

Grad Wins "Tweet" to Be Ellen's Red-carpet Correspondent

May 21, 2009 2:00 AM Fran Simon
fsimon@tulane.edu

On Wednesday (May 20), recent Tulane University graduate Michelle Holmes must have felt like a celebrity as she was ushered through make-up, hair styling and wardrobe in preparation for an evening of reporting on the season finale of "American Idol" as a correspondent for the "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." Holmes was whisked into the world of show business after winning a trip to the "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" by responding to a "tweet" sent out on Twitter by the talk show host.



Michelle Holmes, center, a 2009 graduate in political economy and international development, brings her dog Lula to campus after getting a "tweet" from "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." As a prize, Holmes reported from the red carpet of the "American Idol" season finale after being tapped as a correspondent for the Ellen show. (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano)

“Usually you can find me wearing sweats in the library,” laughs Holmes, a native of Chicago who graduated in political economy and international development on May 16.

The challenge issued by DeGeneres on her May 14 “tweet” was to be “the first at the Breyer’s cart on Freret St. â?¡ wearing your graduation robe ... and nothing else.”

The giveaway was one of two involving Tulane students that were orchestrated by DeGeneres prior to her engagement as the university’s [Commencement speaker](#).

Holmes showed up for both giveaways, the first time winning a Kindle book-reading device.

For her top prize, Holmes and her boyfriend, Drew Pippin, were flown to Los Angeles to attend a taping of “The Ellen DeGeneres Show.”

During the taping, DeGeneres announced that Holmes would be her show’s correspondent covering celebrity arrivals on the red carpet of the finale for the “American Idol” TV show. In the audience, an excited Holmes jumped up and down, screaming.

Holmes expects her stint as entertainment reporter to air as a segment on DeGeneres’ show on Tuesday, May 26. The show is syndicated and airs at different times in markets across the country. Find out [when it’s on](#).



“My 'rescue' dog, Lula, knows when it's time for Ellen because she hears the [intro] music,” Holmes says.

The unexpected brush with show business hasn't deterred Holmes from her plans. This summer, she will be working with the Tulane Law School's [Payson Center for International Development](#) on a project in the Republic of CÔte d'Ivoire in West Africa.

For the next academic year, she will be pursuing a degree at the London School of Economics. Then she plans to pursue a law degree to prepare for a career in international human rights.

Holmes has already had an international reach. In addition to broadcasting to millions of viewers daily in the U.S., the Ellen show can be seen on television internationally in nearly 30 countries.

Long-time fans of “The Ellen DeGeneres Show,” Holmes and Pippin say they watch the show daily. It's the only TV show they can agree on, they say.

“My 'rescue' dog, Lula, knows when it's time for Ellen because she hears the [intro] music ? she jumps up on the sofa for cuddle time with us,” Holmes says. “If you're having a bad day, the show makes you happy. If you're having a good day, it keeps you in the mood. It lightens my day.”