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Acacia Santos Wins Miss Ole Miss Title

Engineering senior elected to represent UM student body

NOVEMBER 1, 2016 BY RYAN UPSHAW

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Mr. Ole Miss Cole Putman and Miss. Ole Miss Acacia Santos

Acacia Santos was recently named 2016 Miss Ole Miss.

A native of Southaven, the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College senior is studying mechanical and electrical engineering with an emphasis in manufacturing at the University of Mississippi.

Reflecting on her decision to run for the honor, Santos said that she just wanted show how grateful she was for the educational opportunities she has enjoyed since enrolling four years ago. She credits close friends who encouraged her to run for the title in this year's student body personality elections.

"I quickly realized what type of positive impact I could have on Ole Miss if given the opportunity to serve," she said. "From there, it was simply about remaining humble and hopeful of the outcome."

Santos said the experience of campaigning for the title was "indescribable." Her team supporters helped throughout the process, giving her encouragement and advice.

"A good friend told me to soak in every moment and cherish the opportunity," Santos said. "As the campaign progressed, I began to receive support from all types of students and places I did not realize would be supporting me in this effort."

"I knew that no matter what happened, I was eternally blessed to have so many people tell me that how proud they were of me, how much they loved me and that regardless of the outcome, I was still going to be someone that they believed in."

As she stood outside the Lyceum, surrounded by friends and supporters, Santos felt as if time slowed down as the election results were announced, she recalled.

"It was surreal," Santos said. "I remember everyone screaming and jumping up and down out of excitement. Once the crowd died down, I thought, 'Did he actually say my name?'"

She could tell by everyone's excitement that her name had officially been announced as Miss Ole Miss. "I promptly started crying," she said.

Since the election, Santos and Cole Putman, who was elected Mr. Ole Miss, have been planning to amplify the service roles that these positions typically engage in throughout the year. She thinks they have the strength and support of the entire community behind them.

"We are capable of change and inspiring kindness, diversity and inclusivity," she said. "We have some great opportunities in mind for serving our community."

Besides her role as Miss Ole Miss, Santos serves as president of the Columns Society. She also has served in a number of campus leadership positions, including community assistant, orientation leader, MPOWER mentor and co-director of special events for the Student Activities Association. She also has been a member of the ASB Judicial Council, Mortar Board senior honor society, Omicron Delta Kappa leadership society and Lambda Sigma sophomore honor society.

From an academic standpoint, the School of Engineering has been like a family, Santos said. She is thankful to her fellow students, as well as the faculty and staff for the impact that they have made during her time on campus.

After graduation, Santos plans to attend graduate school in engineering.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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