant at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C.

Sonya will serve as a 2010-2011 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar to India. She plans to attend the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, where she hopes to pursue coursework in Indian politics, history, and society, as well as intensive beginning Hindi. She is particularly interested in examining the social and political implications of India's burgeoning economic transformation. Sonya also hopes to continue her work promoting girls' education, possibly in conjunction with her hosting Rotary Club. She looks forward to working with the Rotarians of District 3010 in India and to sharing her experience and perspective as an American Ambassador of Goodwill to the people of India.