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For Immediate Release

GSU Lincoln Laureate Honored

University Park, IL, November 12, 2007 – Each year an outstanding senior from each of the four-year degree granting institutions of higher learning in Illinois is named a Student Laureate of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois.

This year’s Lincoln Laureate from Governors State University is Titus Payton of Chicago. Payton is a senior in the Elementary Education program at GSU. He is currently completing his student teaching at O. W. Huth Middle School in Matteson and will graduate in February.

"The Student Laureate honor is a great accomplishment. It recognizes the hard work it took to return to school. This award is a great honor," said Payton who returned to school after four years in the U.S. Army and seven years as a foreman at a steel mill.

"We are very proud of Titus Payton. He represents the commitment it takes to return to school and follow one’s dreams. He has been an asset to GSU and will be an asset to the students he will teach," said Dr. Sherilyn Poole, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Governors State University.

"Teaching is my calling. To work with these young students is so important. This is where I can make a difference. I want to help them with their academics and also extra curricular activities. I want to help them find balance and create a firm foundation before they enter high school."

As a Student Laureate, Payton was honored in a ceremony in the Old State Capital Building in Springfield, Illinois. Each recipient of the honor received a Student Laureate Medallion, a certificate of achievement, and a check for $150 to cover travel and other expenses.

According to Payton, his 13-year old son is very proud of his father. "I hope to be a good example for my son. I want him to see how important a college education is and to not take as long as I did to get his degree."

Since attending GSU, Payton made the Dean's List many times, is a member of the Access to College Education Student Support Services (ACCESS) program, served as a volunteer math tutor, and volunteered at many university events.

Payton plans to continue his education even while he teaches junior high school students. He will have his endorsement to teach mathematics upon graduation, and will return to GSU on a part time basis to earn his master's degree in multicategorical special education.