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Big Things Come in Small Packages: Two Local Youngsters Win Engineering Awards

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OXFORD, Miss. – Talmadge Lewis is only 7 years old, but thanks to a recent competition at the University of Mississippi, he may already be looking years ahead to a career as a robotics engineer.

Scott Kilpatrick, assistant to the dean of engineering at Ole Miss, congratulates Talmadge Lewis and Mary Charles Kendricks on their winning entries in the Region 7 Science and Engineering Fair. UM photo by Nathan Latil.

Lewis was one of two elementary school students from Oxford to receive medals at UM's 23rd annual Excellence in Engineering Awards last week. He and Mary Charles Kendricks, 10, received top honors in the Class 1 and 2 divisions, respectively, for their creative projects entered in the annual Region 7 Science and Engineering Fair.

"We did the best we could do," said Lewis, a second-grader at Oxford University School. He designed and built a robot that simulates combing hair. The idea came after he found one of his grandmother's bobby pins on a bathroom floor. Lewis used LEGO Mindstorm kits to create and test variations of his robot before coming up with his medal-winning entry.

"Because we arrived late, I won fifth place in the science fair, but I still won the Excellence in Engineering Award," he said. "That's pretty cool."

Normally, the awards have been presented only to high school students who have excelled in the areas of science related to engineering or computer science. This is the first year the competition was opened to elementary school students as well.

"In order to increase student interest in math, science and engineering, we must plant a seed at an early stage," said Scott Kilpatrick, assistant to the engineering dean and presenter of the awards. "We want each student to know that we see the engineer in them, no matter what their age may be."

Recipients of these awards receive either plaques or medals during each of the seven regional Mississippi Science and Engineering Fairs and the State Science and Engineering Fair, which is hosted on a rotating schedule.

"I feel like I'm the luckiest girl in the world," said Kendricks, a fourth-grader at Della Davidson Elementary. She designed and conducted an experiment to test the strength and longevity of columns made of paper in cold, humid and room temperatures. She topped the columns with weights to test their strength.

"The columns stood 12 days in the cold environment, four days in the room temperature and only an hour in the humid environment," she said.

Other local winners included Dora Chen, a sophomore at Oxford High School.

Students are appreciative of the opportunity to discuss their projects with Ole Miss engineers and excited to earn the awards, said Maxine Woolsey, UM engineering education outreach specialist. "It is a great opportunity to recognize students who are involved in engineering projects."

"It is always a delight to serve as a judge in the science fair," said John O'Haver, associate engineering dean and professor of chemical engineering. "When you look at the variety of students, the variety of projects and the obvious enthusiasm that students have for their work, it is exciting. The depth and complexity of some of the projects is amazing."

Both winners' parents said they are thrilled to see their children taking an interest and being encouraged in engineering at such a young age.

"Mary Charles loves to get involved in math and science experiments, competitions, investigations and – I'm proud to say – creative engineering projects," said Mami Kendricks, assistant to the engineering

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Students Learn 'Real Politics' in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

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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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

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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Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

school dean and Mary Charles' mother. "Her grandmother was a career science teacher, I'm an engineer and my father, Jim Reeves, is a mathematics guru. I guess you could say science fair is kind of a family tradition."

"I think it's really wonderful that the Ole Miss School of Engineering takes such an interest in students at my son's age," said Pauline Lewis, an Oxford attorney and mother of Talmadge. "This was all his idea and he wanted a medal so bad. I'm extremely happy for him."

Future engineering dreams withstanding, the Kendricks and Lewis children only know they are still happy about having won awards last weekend.

"I'm kind of thinking about becoming an engineer, but I'm also thinking about becoming a veterinarian," Mary Charles Kendricks said.

"My mommy's brother was a robotics engineer at NASA," Talmadge Lewis said. "So I think it would be kind of cool to be one, too."

Jeffrey Roux, former chair and retired professor of mechanical engineering, originated the Ole Miss Excellence in Engineering Awards program more than 20 years ago. Since then, Ole Miss engineering faculty members have served as judges at each of the regional fairs and at the state level.

For more about the School of Engineering, go to <http://engineering.olemiss.edu> or call 662-915-7407.

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