Congratulations to Damou Traore, the 2016 Gerard A. Vanderhaar Student Peace Award Winner

Mr. LeMoyne-Owen College and graduating senior Damou Traore is the 2016 Gerard A. Vanderhaar Student Peace Award Winner. Christian Brothers University annually bestows the award on a local college student whose academic and community service pursuits best exemplify the spirit and practice of active nonviolence consistent with the life and work of Dr. Gerard A. Vanderhaar.

Son of Dissa Sacko and Mamady Traore, Damou is originally from Guinea, West Africa. In 2011, he arrived in Atlanta, GA, where he attended and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, Senior Academy. He arrived at LeMoyne-Owen College in 2012 and graduates next month with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science.

Damou is a member of various campus organizations and has served in numerous leadership positions, including as Mr. UNCF 2014-2015 and Mr. LeMoyne-Owen 2015-2016. His initiatives have welcomed an array of state and city officials and political activists as keynote speakers to LeMoyne-Owen's campus in an effort to highlight the importance of civic engagement and to increase the number of students participating in the country's democratic system and craft a generation of “civic scholars,” especially among young African Americans.

For twenty-eight years, Dr. Gerard A. Vanderhaar was a professor of religion at Christian Brothers University. He was instrumental in starting the Peace Studies Minor program; was involved in bring the Gandhi Institute to CBU; and brought speakers and peace and justice events to campus. Dr. Vanderhaar also was a founder of and served on the Board of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center.

Past Vanderhaar Peace Award winners from LeMoyne-Owen include alumni Ayele Akibulan who won the award in 2014 and Kioni Logan who won in 2011.