Brady Kruse

SRHC Travel Report

Last spring, I was granted the opportunity to present my research at the Southern Regional Honors Conference at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, TN. Of course, missing class for an actually legitimate excuse (as opposed to simply getting a few more hours of shuteye) is always a gratitude-inducing experience, however, the conference proved much more enjoyable and beneficial than I initially anticipated and I deeply thank the Shackouls Honors College for investing in both my education and research interests by allowing me to both learn and present in Memphis.

The conference proved itself an intellectual breeding ground, as I was surrounded by and constantly discussing with other active-minded students from all subjects and schools of thought, from advanced physics, that of which are far beyond me, to other Tolkienists and their arguments on *The Lord of the Rings.* Not to mention the venue, that of which was beautiful and the famous Peabody ducks did not disappoint.

More to my academic experience, while at SRHC, I was able to present my paper to a group of equally curious and knowledgeable peers and, to my surprise, found myself able to hold their attention and talk affluently about the subject, despite my intense nerves. The session was standing room only and full to the brim of devoted students and professors, both of which challenged me with questions while simultaneously teaching me more about my research subject (and, naturally, I hope I fulfilled the same role in their eyes as well.) Even more surprising, several students requested my email address to read and discuss the full version of my paper. Until that point, my perception of myself as a researcher was that of a student; the things I said and wrote were not to be taken too heavily. To be considered a professional academic on the subject whose work is *genuinely* worth the time reading and musing over was, quite frankly, shocking and gratifying.

Speaking more to my computer science background, I presented a second paper on Isaac Asimov and the possibility of a combination of quantum computing and big data being used to turn his science fiction into science fact, and, more importantly, the ethics of this notion—an especially relevant topic in this age of online prodding and data combing. My experience in this session was much of the same, and I came away from it even more excited about my work and confident of its relevance.

Once again, I would like to thank the Shackouls Honors College for sending me to SRHC and giving me this opportunity to throw myself into what can best be described as a conglomeration of intelligence and ideas in an attempt to soak up as much as I could in my few short days there. SRHC also lit a fire in my mind, giving me a certain level of healthy chutzpah and assurance that what I do actually matters and can legitimately be classified as quality research. I encourage other Honors students to catapult themselves into the scary breach of research conferences and presentations, that of which SRHC is a fantastic one to start.