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Rust College Senior Shawn Hannah, Named the BSW Student of The Year

HOLLY SPRINGS, MS – Shawn Hannah, a graduating senior, social work major at Rust College, has been named the 2023 BSW Student of the Year.

Annually, one student from each accredited social work program in the state is nominated to receive the NASW-Mississippi Social Work Student of the Year Award. Each student is recognized for outstanding academic achievement, commitment to the Code of Ethics, leadership on and off campus, political and legislative engagement, and contribution to a positive image of the social work profession. She was honored at a ceremony on March 23rd in Jackson, MS.

Ms. Hannah was bestowed this honor from among her peers from BSW colleges and universities across Mississippi. “She has been an outstanding student during her tenure at Rust College. I have known Mrs. Hannah over the past 3 years, as her professor, advisor and as Chair of the Social Work Department. She is dedicated to the field of social work and consistently exhibits the utmost respect for clients, teachers, students, and her community. She takes her education seriously,” said Department Chair Debra Butler.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance sound social policies.

Shawn Hannah is a native Okolona, Mississippi and a graduate of Aberdeen High School. Mrs. Hannah has been able to meet the demands of pursuing her education with excellence after having been out of school for nearly 36 years. She decided to return to college and complete her degree at the age of 53. She is very motivated to excel in the pursuit of her dreams and goals, and none of life’s challenges seems to deter her. She has maintained exceptional grades with a grade point average of 3.9. on a 4.0 grading scale. Ms. Hannah can use adversity as motivation.

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In addition to her studies at Rust College, she brings a wealth of experience of working in the community and in educational settings. She has been on the front lines in the administrative arm of several committees related to policy planning and implementation, fiscal budgets, allocations process, fundraising, and so much more. This includes her work with United Way of Lowndes County on the Executive Board of Directors; Notary Public for the State of Mississippi; Davidson Chapel Church Musician; Sally Kate Winters Family Services Board of Directors; Board of Directors; Davidson Praise Dance Team Group Leader; Mississippi Parent of the Year - Third Congressional District; West Point School District Council President; Mississippi PTA Leadership - Vice President; Mississippi PTA Convention Chairperson; National PTA Leadership Committee – Mississippi Representative; Mississippi PTA North Mississippi Educational Trainer; The Renaissance-Member of Rebuilding Our Communities President/Co-Founder; Bright Horizons Board Member; and Community Event Planner.

Her scholarly activities and accomplishments while at Rust College include serving on the NASW Student Liaison Committee (2022); NASW Student Representative Committee member (2022); NASW-MS Advocacy Day Member of National Association of Social Workers (NASW); Facilitator for Breakout Session at NASW-MS Advocacy Day 2022; President's List Honor Roll; E. A. Smith Honors Program Inductee; Presidential Scholarship, and SGA member. Her awards include: the Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service and the West Point School District Parent of the Year Award.

