

Victoria Vivians

A HEAVILY RECRUITED STUDENT ATHLETE from Forest, Mississippi, Victoria Vivians's path to Mississippi State was centered around family. Not so much the family at MSU, but her own family, her parents and siblings.

Vivians has a large family and all cheer for her boisterously from the stands. MSU women's basketball coach Vic Schaefer jokes that there will be 100 season tickets available when she graduates.

The All-American athlete made her break out in eighth grade when the college scouts first took notice. By the end of her junior year she had narrowed the choices to four universities: Florida, Louisville, Kentucky, and Mississippi State.

"The first three schools had more NCAA tournament appearances and Mississippi State had a losing record in the SEC and had missed the NAAs that year," Vivians said. "However, in the end, it came down to family, particularly my brothers and sister, because MSU was closer to home."

Little did she know that a family awaited her at Mississippi State, a family of athletes and children. As a human development and family science major with a concentration in youth studies, Vivians is surrounded by children, both in her internship in the School of Human Sciences' Child Development and Family Life Center and the numerous bulldog fans who look up to her, literally and figuratively.

"I love kids and have lots of nieces, nephews, and small cousins. Kids are attracted to me for some reason," Vivians said, when describing why she chose

her major. "It seemed like a natural fit to work with kids."

At 6'1", she towers over the young students that attend the center and she knows that they look up to her in more than one way.

"It is an honor to be a role model and mentor to the kids but it is also a lot of pressure, knowing that they are always watching me," Vivians said. "I try to remember to always do the right thing, because if I mess up, the kids will see it. A little bit of pressure doesn't hurt."

This semester Vivians interns in lieu of classes, a final requirement of the human development and family science major. Her day begins early, arriving at the child development center by 7:30 each morning. After a few hours of work, it is off to basketball practice, which generally lasts three and a half to four hours. She then returns to the center in the afternoon. She readily admits that she likes to go to bed early.

Vivians has racked up numerous awards for her prowess on the basketball court including First Team All-America honors from USA Today, four C Spire Gillom Trophies as the best women's collegiate basketball player in Mississippi, a finalist for National Player of the Year honors, named to the AP all-SEC team, among myriad others. As a high-school student, she scored a national-record 5,745 points and had earned her own exhibit at the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum.

However, perhaps her greatest challenge was running for the 2017

Homecoming Queen, an elected position. It was a far reach for the self-described shy homebody from Forest, MS.

"It was outside of my comfort zone to run for homecoming queen," Vivians said. "I didn't think I would win, but I thought, I am just going to try it. Besides being in the NCAA Championship over the last two years, homecoming is one of my fondest memories of my time at MSU. It was something different that I went for and I got it."

Trying different things is something that Vivians embraces that has helped shape her into the leader she is today. While comfortable on the court, she quickly points to her community service that has built leadership skills in her that will last a lifetime.

"I am a positive person and I try to approach each opportunity in that way," Vivians said. "Working in the community, no matter the task, gives me the chance to embrace different people and share my optimistic outlook. It also lets me get others involved that might not otherwise serve."

As for future plans, Vivians' desire to be drafted in the Women's National Basketball Association became reality when she was selected to play for the Indiana Fever.

And when she returns to campus, you will find her at the Junction or the Drill Field, her favorite places at MSU.

"I love the scenery, the buildings, the stadium," Vivians said. "Those are my favorite places on campus."



Victoria Vivians, the 2017 Homecoming Queen at Mississippi State University, is escorted by her father, John Vivians, during halftime of the MSU vs. University of Kentucky homecoming football game on October 21, 2017. (Photo by Russ Houston)