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## Honors College Senior Named Rhodes Finalist

**Austin Powell interviews Nov. 18-19 for prestigious international fellowship**

NOVEMBER 9, 2016 BY EDWIN SMITH

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ASB President Austin Powell is a finalist for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. Photo by Kevin Bain/Ole Miss Communications

OXFORD, Miss. – Austin Powell has long dreamed of winning a Rhodes Scholarship. Now, the **University of Mississippi** senior is just one step away from achieving that goal.

The Corinth native goes to Birmingham, Alabama, this weekend to interview as a Rhodes finalist and will learn Saturday whether he is selected for one of the prestigious scholarships. A public policy and philosophy double major in the **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College** and the **Lott Leadership Institute**, Powell said he was excited when he heard the news.

“My ultimate goal is to come back and raise the quality of life for Mississippians by developing an in-depth understanding of the criminology and the criminal justice system, how different entities can become community partners in Mississippi, and how the state can take partial ownership of the solution,” said Powell, son of former state Sen. Eric Powell and Gwen Salters Powell.

“When combined with my interests in correctional systems policies and the offender’s relationship with race, poverty and education, the Rhodes experience will offer professors, like Mary Bosworth, to guide

my research on the disconnects that lie between empowering offenders in the entrepreneurial class and the reality of the low post-release employment opportunities.”

The Rhodes Scholarships, the oldest international fellowships, bring outstanding students from many countries to the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. Besides “intellectual distinction,” the selection committee seeks excellence in qualities of mind and of person, which combined offer the promise of effective service to the world in the decades ahead. Rhodes Scholars are elected for two years of study at Oxford University, with the possibility of being renewed for a third year.

Powell’s selection as a finalist is an honor for him and an important distinction for the university, said Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez, Honors College dean.

“Austin Powell is a citizen scholar, actively seeking solutions for racial injustice and inequality,” he said. “The Rhodes Scholarship will allow him to continue his development at the University of Oxford as a leader and a scholar. He is investing his talents into his home state and tackling economic and justice issues with broad implications.”

Powell has put together a long list of accomplishments during his four years at UM. He is **Associated Student Body** president, was assistant director for the Ole Miss Big Event, social chair for the Columns Society and co-philanthropy chair and tribune for Sigma Chi fraternity. Powell is also a member of Omicron Delta Kappa, a McLean Innovation Scholar, a Trent Lott Institute Scholar and a Coca-Cola Scholar.

While teaching entrepreneurial and leadership development at the Marshall County Correctional Facility, Powell gained insights for the subject of his honors thesis, being directed by Jody Holland, UM assistant professor of public policy leadership.

“I have not met another student who has impressed me as much as Austin has in combining creativity, hard work, initiative and courage,” Holland said.

Associate Dean of Students Valeria Ross agreed.

“Austin is a rare find,” she said. “There is a genteel goodness about Austin that allows him to get things done and at the end of the day, the entire team is still intact and the relationships are stronger. He finds the good in whatever has taken place, and he never takes the easy way out.”

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### Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children’s play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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### Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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### Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith’s Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school’s first African-American student.

Powell begins a two-day interview process Friday (Nov. 18) before the District 7 selection committee. Finalists are chosen from each state to interview by district, and District 7 includes Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This process leads to the selection of 32 scholars nationally, from roughly 900 applications.

To prepare for the interview, Powell said he has been reading The New York Times and listening to National Public Radio every day, researching correctional education and poverty studies, and mapping out answers to probable questions.

UM's last Rhodes Scholar was Shad White, selected in the 2008 competition.

Powell has a healthy outlook about the interview process.

"I'm humbled and excited at the potential chance to represent Ole Miss and the state of Mississippi," Powell said. "I know many people don't have this opportunity, so I want to enjoy this experience and the interview process."

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"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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