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UM Doctoral Student, Graduate Named US Fulbright Finalists

Eric Rexroat headed to Belgium, Andrew Hayes going to Spain

JUNE 20, 2018 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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Eric Rexroat, a doctoral history student, will study at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Communications

OXFORD, Miss. – A University of Mississippi doctoral student and a recent graduate will study in European countries this fall, thanks to the 2018 Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

Eric Rexroat, a Ph.D. candidate in the university's Arch Dalrymple III Department of History, and Andrew Hayes, a graduate of the Croft Institute for International Studies and Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, are both finalists in the prestigious awards program.

A St. Charles, Missouri, native, Rexroat will be at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, from this September until March 2019. He will conduct research at the Royal Library of Belgium and National Archives of Belgium, both in Brussels, as well as work under the direction of professor Hilde Greefs and some of her colleagues.

Hayes, a Tupelo native who planned to pursue a master's degree at the London School of Economics before receiving his Fulbright notification, will teach English at a public high school in Madrid, Spain, during the 2018-19 academic year.

The highly selective program chooses undergraduate seniors, and graduate and terminal-degree students from the U.S. to study at select colleges around the globe.

"This year's University of Mississippi awardees are exceptionally qualified as strong students and researchers," said Tim Dolan, director of UM's Office of National Scholarship Advisement. "They also all demonstrated their commitment to language and culture through their civic engagement, study abroad or language study. They had to think through and articulate their qualifications and goals, and to imagine ways to engage with the people and culture in their host community."

Rexroat, who earned his bachelor's degree at Southeast Missouri State University in 2012, vividly recalls how he received notification of his award.

"I learned while in Paris doing research that I had been chosen as an alternative (which he said he viewed as an achievement in itself), but my understanding was that there would be little chance of my being promoted to a finalist," he said. "Obviously something changed, and it was a very pleasant surprise."

Hayes, who earned his bachelor's degrees in international studies (with a specialization in Spanish) and economics from UM this past May, said he had a similar reaction upon receipt of his notice.

"I was humbled to have received such a prestigious award and excited for the opportunity to work with students abroad," he said. "I hope to possibly expand upon my senior thesis, which described trends of youth unemployment in Spain."

For the past three springs, Rexroat has been recognized for his achievements. He received the Tenin-Alexander Prize from the history department for Best Graduate Student Paper in 2015, the Graduate Achievement Award from the College of Liberal Arts in 2016 and officially passed his comprehensive exams with distinction in 2017.

"My career goals include teaching European history at a college or university, as well as continuing my research and eventually publishing on 19th-century Europe," Rexroat



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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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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.

said. "Receiving this Fulbright award will enable me to work closely with and benefit from the feedback of my adviser at the University of Antwerp, as well as to expand my research by providing the opportunity to spend further time in Europe. The experiences I have during this stint abroad will be invaluable to my development as a scholar and a person."

Andrew Hayes, an international studies and economics graduate, will teach at a public school in Madrid, Spain. Photo by Kevin Bain/ Ole Miss Communications

Hayes' previous achievements include memberships in both Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi academic honorary societies.

"I plan to become a professor of economics," Hayes said. "I hope that this opportunity will give me some experience in working with students across cultures."

UM administrators and faculty members said both finalists deserve their awards.

"Andrew was a hardworking student who excelled in all the areas of the international studies curriculum: writing, critical thinking, quantitative analysis and language learning," said William Schenck, associate director of the Croft Institute, who worked with Hayes on his senior thesis as a member of his committee. "The written thesis and his defense demonstrated the breadth and depth of his intellectual curiosity as well as his sense of humor."

"Eric came as an M.A. student and has excelled ever since he stepped foot on campus, impressing faculty and colleagues alike with his seriousness of purpose and focus," said Marc Lerner, associate professor of history and director of Rexroat's dissertation.

"His dissertation research on free trade as ideology and political controversy in the mid-19th century is fascinating and important work. The comparative and international perspective is what makes this a particularly challenging and powerful dissertation topic. I am excited to see the results of his research."

Hayes and Rexroat are the second and third UM students to be named Fulbright finalists during the 2018-19 academic year. Maria Mulrooney, a graduate student in higher education, was selected for the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program to serve as an English teaching assistant in South Africa next year.

Established in 1946, the Fulbright program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

The primary source of funding for the Fulbright program is an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected based on academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields.

Fulbright awards allow the Croft Institute and the other participating units on the Oxford campus to deliver on the university's commitment to educating and engaging global citizens and supporting experiential learning, two cores established in the university's new strategic plan, Flagship Forward.

Students interested in applying for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program award are encouraged to contact the Office of National Scholarship Advisement at onsa@olemiss.edu.

"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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