

FINLEY, RIDENOUR NAMED REX BROWN AWARD RECIPIENTS

By Denise Elson Tucker '89 and Spencer Greathouse '16, '21

Southwest Baptist University Track and Field athletes [Trenton Finley](#) '20 and [MeLeah Ridenour](#) '21 have been named the Rex Brown Award recipients for the 2020-2021 academic year.



The Rex Brown Award is the highest award given to SBU's student-athletes and is determined by SBU's Executive Cabinet, head coaches and athletics administration team. Each year, the award is presented to one female and one male senior student-athlete, who has exhibited strong Christian character, academic achievement, leadership qualities, and has had a major impact on their sport.

"I'm delighted that Trenton and MeLeah are this year's winners of the Rex Brown Award," said SBU Athletic Director Mike Pitts '85, '10. "I was able to watch them represent SBU at the NCAA National Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Michigan in late May. They are outstanding student-athletes, who compete with excellence at the national level. They are also 'all-stars' in the classroom, in our community and in our churches.

"The pandemic has disrupted the timing of when we select and recognize the recipients of this prestigious award, but I am thrilled that we have chosen Trenton and MeLeah."

Ridenour, who earned a bachelor of science degree in psychology with a minor in counseling, was a three-time, first-team All-American; three-time, second-team All-American; five-time conference champion; five-time conference athlete of the week; seven-time academic All-American; 2019 USTFCCA Indoor Regional Field Athlete of the Year; SBU record-holder (indoor) 60-meter hurdles, triple jump and pentathlon, and (outdoor) 100-meter hurdles, triple jump and 4x100-meter relay.

Ridenour also was an outstanding member in Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, and the Pearlene Breshears Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award Recipient.

"Receiving the Rex Brown Award is an honor that was unexpected but highly appreciated," Ridenour said. "I could not have accomplished the things that I was able to accomplish without phenomenal people in my corner to support me. Corey McElhaney '06, '12, Marshall O'Brien and my teammates were instrumental to my success on the track. Their continual support and inspiring character challenged me in many aspects of my life. I will forever be grateful for my SBU athletic family.

"My professors, Dr. Bill DuVall, Dr. Shelley Kilpatrick and Dr. Chris Dinwiddie, were significant in my decision to pursue my graduate degree in counseling. Not only did they challenge me intellectually and academically within the classroom, but they were wonderful models of Christ as professionals in psychology. They will never fully understand the appreciation I have for their dedication to the psychology department and helping mold young professionals."

Finley, who earned a bachelor of science degree in exercise science, was a first-team All-American; second-team All-American; five-time national qualifier; conference champion; conference athlete of the week; and holds the indoor and outdoor SBU pole vault record.



Finley also made multiple academic honor rolls and volunteered in the Bolivar community.

"This honor means a great amount to me," Finley said. "As an athlete, I always tried to strive to be the best person I could be even if the athletics side wasn't there that day. I would not have been able to accomplish anything I did while in school without the help of my family, my track family, coaches and my wife, Stephanie '19, '21. They always pushed me to grow not only in athletics, but in life."

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