McLean Institute Presents Sullivan Awards to Wortham and Herod

Christina Steube
McLean Institute Presents Sullivan Awards to Wortham and Herod

Annual honors recognize selfless service to others

OXFORD, Miss. – University of Mississippi senior Ann-Marie Herod and UM alumna Barbara Wortham were honored with the 2016 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award on Wednesday (April 6) in recognition of their volunteer work in the community and beyond.

Presented by the university’s McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement, the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award is the highest honor at UM recognizing service. It is presented annually to students, alumni and community members who demonstrate selfless service to others.

The awards were presented Wednesday afternoon at the McLean Institute’s Celebration of Service at The Inn at Ole Miss.

“The McLean Institute works with partners across campus and in the community to elevate the prominence of service awards,” said Albert Nylander, director of the McLean Institute. “Working with the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation is a tremendous opportunity for the University of Mississippi to grant such a prestigious award.”

“The number of nominations has increased each year, and it is humbling to learn about the many members of our community who set an example for service to others, such as Barbara and Ann-Marie.”

Herod, a senior from Abbeville who has a double major in broadcast journalism and African-American studies, has served with the McLean Institute’s Horizons program, College Corps, Ole Miss Ambassadors and the Black Student Union, in addition to years of volunteer work.

Wortham, of Oxford, is the coordinator with the Adult Basic Literary Education program for the Lafayette County Literacy Council. She has been a GED instructor for 20 years and has been tutoring through a program at Burns United Methodist Church for 11 years. Through her work at the church, she has helped more than 400 people get their GED.

She also has worked as a volunteer with the Oxford Food Pantry and has served on the pantry’s board for the past three years. Wortham expressed gratitude for the recognition, but said she works solely to help others.

“I am greatly honored to be selected for this award,” Wortham said. “The countless hours of hard work and concern for the welfare of others have led to this moment.”

Herod said she was shocked when she learned that she had received the award.

“I was so overcome with joy,” she said. “I didn’t anticipate receiving such an honor. It warmed my heart that people recognized the work I was putting in. I’m grateful and thankful.”

Herod is also involved with several volunteer organizations, both on- and off-campus. She has worked with Leap Frog, Boys and Girls Club and the Big Event for the past three years. As a member of the Lambda Sigma chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, she has gained experience through partnerships with local churches and service organizations, and she said volunteering has become part of who she is.

She began volunteering as a freshman, taking a mission trip to Honduras. While she enjoyed working with children there, she wanted to help closer to home and encourages others to do the same.

“I asked myself, ‘What am I doing in my community?’ she said. “The real work starts in our own
backyard. We can make the world a better place by volunteering locally. The best way to be a good steward to our communities and break down barriers is by serving others.”

Wortham also encourages others to find ways to become involved.

“Do what you love and whatever feeds your soul,” Wortham said. “Find a way to become involved in your community that you have a passion for, and that passion will keep you motivated during the hard times and low points of life.”

Sullivan Award recipients are chosen by a nominations committee convened by the McLean Institute, which works to achieve transformation through service throughout the university and fights poverty through education.