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## A 'Dilley' of an Honor

### Civil engineering alumna named Mississippi Engineering Society's Young Engineer of the Year

MARCH 31, 2017 BY EDWIN SMITH

FaTvLiErCSMPSt



Jeff Ely, MDOT state planning engineer, presents Jessica Dilley with the Mississippi Engineering Society's 'Young Engineer of the Year' award during the organization's 2017 winter meeting in Jackson. (Submitted photo by Marni Kendricks)

Jessica Headrick Dilley, a planning engineer at the Mississippi Department of Transportation, was honored as the Mississippi Engineering Society's "Young Engineer of the Year" during the organization's annual winter meeting in Jackson.

"I felt very humbled to win this award," said Dilley (BSCE 08, MS 10), a native of Sugarland, Texas. "There is a lot of young, talented engineers in the field right now, many of which I look to for guidance and direction."

Winning awards for her outstanding work is

nothing new for Dilley.

As a UM civil engineering undergraduate, she won first place at the 2010 Institute of Transportation Engineers Deep South District 5 Student Chapter Paper competition, first runner-up in the 2008 American Society of Civil Engineers Deep South Section Professional Paper Competition and third place in that same organization's 2008 Canoe Competition.

While earning her master's degree in environmental engineering from the university, research from Dilley's thesis, titled "Geospatial Analysis of Roadway Traffic Volume, Flow Simulation and Air Pollution Impacts on the Built Environment," was included in MDOT's State Study 213, "Performance Evaluation of Roundabouts for Traffic Delay and Crash Reductions in Oxford." MDOT was awarded the 2014 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' "Sweet Sixteen" High Value Research Award for this study, and it was presented as a poster session at the 2015 Transportation Research Board.

Requirements for the Mississippi Engineering Society recognition include being a resident of the state of Mississippi, a registered engineer, a member in good standing in the society and under the age of 35. The award is weighted on professional integrity, professional reputation that extends beyond the engineering field, and promotion of the welfare of the engineer and the engineering profession.

"I must give special recognition to the staff and professors in the School of Engineering at the University of Mississippi," Dilley said. "I especially thank Dr. (Waheed) Uddin for supporting me throughout my undergraduate and graduate school, Mami (Kendricks), who served as my counselor and role model, and Dr. (Alex) Cheng, for always being there for all his students."

Uddin, a UM professor of civil engineering and director of the Center for Advanced Infrastructure Technology, said he found Dilley's achievement rewarding.

"Her award is a testimony to her professional achievements and makes her a great role model for UM engineering students," Uddin said. "Jessica helped me develop instruction materials for my Geospatial course, which I am currently offering as CE 495. She is a dependable, loyal Ole Miss alum and a great asset to MDOT's Planning Division."

Uddin began mentoring Dilley in her junior year at the university. Dilley and her classmate Katherine Osborne recruited, trained and managed a geographic information system staff of more than 12 students from 2007 to 2009.

"This was an essential task of CAIT's Karachi transportation study for the successful completion of this National Academy of Sciences-USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) project," Uddin said. "Her thesis produced two peer-reviewed papers and several conference presentations. Jessica coordinated the extensive field traffic data collection by 12 undergraduate and four graduate students."

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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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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Her outstanding M.S. research involved capacity analysis, congestion costs, traffic micro-simulation, vehicle emissions and traffic safety analysis.”

Uddin said Dilley has returned to campus, with her MDOT colleague Colby Willis, and presented a lecture to his class on highway planning and design. Since receiving the news of Dilley’s MES honor, several other UM civil engineering faculty members have invited her to come speak to their students as well.

“It would be my pleasure to schedule her for my senior design and the introductory freshmen classes,” said assistant professor Hunain Alkhateb. “The students are always inspired by successful alums.”

The civil engineering department is “extremely delighted” about Dilley’s notable achievement, said Jacob Najjar, chair and professor of civil engineering. “She represents a superb role model for our CE students and recent graduates.”

Dilley said she will always feel a debt of gratitude to Ole Miss engineering faculty and staff.

“They did an amazing job working with us individually throughout our time at the university and keep in touch with us once we have graduated,” she said. “They truly become our lifelong mentors, and I cannot say enough good things about the engineering program at Ole Miss.”

Dilley and her husband, Adam, have two children, Gracyn and Hayes.

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