

A State of Grace.



We always hear about Mississippi being last. Last in this, last in that. Well, at last, Mississippi is first ... in generosity.* And, in 1995, the world took note of Mississippi's generous spirit through a single, unselfish act.

Ms. Oseola McCarty of Hattiesburg had made a living washing & ironing for over 75 years. As a child, she was taught to save money by her mother, a single-parent who was a cook and sold candy to make ends meet.

Over the years, Oseola – who lived modestly, never even owning a car – accumulated a small fortune. In 1995, she donated \$150,000 to The University of Southern Mississippi for an endowed scholarship. It was the single largest gift ever given to USM by an African-American.

Having quit school in 6th grade to help take care of her ailing aunt, Oseola wanted desperately “to help somebody's child go to college.” The Oseola McCarty Scholarship does just that by giving “priority consideration to those deserving African-American students enrolling at USM who clearly demonstrate a financial need.”

Prior to her death in 1999, Ms. McCarty received scores of awards and other honors recognizing her generous spirit, including the Presidential Citizens Medal, the nation's second highest civilian award. But all the awards and accolades in the world could never truly match the rich, warm, humble blessing that was Ms. Oseola McCarty.

*The Boston-based Catalogue for Philanthropy annually ranks the 50 states on how much residents donate to charity in relation to their income. Mississippi has consistently ranked among the very top of this list for over a decade.

MISSISSIPPI...
Believe It!™