FIRST COLUMN

King-Drew Magnet School Science
Whiz Kid Making a Name for Himself

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King-Drew Medical Magnet High School senior Chijoke Nwo
stated his cell and molecular biology project under the watchful eye of
his mentor, Dr. Wayne Taylor, an assistant professor at Charles R.
Drew University. He admits "he didn't understand anything."

In just under one year, however, 15-year-old Chijoke, or C.J., has
learned so quickly that Taylor said he allows him to culture cells all by
himself. "C.J. has been working with me about a year through a program in
relation to the National Institute of Health (NIH) and is one of the best
students I ever had," Taylor said. "He has advanced to the stage where I
can leave him alone to culture cells and he gets it right every time."

Chijoke said he’s fascinated with the work he does in his science
projects and believes it is preparing him to pursue his dream to be a doc-
tor. He also wants to do medical research in breast cancer.

"I've really been working and studying hard getting ready to pur-
sue my career in medicine... all my life I've loved math and science," he
said. "And I want to go into breast cancer research because my mother
died of it."

Chijoke’s research project was made possible through the Office
of Minority Health Research Coordination (OMHRC) in the National
Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease.

See WHIZ KID, page 11

WHIZ KID

Continued from page 1

The conference was designed to provide a forum for the presentation
and discussion of the best research, scholarship, and creative work of
undergraduate college students in the region.

The fact that Chijoke's work was allowed to be displayed in a
venue designed for college students pays testimony to his future.

"C.J.'s research project examines how testosterone affects gluo-
sus," Taylor said. "C.J. grossed culture and looks at the different effects
testosterone hormone has when injected with insulin, glucose or cortisol.
The work he is doing is quite fasci-

Chijoke said he had to make
several revisions before his work
was accepted, but he was thrilled to
display his work among college stu-
dents.

"I was pretty sure it would be
accepted... I was just happy to have
an opportunity like that," he said. "It
was amazing to see how cells
changed so quickly. And I learned so
much about how different hormones
can change a stem cell's physical and functional abilities."

Chijoke was smart enough
that he was advanced two grade levels,
making him the youngest senior in
his class.

Sporting a grade-point-average of 3.7 and a 1990 SAT score,
Chijoke believes he will gain entrance to Stanford University to
continue his education. He is also applying to the University of
California, Los Angeles and the University of California, Berkeley.

Chijoke said he gained his
willingness to work hard from his
father Okwu Nwo, who serves as a
diplomat for Nigeria.

"He is a hard worker and has
accomplished a lot since his child-
hood," Chijoke said of his father.

What else fuels his quest for
academic excellence?

"I study a lot and I'm always
looking for a challenge... if I don't
find the challenge I feel I'm not
accomplishing anything," he said.