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7-6-2022

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LaReeca Rucker

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Recommended Citation

Rucker, LaReeca, "Two UM Journalism Students Place in Prestigious Hearst Competition" (2022).
University of Mississippi News. 5346.
<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews/5346>

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Two UM Journalism Students Place in Prestigious Hearst Competition

Package examines inequities of public utilities in rural Mississippi

JULY 6, 2022 BY LAREECA RUCKER



OXFORD, Miss. – Two members of the **University of Mississippi School of Journalism and New Media** have placed in the Top 20 in the annual **Hearst Journalism Awards** competition.

Rabria Moore, who will be an Ole Miss senior this fall, and Billy Schuerman, a 2021 graduate of the school, were among the winners of the prestigious national contest, placing in the team digital news/enterprise category.

Their project, examining water supply problems in the Lafayette County community of Taylor, was published during the 2021 spring semester. They worked on the package under the guidance of editor-adviser Ellen Meacham, an adjunct assistant professor of journalism.

The project tied for 16th place in the Hearst contest with a project from Elon University, said Patricia Thompson, former director of the university's **S. Gale Denley Student Media Center**. The Top 5 winners in that category were students from Western Kentucky University, Syracuse University, University of North Carolina and the University of Oregon.

"We are always proud when our students are recognized for their outstanding work, but it's especially gratifying when that work exemplifies the core tenets of journalism – giving voice to the voiceless and holding the powerful accountable," said Debora Wenger, interim dean of the journalism school. "I know that both of these students will be making a positive difference in the world for many years to come."

A native of Durant, Moore is majoring in journalism and political science. She will be editor-in-chief of **The Daily Mississippian** for 2022-23.

"I was very excited to find out I received a Hearst award for this project," Moore said. "When I started this project, I didn't think about winning any awards. My main goal was to tell a story about a woman who's been fighting for access to water, and hopefully bring attention to the issue of water access, especially in Mississippi."

"I'm happy to receive the award, but I definitely take more pride in knowing that the story has reached a broader audience."

Working on this project was different from others, she said.

"For months, I was able to visit Ms. Ilean's home to hear about and see the problems she was facing without access to community water," Moore said. "I hope others, especially people living in Mississippi, understand that not everyone has access to the same resources."

"Water is something we take for granted and something we don't typically think about, but I hope people can appreciate the 'small' things that we don't have to figure out on our own."

Moore said learning to listen was one of the things she took away from the project.

"So many times, we think we know someone's story or situation," she explained. "I think listening gives people the opportunity to tell their stories without us injecting ourselves into those stories."

Schuerman, from Houston, Texas, just completed his first year in the visual communication master's program at Ohio University. He spent winter break as a photographer and writer at a newspaper in Colorado and has a photo internship this summer at the Virginian-



Rabria Moore

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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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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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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



Billy Schuerman

He said he was elated to hear that their hard work was recognized in the competition.

"I am more hopeful that this recognition helps provide a future for the community we reported on," Schuerman said. "Awards are secondary to the communities we serve."

He said the project was meaningful.

"Before we are journalists, we are humans, and this is a human story," Schuerman said. "This was not a project we could just walk into. We dedicated our time to telling a meaningful story about something that really matters.

"I hope other students can take away that in order to tell the rough draft of history, we must truly dedicate ourselves to the people we serve."

Schuerman's advice to other journalists is to find time to do important stories.

"Not everything you work on will come through, but when you have an opportunity to really do something important, it's important to take it head-on," he said.

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