RILEY H. PITTMAN OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD

Established 2004

The Riley H. Pittman Outstanding Student Award is available through the University of Central Missouri Foundation for the student pursuing a degree within the Department of Sociology and Social Work. The awards are made possible by way of a gift from the estate of Dr. Riley H. Pittman.

BACKGROUND:

Dr. Riley H. Pittman earned his undergraduate degree at Texas Christian University, and his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago. From 1946 to 1953, he taught sociology and religion courses at Drake University. In 1954, he went to work for the State of Illinois in their Human Resources Department.

In 1957, he was recruited by Central Missouri State College to teach sociology with the specific charge to develop a sociology program. He began by offering 20 hours of sociology; he taught most of the classes and used faculty from other social science departments to teach the rest. During his tenure as chair from 1957 to 1971, the program grew from the original 20 hours to include a minor in sociology, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Arts degrees. In 1971, he stepped down as chair and returned to full-time teaching until his retirement in 1976. Since that time the department has grown to include the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Science in Social Gerontology degrees.

After his retirement, a fund was established at a financial institution in Warrensburg to honor outstanding students. It began with generous personal gifts from Dr. and Mrs. Pittman, their friends, and colleagues. Always the entrepreneur, Dr. Pittman supplemented it with additional funding generated from the sale of a book he wrote called, Pitticisms (which he described as one-liners for all occasions), and a “Variety Show” featuring some “not-so-talented faculty members”. The result of this effort is the award given to an outstanding student in each of the Department of Sociology and Social Work’s program areas.

CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION:

The faculty in any of the following program areas may nominate students: undergraduate sociology, social work, graduate sociology, and social gerontology. Nominations must be submitted to the Chair, Department of Sociology and Social Work and received by March 31. Awards will be announced no later than May 15 of any given year.

Criteria for nomination include:

a. excellence in class-related activities;
b. quality oral and written work;
c. good leadership skills; and
d. a belief that the student will represent UCM well in her/his chosen profession.
CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION (continued):

If there are no written nominations for outstanding students in a particular area, the award for that area will not be given that year. It is possible, in exceptional circumstances, for the award for the outstanding student in a category to be shared by more than one person. Recipients of the award are recognized at the department’s spring recognition function and given an award of a meaningful amount. Recipients can be students who have graduated or will graduate during the current academic year. The recipient can also be a continuing student with outstanding accomplishments.

The Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work with the approval of the Executive Director of the Foundation, will annually establish the award amounts. In a given year, the Selection Committee may exercise the option of making no selection.

SELECTION PROCESS:

The Riley H. Pittman Outstanding Student Awards are given annually to a student in each of the Department of Sociology and Social Work’s program areas. The award recipients will be recommended by a committee designated by the Chair, Department of Sociology and Social Work and approved by the UCM Scholarship and Awards Officer.

The four awards are:

- Outstanding Student Award in Social Gerontology
- Outstanding Student Award in Social Work
- Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award in Sociology
- Outstanding Graduate Student Award in Sociology

For more information, contact:
Department of Sociology & Social Work • University of Central Missouri • Wood 203 • Warrensburg, MO 64093