

## Nine Students to Participate in Southern Mississippi Photojournalism Project

Contributed by Tearanny Street, 601.266.6823  
Thursday, January 07, 2010

Six Mississippi high school students have been selected to join three University of Southern Mississippi photojournalism majors to participate in the second year of the Southern Mississippi Photojournalism Project. The students will attend the first of two weekend workshops on the Southern Miss campus January 8, 9 and 10.

The Southern Miss School of Mass Communication and Journalism received a \$55,000 grant from the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation to support the two-year project, which is headed by Clarence Williams, photojournalist in residence. Williams won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography when he was a staff photographer at The Los Angeles Times.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for these students," Dr. Chris Campbell, director of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism, said. "They're getting some first-rate instruction, and they'll be working on stories of real significance. What an excellent way to get a photojournalism career started."

High school students selected to participate include: Shayan Asadi, a junior from Columbus who attends Heritage Academy; Ruth Brown, a junior from Starkville High School; James Butts, a sophomore from the Winona Separate Special School District; Horacio Leal, a junior from Eupora High School; Adreain Reynolds, a senior from Bruce High School; and Kasey Thaggard, a senior from Philadelphia who attends Leake Academy.

Jana Edwards, a Southern Miss freshman photojournalism major, will join the project in 2010. Two senior photojournalism majors will continue in the second year of the project: Eli Bayless and David Jackson, both of Hattiesburg.

The project brings members of the Iris Photo Collective to the Southern Miss campus to work with the students. The collective is made up of Williams and three other highly respected photographers: Andre Chung, a photographer who has worked for the Chicago Sun-Times and Baltimore Sun, who has won the George Polk and Robert F. Kennedy journalism awards; Carl Juste, a photographer for the Miami Herald and also a Kennedy award-winner; and Pablo Martinez Monsivais, a photographer for the Associated Press Washington Bureau, where he was one of the group of photographers who won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography for coverage of the impeachment process during the Clinton administration.

"We formed the Iris Photo Collective because the four of us share a passion for social justice, and we believe that photojournalism has the potential to affect important societal changes," Williams said.

The project is designed to allow students to work on stories about issues in the region that are sometimes overlooked in mainstream media coverage, including poverty, racism, inadequate public education and substance abuse. The students' work will be published on the project's Web site, which can be viewed at [www.usm.edu/usmphotoproject/](http://www.usm.edu/usmphotoproject/).

For more information, contact Dr. Campbell at [Christopher.campbell@usm.edu](mailto:Christopher.campbell@usm.edu); or call 601-266-6283.

### About The University of Southern Mississippi

The University of Southern Mississippi, founded in 1910, is a comprehensive doctoral and research-extensive university fulfilling its mission of being a leading university in engaging and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities. In a tradition of leadership for student development, Southern Miss is educating a 21st century work force providing intellectual capital, cultural enrichment and innovation to Mississippi and the world. Southern Miss is located in Hattiesburg, Miss., with an additional campus and teaching and research sites on the Mississippi Gulf Coast; further information is found at [www.usm.edu](http://www.usm.edu).