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## Leaders for Tomorrow' Recipients Aim High at Ole Miss

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## ‘Leaders for Tomorrow’ Recipients Aim High at Ole Miss

Incoming freshmen awarded Annexstad Family Foundation scholarships

AUGUST 15, 2022 BY ERIN GARRETT



OXFORD, Miss. – Three students in the University of Mississippi’s Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College have been awarded scholarships from the Annexstad Family Foundation.

The foundation awards three Leaders for Tomorrow National Scholarships each year to Ole Miss students who have exhibited leadership in their schools or communities, said John Samonds, associate dean of the Honors College.

“Our 2022 recipients have demonstrated that they have the drive to accomplish anything they set their minds to,” Samonds said. “We hope that this scholarship will enable them to do just that.”



Oxford native and Annexstad scholar Brady Bass plans to major in biology. Submitted photo

Incoming freshmen Brady Bass, Destiny Kirksey and Manjot Nagra are setting big goals for their time at the university.

Originally from Oxford, Bass learned about hard work from his family’s business, Bassco Foam in Tupelo. COVID-19 had an incredible effect on the polyfoam fabrication company when a stay-at-home order was issued in March 2020.

“While many of the workers could go home, we still had orders coming in that needed to be taken care of to keep the business afloat,” Bass said. “We were let out of school, so I began working.”

Bass, along with other family members, worked every weekday from March to August, barring one week that summer. He primarily operated a polyfoam cutting saw and a table saw that cut fiber for furniture.

“At the end of the summer when it was time for me to go back to school, people had begun to learn more about COVID and most of our workers came back through mandating the wearing of masks,”

he said. “I was able to return to school with the proud feeling that I had helped keep my family’s business from potentially collapsing.”

Bass, who will major in **biology**, said he learned to never waver when solving a problem.

“I have an ideology that bad things are going to happen, and you just have to persevere and work through them,” he said. “I am definitely relying on my work ethic to help me excel in college.”

Bass is grateful for the scholarship, which will ease his financial burden as he plans to attend medical school.

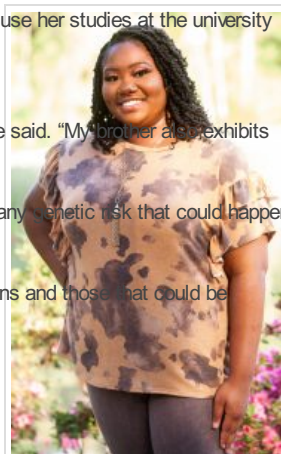
Kirksey, who hails from Philadelphia, Mississippi, hopes to ultimately use her studies at the university to help families through genetic counseling. This mission is near and dear to her heart.

“I have a cousin who was diagnosed with autism when he was 12,” she said. “My brother also exhibits symptoms, though he was never diagnosed.

“By becoming a geneticist, I could assist by telling the parents about any genetic risk that could happen to their future child.”

The biology major said she hopes to specifically study genetic variations and those that could be hereditary.

Helping others is vital to Kirksey. During the pandemic, her mother was infected with the Delta variant of COVID-19 while working as a licensed counselor at Weems Community Mental Health Center. The community stepped in to help take care of her family.



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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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## Thank You To Our Donors

### 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.

"People would drop off food, disinfectant, medicine and anything else we might have needed," Kirksey said. "The community even made sure my brother and I attended school."

"Without their help, I would have struggled to be where I am today. They helped me continue on the path towards higher education."

Kirksey is also grateful for the opportunities that this scholarship will provide – namely saving for medical school.

"Years from now, I would like to say I accomplished my goals, helped many families and helped my community," she said.

Destiny Kirksey, of Philadelphia, is using her Annexstad scholarship to study biology in hopes of someday helping families through genetic counseling. Submitted photo

"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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First-generation college student Manjot Nagra is using her Annexstad scholarship to major in biomedical engineering. Submitted photo

The eldest daughter of Indian immigrants, Nagra is a first-generation college student. She became interested in health care during high school and has selected **biomedical engineering** as her major.

"The medical field has always caught my eye, but when I started shadowing physicians from the Tupelo area, it really made me feel like this is the job I was meant for," Nagra said.

"I am very passionate about science, and as the oldest sibling and first grandchild in my family, caregiving comes naturally to me. I hope to use these qualities to become a pediatric surgeon one day."

Nagra often helped her parents by caring for her younger brother and sister. Even with these obligations at home, the Tupelo native excelled at school and has kick-started her education by becoming a certified nursing assistant during the summer.

"I have been waiting for the day I could complete the CNA program ever since my second semester of junior year in high school," she said. "I thought it would help make me a better future physician."

"I learned so much – the biggest realization was that nurses are truly the backbone of the health care field. Overall, I now have a huge amount of respect for CNAs."

Nagra said that the scholarship will allow her time to study and conduct research while going to classes. She also plans to pursue research programs and internships during the summer before applying for medical school.

Cathy and Al Annexstad, with their family, created the foundation in 2000 to focus on helping young people earn college degrees. They've been awarding scholarships at Ole Miss since 2015. The foundation, based in Minnesota, has provided more than 1,000 scholarships to deserving students across the nation.

For more information about the Annexstad Family Foundation Leaders for Tomorrow scholarships, visit <http://annexstadfamilyfoundation.org/>. To make a gift to Honors College programs or scholarships, visit <https://give.olemiss.edu> or for more information, contact Brady Bramlett at [bradyb@olemiss.edu](mailto:bradyb@olemiss.edu) or 662-915- 3081.

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