

McKinley, Le Bonte Club scholarship recipient, makes future plans

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The Le Bonté Women's Club 2021 scholarship recipient, Sierra McKinley, a 2021 graduate of Clinton High School, has begun her college career as a student at Mississippi Delta Community College. She is majoring in pre-allied health, where she will earn an Associate Degree. She plans to attend a nursing school to earn the BSN degree. Her ultimate goal is to be a pediatric nurse practitioner, with an MSN degree, as well.

"Since I was about seven years old, I knew that I wanted to be in the health-care field dealing with children," shares McKinley. "My first choice was a neonatal nurse until, as I got older, I realized that I wanted to work with children of all ages. I have always been the type to push myself to do more, so that is why I chose a specialty as a nurse practitioner, which will mean furthering my education once more." After the nursing school years, she says she may decide to become a pediatrician.

McKinley relates that there were times in her high school career when she had a few setbacks that made her want to give up things she loved, such as softball. Yet with teammates, coaches and parents encouraging her, they helped her understand that giving up did not have to be an option.

She suffered a shoulder injury in the eleventh grade. Diagnosing the source of her injury proved to be challenging, and she played starting shortstop with the shoulder pain. She found later that she had suffered a torn labrum in her right shoulder, which was addressed with surgery in August.

"Thanks to Mark at Elite Physical Therapy in Clinton, I had a speedy recovery," says McKinley. "Also, the CHS athletic trainer LeJoy Paige stood by me every step of the way. She told me, 'Sierra, you can do anything you put your mind to.'"



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Sierra McKinley

Also a basketball player, McKinley finished her senior season as State Farm Athlete of the Month for May, was a Lindy Callahan Scholarship nominee, an All-District Award Player, and the fast pitch softball team's Overall MVP of 2021, leading the team in batting average, home runs, stolen bases, on-base percentage and RBIs.

Memberships included National Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa, Mu Alpha Theta, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Health Occupations for Students of America, and Delta G.E.M.S. She was named Rookie of the Year and awarded the Kindness Award her freshman year; student of the month for December 2019, November 2020, and March 2021; perfect attendance ninth and tenth grade; high honor roll ninth through twelfth grades; May Week Scholarship Award winner; Athletic Scholarship to continue her softball career at MDCC; Highest Average in Healthcare and Clinical Sciences 2021; Presidential Award 2021; Most Dependable Female Senior 2021; and 2021 Arrow Princess.

McKinley credits her mother, Mrs. Edna Bonner, and her grandmother, Mrs. Elsie Bonner, as her mentors and supporters.

"Speaking on behalf of my family, we lost my father, George McKinley, this past June. I am following along the path of Proverbs 3:5 and Jeremiah 29:11, being grateful for all the adversities that have come my way, because it has made me who I am today. Because of them, I am stronger than ever," she said.

"I would like to thank the Le Bonté Women's Club for selecting me as this year's scholarship winner. This has been a major blessing to me and my family. The thought that others are backing my educational efforts is special and will be very helpful throughout my studies. I will continue to work hard and keep my mind on the right path. A new day equals new opportunities and new beginnings. This is the beginning of another major part of my life."

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