

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@homecomm.net

But the Farmington High School senior, who recently won a Golden Torch Award as "Male Pre-College Student of the Year-2000" from the National Society of Black Engineers, doesn't give anybody the impression that he knows his star rises above everybody else's.

"I don't think we've ever had a student quite as involved in academic pursuits outside the high school, with all the internships he's done over the years," Barrett said. "And yet, he still seems to be a normal, well-rounded kid."

"You see him in the hallway between classes, talking to other kids and enjoying life. That's the amazing part of the whole picture."

Then, Barrett chuckled when asked about the supportive role played by Garlin's proud parents, Garlin Sr. and Yvonne Posey Gilchrist of Farmington.

"His parents are as dedicated as he is," the principal said. "If we had more parents like them ... we'd maybe have even more success stories."

During a recent interview at the high

But they also delved into what motivates the teen, who, incidentally, was guest speaker at DAPCEP's annual meeting, Jan. 19 at the Museum of African-American History in Detroit.

About winning the "Male Pre-College Student of the Year 2000" award itself, Garlin II said he was honored and surprised that the engineering organization would select him over other worthy candidates.

**It's fun, too**

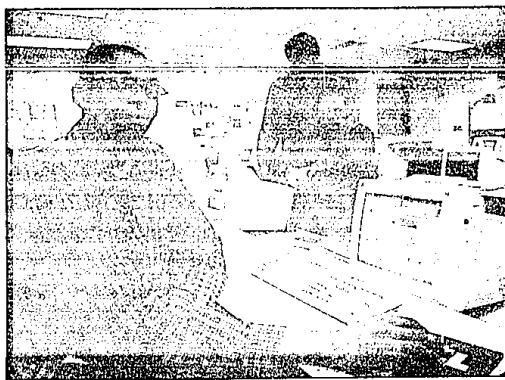
But to him, the reason he is amassing such a solid portfolio of accomplishments is because he simply enjoys engineering. That enjoyment, and a thirst for knowledge, was why he spent eight weeks last summer at Wayne State University's medical school (for a DAP-CEP internship), working as a research laboratory assistant. Yvonne said.

She laughed when she recalled one conversation with the family's only child. "His internship in biomedical grew out of the fact that one time he said to me, 'You baby boomers are losing it. We're going to make you big buttons and huge handles'" to help them with basic tasks of life.

According to Garlin II, he became interested in engineering after being encouraged in 1993 by his parents — neither of whom is an engineer — to enter the DAPCEP internship.

"It seemed interesting to me, because you need to be good at math and science to be an engineer and I happened to be good at math and science," Garlin II said in a quiet, matter-of-fact voice. "By going to the workshops, I found out that I liked it, it seemed fun. And I like to solve problems and use computers."

Initially, Garlin Sr. was reluctant to see his son spend so much time



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER

**Proud:** Garlin Gilchrist's hard work paid off. Mom, Yvonne Posey-Gilchrist, and Dad, Garlin Gilchrist Sr., are proud of his accomplishments.

during summer vacation working on such a big endeavor. But after that first internship, chimed in Yvonne, "we could not hold him back."

Several years later, that still appears to be the case as evidenced by the NSBE award.

The NSBE presents two Golden Torch Awards annually to the two high school seniors nationwide who show the most promise in science or engineering. One male and one female win the awards, which are based upon a mix of academic success, school activities, community service, educational and professional career goals, accomplishments and letters of recommendation.

Barrett added that such an accomplishment, above everything else Garlin

It has done so far, indicates "he's going to have an amazing future."

Indeed, the younger Garlin keeps very busy even beyond his chosen field of interest. He strives on many levels: academics, attaining honor's student status

with a 3.9 grade-point-average; athletics, playing small forward on the Falcons varsity basketball squad; and community service, serving meals on Thanksgiving at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, for example.

### Good teaching helped

Beyond that, he is a tutor and youth basketball coach at Mann Elementary School in Detroit.

Garlin II is just a high school senior. But he already has a maturity about him that enables him to get a grasp about how his work at Manna is important.

■ 'It seemed interesting to me, because you need to be good at math and science to be an engineer and I happened to be good at math and science.'

**Garlin Gilchrist**  
—Farmington High student

"I think it's really good," he said. "If they can see somebody not that much older than them being a positive influence, they can see they can also wind up doing positive things when they get to their high school or college years."

Not insignificant in all of this, his parents emphasized, is the quality of instruction Garlin II receives at Farmington High School. They also both pointed to the move to block scheduling, good curriculum and fresh, innovative teaching techniques as important factors in their son's development.

"Garlin is very busy, and whenever he gets a homework assignment he always has that extra day to get it done," said Garlin Sr., referring to the Student Managed Academic Resource Time at FHS. "Block scheduling has been a god-send for us."

Yvonne said block scheduling "gives him a prelude to what college is like and allows him the flexibility in his schedule to accommodate his very busy lifestyle."

For Garlin II, who gives an assist to FHS teachers such as Don McGregor, things won't be slowing down anytime soon.

In April, he will make a presentation at a biomedical symposium at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. Then will come graduation and summer internships, followed by college. As of now, Garlin II is leaning toward enrolling at the University of Michigan, to pursue a degree in computer engineering.

"It will be interesting to follow his career," Barrett said.

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