

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Language of success comes easy to 2014 Tasmanian Rhodes Scholar

University of Tasmania graduate Samuel Forbes, 24, of Hobart, has been announced as the Tasmanian Rhodes Scholar for 2014.

Samuel, who holds a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese and Chinese and a Graduate Certificate in Arts (Asian Studies), from UTAS, will complete further study at the University of Oxford in the UK next year.

Samuel also recently completed his Masters degree in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Nanjing University in China.

He speaks Chinese and Japanese fluently and several other languages proficiently. His research focus is neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics, and in particular child language acquisition.

“These areas look at how children of a very young age acquire language and what psychological states and brain patterns that make that happen,” Samuel said.

“This Scholarship will give me the opportunity to work with the BabyLab at Oxford with some of the very best researchers there.

“They look at very young children, about one year of age, which is quite rare.

“Once we understand why it is that children of that age acquire language so quickly, then we can look at things like how adults can better acquire a second language.

“I hope I can contribute to research in that area and also encourage people to learn more languages, particularly in Australia.”

Samuel’s father Professor Larry Forbes is an academic in the UTAS School of Mathematics and his mother Dr Anne-Marie Forbes is a Senior Lecturer at the UTAS Conservatorium of Music.

Samuel is also keen on badminton, singing and conducting music.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen congratulated Samuel on his achievement.

“The calibre of all the Rhodes applicants was exemplary,” Professor Rathjen said.

“Samuel is an exceptional student and possesses a particularly keen and enquiring mind - not only does he excel at learning languages, his ultimate goal is to understand how the human brain learns these skills.

“This desire for depth of understanding of such a complex process sets Samuel apart - I have no doubt that he will go on to make an invaluable contribution to his chosen research field.”

The Rhodes Trust also selects three additional Scholars from Australia. Each state and territory is permitted to nominate an applicant and UTAS student Robert Hortle was Tasmania’s selection. He will now be considered for one of the three national Rhodes Scholarships.

About the Rhodes Scholarship:

The Rhodes Scholarship is awarded yearly to gifted students who have completed their undergraduate degree and achieved First Class Honours in their chosen field of study. One recipient from each state in Australia is selected. The Scholarship allows the recipient to study at the famed University of Oxford in the UK.

The Rhodes Scholarships were created under the will of Cecil John Rhodes in 1902. Rhodes scholars are chosen not only for academic excellence but also for sporting and leadership abilities, community involvement and strength of character.

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