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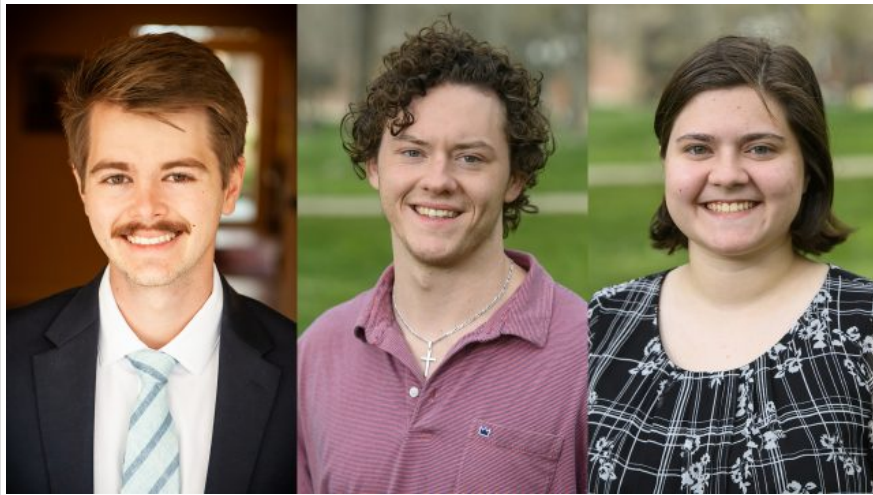
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Three UM Students Named Goldwater Scholars

Record-breaking class of honorees awarded for excellence in STEM studies and research

MARCH 31, 2022 BY STAFF REPORT



UM students (from left) Matt Knerr, Ethan Lambert and Ally Watrous, all members of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, have been awarded Goldwater Scholarships to fund their studies and research. This is the first time the university has produced three Goldwater scholars in one year. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – For the first time at the **University of Mississippi**, three students have been awarded **Goldwater Scholarships** in a single year.

Ethan Lambert, of Corinth; Reinhard “Matt” Knerr, of Paducah, Kentucky; and Alexandria “Ally” Watrous, of Lexington, Kentucky, all members of the **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College**, have become the university’s 19th, 20th and 21st winners.

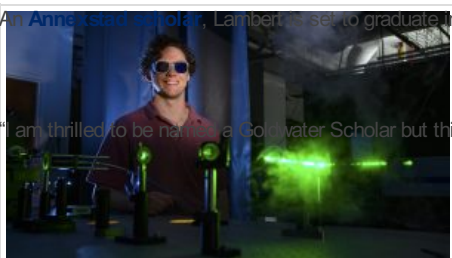
The Goldwater is one of the oldest and most prestigious national scholarships in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. It supports exceptional sophomores and juniors who show promise in becoming the next generation of research leaders in these fields.

This year, the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation awarded 417 scholarships from a pool of 1,242 outstanding undergraduates nominated by 433 institutions.

“Ethan, Matt and Ally have all presented an incredible commitment to a career in research, and a genuine display of intellectual curiosity,” said Vivian Ibrahim, director of the UM **Office of National Scholarship Advisement**. “This is the first time UM has had three Goldwater scholars. We couldn’t be more excited for them.”

In recent years, the office has had steady success in recruiting competitive students for the Goldwater, Ibrahim said.

Knerr, Lambert and Watrous follow in the footsteps of Ole Miss Goldwater scholars **Ivy Li and Austin Wallace in 2021, William Meador and Jax Dallas in 2020**, and **Addison Roush in 2019**.



an Assistant Scholar, Lambert is set to graduate in 2023 with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry with an emphasis in chemical physics and a minor in mathematics.

“I am thrilled to be named a Goldwater Scholar but this accomplishment would not have been possible without the incredible people around me in the lab,” he said. “They taught me new techniques, proofread and answered my questions at 2 a.m. when I couldn’t sleep.”

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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.

Ethan Lambert, a junior from Corinth, is studying light-induced electron transfers to help improve solar energy technologies. He has been awarded a 2022 Goldwater Scholarship to support his studies and research. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

"I would be a fraction of the person I am without them around me."

Lambert hopes to apply for a graduate research fellowship from the National Science Foundation

next year to fund a doctorate in chemistry with a focus on studying how to use light to induce electron transfers between small molecules. This work has potential real-world applications in solar energy conversion.

Already first author on three published research papers and co-author of a book, Lambert has been working with Nathan Hammer, UM professor of chemistry and biochemistry.

"It has been a joy mentoring Ethan in the lab," Hammer said. "He truly has the love for science and the aptitude for research. I expect great things from him for the remainder of his time with us at UM and beyond."

Knerr is a **Stamps scholar** who is pursuing a degree in biochemistry, with minors in neuroscience, biological sciences, environmental studies and psychology.

"I am fascinated by aging," he said. "My time abroad – in Spain, Costa Rica and the Netherlands – has really shed light on different ways to approach how we age.

"In the future, I want to be able to look at aging from a scientific angle as well as a moral and humanistic one."

Knerr has four published articles and has worked with Joshua Bloomekatz, an assistant professor of biology.

"Matt is a dynamic student with a passion for research, who shows great promise as a physician scientist," Bloomekatz said.

Watrous is the only Ole Miss sophomore to be awarded a Goldwater, which will provide funding for her junior and senior years at the university. She is pursuing bachelor's degrees in chemistry with a chemical physics emphasis, in physics and in German with minors in French and mathematics.



Ally Watrous, a sophomore from Lexington, Kentucky, already has published three peer-reviewed papers in computational chemistry. Her Goldwater Scholarship will provide funding for her junior and senior years at the university. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

In the long term, Watrous is interested in collaborating internationally while conducting research in computational chemistry.

"The whole national scholarship and Goldwater process reaffirmed that grad school is something I want to do and can achieve," she said.

Watrous has three peer-reviewed papers and one cover article to date as part of the UM Computational Astrochemistry Group, headed by Ryan Fortenberry, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry.

"Ally is an absolute joy to have in our group, and I count myself lucky to be on her team through her education," Fortenberry said. "Most often, about the time that students get trained, they leave. However, she'll be around for a few more years, and I look forward to continuing my collaboration with her."

For more information on the Goldwater Scholarships and how to apply for them, contact the Office of National Scholarship Advisement at onsa@olemiss.edu.

FILED UNDER: **CHEMISTRY, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS, FEATURED NEWS, NEWS RELEASES, SALLY MCDONNELL BARKSDALE HONORS COLLEGE**

"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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