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Reese Honored as Emerging Young Philanthropist

Ole Miss Women's Council celebrates 'giving nature' of UM alumna and Olympian

NOVEMBER 28, 2022 BY JONATHAN SCOTT

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Elizabeth Randall (left), immediate past chair of the Ole Miss Women's Council for Philanthropy, presents the council's Emerging Young Philanthropist Award to Brittney Reese, UM alumna and celebrated Olympic long jumper. Photo by Joey Brent

OXFORD, Miss. – One of the greatest long jumpers in history, **University of Mississippi** alumna Brittney Reese is already recognized as the university's most celebrated Olympian. However, her quiet efforts to help and serve others are often overlooked.

That changed recently when the 36-year-old Reese was honored in Oxford with the Emerging Young Philanthropist Award by the **Ole Miss Women's Council for Philanthropy**.

"I'm so honored to be a recipient of the Emerging Young Philanthropist Award," Reese said at the event at the home of Mary Haskell, a former OMWC chair. "I have always prided myself on giving back, and I have been blessed to be able to do so."

Reese's philanthropic efforts are an important aspect of life for the 2011 UM graduate, said Suzan Thames, of Ridgeland, who is OMWC chair.

"While the world knows Brittney Reese is an extraordinary athlete who has been decorated for her many unparalleled accomplishments on track and field's world stage, the Ole Miss Women's Council for Philanthropy is pleased to have this opportunity to highlight Brittney's generous giving nature and outstanding philanthropic resume as well," she said.

Thames noted that nurturing philanthropic behavior is a fundamental and crucial aspect of the council's mission. The program encourages its scholars to develop strong leadership skills while also becoming caring, ethical leaders within their communities and with causes that are important to them.

"Brittney is the quintessential example of a genuine servant leader and role model of a multifaceted, successful life with philanthropy woven throughout every aspect of it," Thames said. "She is precisely the type of person that we aspire for our scholars to witness as the teaching example of an exceptional life that is in balance with a priority of servicing others."

For many years, Reese has supported her hometown of Gulfport in several ways. For instance, shortly after graduating from Ole Miss, she returned to Gulfport to assist various homeless and religious organizations. She also donated 100 turkeys to help area families enjoy the holidays and personally delivered them to visit with the families.

On another occasion, Reese rented a local theater so children from financially insecure families could

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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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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Ole Miss In the News

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

attend a free screening of the superhero movie "Black Panther." She created the B. Reese Scholarship to be given annually to a male and female student in the Gulfport School District who will attend either a two- or four-year college.

Reese and her agent, Mark Pryor, owner of a firm specializing in track and field management, also established the Brittney Reese Allied Sports Scholarship. It is awarded to students with disabilities who are of outstanding character and sportsmanship, are involved with two allied sports and plan to attend a secondary school after high school.

This Olympic medalist most recently illustrated her commitment to sharing her gifts with others when she returned to her former school, Gulfport High School, in August to coach the girls' cross-country and track and field teams. Reese said she also is developing an indoor track and field program at the school and plans to coach the boys' and girls' teams.



Brittney Reese

Reese credits her great-grandmother for instilling within her a desire to help others.

"When my great-grandmother started to notice how good of an athlete I was becoming, she told me to never forget where I came from," she recalled. "And from that day on, I have not forgotten. Her words have stuck with me and hopefully, I am doing just as she asked of me."

Reese also asks others to consider doing the same. Even those who have limited financial resources, as she did when she started her athletic career, can help improve their communities.

"I always encourage everyone to give back to their communities, whether it is with a financial gift or giving of their time," Reese said. "I hope they will try to find some time to volunteer in their community, even if it's just picking up litter in their neighborhoods."

"I want to be an example for others. I felt that when I retired as an athlete who was passionate about competing with other athletes, the best way for me to give back would be to share my time and knowledge with young athletes. This is why I'm enjoying being a high school coach and helping these students reach their full potential on and off the track."



Brittney Reese (third from left) visits with some of the Ole Miss Women's Council for Philanthropy Scholars after she was named the council's Emerging Young Philanthropist. The students are (from left) Daneel Konnar, Miley Ray, Benton Donahue, Amyaha Graham and Nadia Corder. Photo by Joey Brent

When Reese retired after the 2021 Olympics, she did so after a remarkable athletic career.

She is among only three American women to compete four times in an Olympic final. With one gold and two silver medals, Reese is one of just three women in Olympic history to earn three medals in the long jump competition.

As an Ole Miss student-athlete, Reese was a two-time NCAA champion. In addition, she's won 12 U.S. championships and six world championships.

Reese earned these honors and demonstrated consistent examples of service at a young age, which makes her an ideal recipient of the Emerging Young Philanthropist Award, said Elizabeth Randall, the council's immediate past chair.

"We see people of all ages doing tremendous philanthropic work, and the Ole Miss Women's Council founded this award to recognize those who are diligently serving others early in their lives to promote a broader culture of service for all of us, especially our younger audience," she said. "The simple message with this award is that everyone has something to offer which can be of service to others."

Reese continued to serve others while competing on an international level, Randall said.

"We first became aware of Brittney's strong philanthropic heart when we learned that she had adopted her young godson," she said. "She was raising him as a single mother at the height of her career while balancing an intense training schedule, living away from her family and traveling the globe, literally, to compete on the largest stages in her sport."

"As we started to research her, she inspired us with more examples of her service emerging with her very humble disposition. We immediately knew she was our next Emerging Young Philanthropist winner and that we had to tell this side of her amazing life story."

To learn more about supporting the Ole Miss Women's Council, contact Suzanne Helveston, OMWC program director, at shelveston@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2956, or online at <https://omwc.olemiss.edu>.

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