

# McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year



**Pamela Rutledge  
Morris College**

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## About the McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year Award

*In 2016, the SCICU Board of Trustees elected to combine the J. Lacy McLean and the Sterling L. Smith Scholarships into the McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year Award. J. Lacy McLean advocated for independent higher education in South Carolina for over 34 years. Sterling L. Smith was instrumental in the development of the SC Tuition Grants Program. The award seeks to recognize students who perform well academically and who demonstrate commitments to public affairs, community service, and leadership.*

*Full-time rising seniors attending SCICU member colleges and universities are eligible to be nominated for the combined scholarship award. The recipient must be a South Carolina resident and a SC Tuition Grant recipient. Rising sophomores at SCICU two-year institutions are also eligible for the award.*

# Pamela Rutledge

## Morris College

Pamela Rutledge, a senior at Morris College, has been named the 2017 McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year. This award includes a \$3,000 scholarship.

Rutledge was selected for SCICU Student of the Year honors from among nominees submitted by SCICU's member colleges and universities. The Greenville-based Center for Scholarship Administration independently conducted the nomination process and submitted the name of the award winner to SCICU.

Rutledge hails from Camden, SC, and is the daughter of Geneva Rutledge. She is majoring in sociology.

Life experiences have molded this non-traditional student into a leader who seeks to help others. After more than ten years of self-described wandering, Rutledge, with the support of family and friends, made the decision in fall 2014 to enroll in classes at Morris College. Rutledge, a single Mom to four children, is a firm believer in leading by example. She knows that every time she walks across the stage to receive an academic award, she is setting a direct example for her children.

Rutledge was recommended for the scholarship by Carlotta Stackhouse, the Director of the Morris College Forensic Center and the Morris College recipient of the 2017 SCICU Excellence In Teaching Award. Stackhouse noted Ms. Rutledge's involvement in the Morris College Student Leadership Program and the Morris College Gospel Choir. Additional campus activities include the Sociology Club and the Baptist Student Union.

In addition to her campus activities, Rutledge works with the Wateree Prison Ministry and the Cathedral of Praise Outreach Program.

After graduation in 2018, Rutledge plans to attend The University of South Carolina and obtain a Masters degree in counseling and abnormal behavior. Her goal is to become a licensed substance abuse counselor, adolescent mentor, and life coach.

Good afternoon, I humbly come before you today as the 2017 SCICU "Student Of The Year". It is an honor and privilege to have been selected amongst many great students who have proven their academic excellence and scholarship. I would like to personally thank the South Carolina Tuition Grant committee for making this possible, with your generous contributions towards my education. I would like to thank every organization that sponsored the beautiful luncheon as well, it was beautiful! I thank God for being my ever-present guide and strength.

To all my family and friends, Thank you for your love and support, I love and appreciate you. For those of you who are not familiar with my hometown of Camden, South Carolina; we are the oldest inland city, and the fourth oldest city in the state of South Carolina. Our city is currently working to accomplish a number of goals including: infrastructure improvements, and economic and tourist developments to improve the well-being of our city.

However, the building process has created a temporary inconvenience for people traveling through specific areas. Detours, warning cones, speed restrictions, etc. Just a lot going on in those areas. As I was traveling to school one morning, I began to think about the situation of our city. The purpose of the renovations, and my expectations of the outcome. Suddenly, I began to reflect on how this situation relates to life. Sometimes we have to tear down our old mindset, to rebuild our lives for the better. We have to let go of the old, to experience the benefits of something new. But the reality of it is; many people are not empowered with the knowledge and understanding of how to do the work, or they're too overwhelmed with the idea of the time and sacrifices it takes to do the work.

Sadly, they began to accept things as they are, being close minded to changes for the better. There were situations that have happened in my life that were inconvenient, challenging, and sometimes unfair. Yet through faith and determination, I overcame those odds to improve my life, and to hopefully be an inspiration to this generation. Having the opportunity to grow

mentally and spiritually is a blessing that I consider foundational to creating a legacy for my children and my children's children to follow.

So when I say, thank you... I am simply saying thank you for the investment, which grants me the opportunity to continue reconstructing my life for the better. Because of organizations such as the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities grant program, students such as myself can continue to improve our lives, our families, and communities at large. Thank you for promoting and seeking to advance our independent colleges and universities. Thank you for encouraging government policies to assist students with financial needs, and thank you for honoring me for my consistency.

As a student of a small HBCU with a religious background, I have also been blessed with the opportunity to learn more of my cultural history, while enhancing my spirituality. Education has truly, "Kindled my flame", as the famous Socrates once mentioned. So what's next, now that I have been selected as the student of the year? Being awarded as the student of the year means, that I have to continue sharpening my leadership skills, sharing my methods of success, and to be a voice for our independent colleges and universities that will represent with pride, respect, and professionalism.

As your 2017 Student Of The Year, I want to ensure you that I will continue to work on my personal growth and development, I will continue to promote the importance of education, and the relevance of our religious based institutions and HBCUs, and I will continue to follow my passion and serve my community. This award will be placed on my wall as a reminder to myself, family, and all visitors; that with hard work and consistency we can make a difference.

So again I say, thank you for the scholarship, the award, and for believing in me. May God continue to bless you all, and this organization. I'll leave you with this quote by the famous Booker T. Washington. "No man who continues to add something to the material, intellectual, and moral-well-being of the place in which he lives, is left long without proper reward." Thank You!

Sincerely, Pamela Rutledge