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Honors College Student Thankful for ‘Stamp’ of Approval

Stamps Scholarship recipient Tatiana Davis continues mission to be exceptional

OCTOBER 4, 2020 BY EDWIN B. SMITH



UM freshman Tatiana Davis, a Stamps Scholar and member of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, hopes to attend medical school someday. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Although Tatiana Davis already had a proven record of successes before coming to the **University of Mississippi**, the Stamps Scholar and **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College** freshman is out to become an even better version of herself.

“My biggest goal is to have an impact on others and leave this campus having made a lasting impression,” said the Brandon native, a biology major with a minor in chemistry. “I was always taught that if you have a chance, leave every place you touch or encounter better than you found it.”

Short-term goals Davis seeks to achieve at Ole Miss include getting even more involved in clubs and the Honors College. She also wants to obtain internships and research positions.

Davis indeed seems poised for greatness while on campus and beyond, said Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez, Honors College dean.

“Tatiana demonstrates her commitment to excellence through her ability to soar academically while balancing extracurriculars,” he said. “She is already immersed in the citizen-scholar life and was recently elected as an Honors College ambassador.”

Davis said receiving the Stamps Scholarship was a boost to both her finances and her confidence level.

“Last year around this time, I wasn’t sure how I was going to pay for school,” she said. “My hard work and dedication lead me to this great opportunity that I am so thankful for.”

Davis’ lofty ambitions stem from the track record for success that she began in high school. The first person from her family to attend UM, she was also the first female African American salutatorian at Brandon High School.

At BHS, she created the school’s first Black Student Union – renamed Multicultural Ambassadors – in an attempt to increase diversity and create a welcome environment for minority students.

“I wanted to create a club that increases the awareness and appreciation for minority students but also gave them a voice,” Davis said. “After hard work and dedication, our club grew to more than 150 members.”

Under Davis’ leadership, the Multicultural Ambassadors introduced interactive events such as “No phone, New friends Fridays,” emphasized Black History Month, led orientation/pep rallies for upcoming students, provided college campus visits to HBCUs, brought speakers to the school and created the first homecoming dance following the school’s basketball games.

“Everything we accomplished gives a sense of the impact the club made,” she said. “The academic accommodations and the productions of events to bridge diverse backgrounds led other teachers to reach out and ask about how to start a similar club at their own schools.”

For all her achievements, Davis wasn’t always confident that she could accomplish the things she set out to do.

“Typically, I tend to doubt my abilities and lack confidence in myself,” Davis said. “Although I still struggle with this, I overcame this by stepping outside my comfort zone and applying and running for things I typically would not have.

“Having support and encouragement from others has help me realize the true value of myself.”

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Campus Briefs

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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Ole Miss In the News

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.

Two people whom Davis cites as having inspired her are Stephanie Murphy, her former basketball coach; and Marcus Stewart, her principal.

"They taught me how to overcome adversity as an African American in our society," she said. "They saw something in me that others didn't and continued to challenge and encourage me throughout my high school career. Their love and dedication play a big part in the reason I am where I am today.

"My long-term goals are to graduate with a 4.0 GPA, receive my degree and be admitted to medical school."

Davis' parents are Renae and Anthony Williams. Her mother works as a pharmacy technician at the V.A Medical Center, and her father is the general manager of Fannin Lanes bowling alley. Davis has a younger brother, Ethan Williams.

Reflecting on her time at Brandon High School, Davis said she is most proud of using her positions to advocate for the young minority students behind her.

"As a result of my multiple positions in the school, I often got to meet with administrators to discuss things such as including African American studies classes to the curriculum or providing the teachers with diversity training," Davis said.

"Doing these things was important to me because the voices of minority students needed to be heard. I think I did just that."

The Stamps Scholarships are the largest and among the most prestigious academic scholarships at Ole Miss.

In 2006, Penny and Roe Stamps initiated a merit scholarship program for undergraduates. Penny Stamps died in December 2018, but her legacy continues. The Stamps Scholars community has grown into a nationwide network of 36 colleges and universities with more than 2,000 current scholars and alumni.

For more information about the program, go to <https://www.stampsscholars.org/>.

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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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