



## **For Immediate Release**

Contact: Jody Cofer

October 1, 2008

### **Roberts Receives \$500 Undergraduate Research Grant**

Evan Roberts was recently awarded a \$500 grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity (URSA) for his proposal entitled "Development of a Synthetic Strategy Toward Amphibian Indolizidine Alkaloids."

Roberts, a senior chemistry major from Mayfield, Ky., is attempting to synthesize a precursor to indolizidine, which is a toxin found on the skin of poison dart frogs that is believed to have medical applications as a treatment for Alzheimer's disease. Preparing inexpensive, synthetic toxins would give researchers a much more accessible alternative to the real toxins, which can only be taken directly from poison dart frogs.

Dr. Edie J. Banner, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, will assist Roberts with his project. "This project is a new one and will require close interaction with Evan to proceed through the development of a multi-step synthesis. Evan has shown that he can grasp the concepts being discussed and can move the project forward," Banner said.

Roberts plans to present his findings at *Posters-at-the-Capitol* and MSU's *Scholar's Week*, which will take place April 20-24, 2009. In addition, Roberts will submit his work for publication in *Chrysalis: The Murray State University Journal of Undergraduate Research*.

More information about the URSA program can be found online at <http://campus.murraystate.edu/services/ursa/> or by calling (270) 809-3192.