2003

Tonya Flesher named top teacher at University of Mississippi

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Recommended Citation
Pugh, Elaine (2003) "Tonya Flesher named top teacher at University of Mississippi," The Accounting Historians Notebook: Vol. 26 : No. 2 , Article 1. Available at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aah_notebook/vol26/iss2/1

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Dr. Tonya Flesher, past president of the Academy of Accounting Historians and professor of Accountancy, was recently recognized as winner of the University of Mississippi’s 2003 prestigious Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award. Flesher, who has taught in the UM School of Accountancy since 1979, was selected from among the university’s 549 full-time faculty members for the prestigious award.

“During her years at Ole Miss, Dr. Flesher has enjoyed the respect and admiration of her students, faculty colleagues and other members of the community,” said Chancellor Robert Khayat. “She is recognized as one of our finest teachers, has established a strong reputation for her research and writing, and has been active in professional and community service. The university has been enriched by her leadership and service.”

“This is my proudest moment as a teacher,” Flesher said. “I’ve been attending the annual honors convocation for years, and I remember thinking that this award has to be the ultimate in anyone’s career, but I never really thought I would receive it.”

Recognition for outstanding classroom performance was accorded to Flesher as the Accountancy School’s Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 1986, 1998 and 2002. Flesher became the first woman to hold a UM deanship when she was appointed to head the accountancy school in 1987. A 1971 graduate of Ball State University with a social science degree, Flesher received a Master’s in Accounting at Appalachian State University in 1975. Early in her career, she was a tax auditor for the Internal Revenue Service, then staff accountant for J.A. Grissette & Co., now Deloitte & Touche. In 1977,
History In Print


she enrolled in Mississippi’s doctoral program and upon completion in 1979, she joined the faculty.

In 1995, the Mississippi Society of CPAs recognized her as Outstanding Accounting Educator, and she won Ole Miss’s 1986 Burlington-Northern Faculty Achievement Award as an outstanding faculty member.

Adviser to Tau Alpha Chi student honor society, she co-advises the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. A mentor to minority accountancy students, she recently joined the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants national Minority Initiatives Committee, which selects recipients of scholarships funded through the AICPA Foundation.

In 2002, she was listed by the Mississippi Business Journal as one of the state’s 50 Leading Business Women.

(adapted from a news release by Elaine Pugh)