

Rodeo Royalty

CALS ALUMNA CROWNED MISS RODEO AMERICA

By Janiece Pigg

"BELIEVE YOU CAN and you're halfway there," is **TAYLOR MCNAIR'S** motto. The recent agribusiness policy and law graduate soared to royal status after completing her degree in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Mississippi State University.

In December 2018, McNair was crowned Miss Rodeo America 2019. This hardworking cowgirl is the third Miss Rodeo Mississippi to achieve the honor of wearing the coveted Landstrom's Black Hills Gold crown.

As a Learned, Mississippi native, McNair grew up an avid 4-H member and flourished around the livestock show ring.

"From the age of nine to 18, I was a junior livestock exhibitor in 4-H. Nothing made me more proud than driving a hog, bracing a lamb, and sticking a steer," McNair said. "My life revolved around getting my project animals ready for our county, district, and Dixie National Junior Livestock shows. Throughout my years of showing, not only did I learn a lot about responsibility, but a lot about myself and who I wanted to be."

McNair's experience in 4-H and livestock showing is what led her on the path of becoming Miss Rodeo America. She started her pageant training in 2011 at 15 years old and quickly rose to become rodeo famous far and wide in Mississippi.

"As a little girl, I dreamed of nothing more than becoming Junior Miss Dixie National. I would joke and say the Dixie National was my favorite holiday," she remembered.

While McNair didn't win her first rodeo pageant queen competition, she was determined to be a pageant queen.

"While I didn't win that first year, I think the Lord had better plans for me because I ended up having the grand champion market steer at the Dixie National. I had such a whirlwind of a year," she said.

The next year, she won Junior Miss Dixie National 2012.

"I came back and won—from not even placing the previous year to winning the whole pageant," she said.

From there, she was Teen Miss Rodeo of the Mid-South 2013, Miss Dixie

National 2014, Miss Crossett PRCA Rodeo 2015, Miss Rodeo of the Mid-South 2016, and Miss Rodeo Mississippi 2018, before capturing the national title of Miss Rodeo America 2019.

As Miss Rodeo America, McNair is the official spokesperson for the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, spending her time promoting rodeo, agriculture, and the western lifestyle throughout the United States. She'll travel more than 100,000 miles and attend over 100 rodeos speaking at schools, keynoting large events, and meeting one-on-one with fans throughout the year.

"Growing up on a farm, I know the importance of agriculture and our western heritage and I'm happy to share that," she said. "We need to show people of all ages across the U.S. where their food, fiber, and fuel comes from."

After her reign as Miss Rodeo America is complete, McNair plans to pursue a career as a lobbyist for an agricultural organization. She has a strong passion for the policies that surround the industry. She said much of that passion was fostered



Taylor McNair at the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo in Jackson, MS. (Photo by David Ammon)



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during her time in the agricultural economics department at MSU.

“The agricultural economics department at Mississippi State University is second to none. It’s truly a family that supports and cares about your future. The degree afforded me the opportunity to combine my love of agriculture and business,” she said.

During her time at Mississippi State, McNair was highly involved in organizations and clubs throughout campus. She was a member of Block & Bridle, the Equestrian Team, and the Rodeo Team. She was also a member of campus-wide

organizations, such as Chi Omega Sorority, Foundation Ambassadors, Freshman Council, and Toastmasters. While McNair was certainly busy during her time at MSU, she always kept her pageant training in the forefront of her mind.

Through her work as Miss Rodeo America, McNair will get to be a representative for the entire sport of rodeo and the agricultural industry, as a whole. She loves her position because no two days are the same.

“One morning I may be waking up at 3 a.m. to get ready for my 6 a.m. flight or I may just be feeding horses. You just

never know,” she said.

No matter what McNair may be doing any given day, she knows her biggest job is to educate the next generation while honoring those who came before her.

“Miss Rodeo America, as an exceptional young woman who possesses horsemanship, communication, poise, and grace, is a role model for all ages,” McNair explained. “My personal goal is to carry on the legacy of the incredible women who wore the Landstrom’s Black Hills Gold crown of Miss Rodeo America before me and inspire those who will serve after.”