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FROM GRIEF TO GLORY

Senior forward Lykendra Johnson takes the Breslin floor one last time

RIGHT: Senior forward Lykendra Johnson has a word with her team. Johnson scored 13 points and grabbed 12 rebounds in the Spartans 64-41 over the Detroit Titans Dec. 6, 2011 at Breslin Center. **BELOW RIGHT:** Then-senior forward Cetera Washington, right, hugs her teammate, then-junior Lykendra Johnson, after raising the Big Ten Champion banner in Breslin Center on Feb. 24, 2011 after the home game against Ohio State. STATE NEWS FILE PHOTOS



DEFENDERS

STUDENTS LOOK TO DEFENDERS FOR HELP WITH GRADE DISPUTES

By Rachel Jackson
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THE STATE NEWS

Last semester, when horticulture senior Brendan O'Keefe calculated his final grades, he was satisfied he would get a 4.0. But when his sociology professor ended up giving him a 3.5 in the class, O'Keefe took issue and contacted the professor with his concerns.

After a series of argumentative emails, O'Keefe said he ended up dropping the issue.

"It might have been a miscalculation on either of our parts, (but) he seemed pretty set on it," he said.

Grade disputes similar to O'Keefe's from last semester take the cake for this semester by the Student Defenders program, amounting to more than half of total cases heard so far.

Director of Legal Services and Student Defenders Andrew Block said of the eight cases the program has heard, about five have been cases of grade disputes.

Block said during the spring semester, students are more likely to appeal unsatisfactory grades than other times because of the shorter break between semesters. The cases involve students disagreeing with their final grades or test scores.

The Student Defenders program is a division of legal services provided to tax-paying members of ASMSU, MSU's undergraduate student government, and the Council of Graduate Students, or COGS.

The five student defenders in the apartment act as counsel for academic issues — including grade disputes or academic dishonesty, and judicial cases — including citations for possession of alcohol in the dorms or violent behavior, Block said.

The Student Defenders heard 14 total cases last semester and about 40 during the 2010-11 academic year, he said. Block said academic issues make up about 75 percent of cases and judicial issues make up the remaining 25 percent, but there was no trend in further breakdown of what cases were most common.

Economics and political science senior Adam Ratliff has been a student defender for two years and he usually hears about two or three cases per semester. When Ratliff is assigned a case, he said he first sits down with the student to discuss the issue before putting together a defense relating to the general student regulations, a set of rules established in the MSU community to ensure the success of its members.

Most cases do not end with an unanimous decision supporting or opposing the student who brought the case but rather a compromise between the two, which in the case of a grade dispute is the student and professor, he said.

"Most of the time it's somewhere in the middle," he said, "(We) make sure everyone understands what happened and try to work for the best resolution." Ratliff said some of the hearings can take months — one even took several semesters — depending on how quickly the university grants a hearing request.

But Block said because not all cases brought to the program end up in a hearing, there's no official record of the number and types of cases heard.

Staff writer Darcie Moran contributed to this report.

To watch a video about Lykendra Johnson's time as a Spartan, go to statenews.com/multimedia.

To read more about the women's basketball senior day, go to page 8.

By Josh Mansour
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Running up and down the basketball court, her brother stopped, and in that moment, so did her world. Lykendra Johnson and her big brother, Homer, always played basketball together, but one January day in 2001, the fun and games turned fatally serious.

"I was jogging up the court, playing with the dudes, like I usually did, and he just fell, collapsed," she said. "I thought he was playing at first."

Homer wasn't, and died from complications from an enlarged heart at the age of 15, with his 11-year-old baby

sister standing by his side.

The MSU women's basketball team (7-10 overall, 9-5 Big Ten) will host No. 23 Nebraska (20-6, 9-5) at 7 p.m. for Senior Day, and as Johnson steps on the Breslin Center floor to be recognized in the final home game of her illustrious career, there's no doubt the brother that taught her the game will be on her mind.

For Homer

Growing up in Chicago, Johnson was the youngest of four children and always was treated as the baby of the family.

Although she's now known for her size and athleticism, Johnson said it wasn't always that way.



"I was this short, 5-foot-2, chubby kid playing around with boys in our church gym," she said. "I didn't even want to play basketball. I

was like, 'No, that's a man's sport,' but after (my brother died), it just changed

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ACADEMICS

MSU College of Human Medicine expands early admission program

By Stephen Brooks
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THE STATE NEWS

The MSU College of Human Medicine is increasing efforts to recruit students from medically underserved areas with the addition of Alma College to its group of Michigan university partners in the early assurance program for admissions.

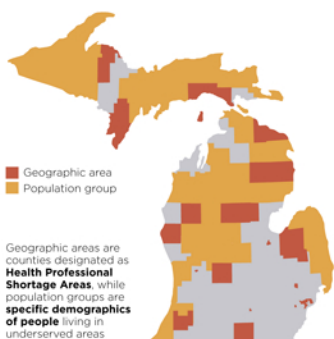
The program reserves a certain number of seats in each class of 200 students entering the College of Human Medicine, or CHM. There now are two seats reserved — but not guaranteed — for Alma College premedical students in each incoming class, increasing the total number of reserved seats for students from 11 Michigan colleges and universities to roughly 30, said Christine Shafer, CHM admissions consultant.

"Alma (College) does attract a lot of students from rural areas, and that fits our missions of serving students from rural areas," Shafer said. "That's what made Alma attractive to us."

Preference in the early assurance program is given to students

MICHIGAN'S MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREAS

The MSU College of Human Medicine's early assurance program aims to provide more medical help in areas of need across the state



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INFOGRAPHIC BY LIAM ZANYK MCLEAN | SN

NEWS BRIEF

THOMPSON TETHER REMOVAL PLEA DENIED

A newly styled haircut, fashionable suit and a calm demeanor characterized Andrew Thompson during a brief court appearance Wednesday — a far cry from the blue jumpsuit and handcuffs he wore only a few months ago.

Thompson, a 24-year-old former MSU graduate student, is facing 13 counts of animal killing/torture in Meridian Township and East Lansing for allegedly killing several Italian greyhounds while living in apartments in those municipalities.

He appeared in Lansing's 30th Circuit Court before Judge Paula Manderfield again Wednesday in the hopes of removing his GPS tether, one of the conditions of his current freedom after posting 10 percent of his total bond in both cases in October, 2011, amounting to \$10,000.

Thompson spent more than 100 days in jail after turning himself in to Meridian Township police on June 25, 2011. Thompson currently is staying with friends in Okemos as he awaits trial. Along with the tether, Thompson also is required to abide by a 10 p.m. curfew.

Stacia Buchanan, Thompson's attorney, argued the \$360 a month price tag for Thompson's tether was too high for her client, who currently is working part time in a retail position. Thompson was suspended from MSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine pending orders of the case, but left the university earlier this year and no longer is attending school. Buchanan said Thompson has been cooperative with the court up to this point and believed the court would trust him to continue cooperating by removing the GPS tether.

Thompson ultimately was denied the request to remove the tether. Manderfield said she based the decision on the fact that Thompson hails from Arizona and because in her opinion, the price does not seem unreasonable. Manderfield said she would like to see the trial commence as soon as possible, potentially within the next several weeks. A trial date has not yet been set.

LAUREN GIBBONS