

Contact Information:

College Insider, Inc.
Natalie Rivers
(781) 414-1698
natalie_rivers@collegeinsider.com

Release Date:

March 31, 2025



jimphelanaward.com | collegeinsider.com

OLE MISS' CHRIS BEARD RECIPIENT OF 2025 JIM PHELAN AWARD

The top head coach in division I college basketball

SAN ANTONIO, TX -- Ole Miss head coach Chris Beard is the recipient of the 2025 Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year award, which is presented annually to the top head coach in division I college basketball.

Beard led Ole Miss to a 24-12 record and its' first trip to the NCAA Tournament since 2019. It was just the 10th time in 115 years that the Rebels earned a spot in the Big Dance. With wins over North Carolina and Iowa State, Ole Miss advanced to the Sweet 16 for just the second time in school history.

“Chris Beard is a program builder,” said Angela Lento, Vice President of CollegeInsider.com. “Wherever he goes, he wins and his players love playing for him. An incredible work ethic, attention to detail and a humble approach have helped to make him one of the best coaches in college basketball. There are a lot of great people in the profession, but you’ll be hard pressed to find a better guy than Chris Beard.”

Ole Miss played one of the most difficult schedules in the nation, with the cumulative opposition's win percentage of 64.8 ranks as the fifth highest in the nation, behind only Alabama, Auburn, Kentucky, and Purdue. The Rebels have faced 13 ranked opponents this season and six top five teams, both of which are the most in a single season in school history.

On January 14, Ole Miss took down No. 4 Alabama on the road for their first-ever road win over an AP top five team, and second win over the fourth ranked AP team ever. Ole Miss

followed that up later in the season, defending their home court on senior day with a win over No. 4 Tennessee on March 5. This marked the first time in program history that an Ole Miss team earned two top five wins in the same season.

The Rebels hit the record book for numerous team stats on the season, setting all-time bests in made threes, assist-turnover ratio, and turnovers per game, while ranking second for most steals.

Beard is now one of seven active coaches to take four schools to NCAA Tournament, along with Steve Alford, Rick Barnes, John Calipari, Fran McCaffery, Rick Pitino, and Kelvin Sampson.

The Jim Phelan Award is named in honor of a legendary bow-tied coach who spent his entire head coaching career at Mount Saint Mary's University.

Phelan graduated from La Salle University in 1951 and played one season in the NBA with the Philadelphia Warriors. After a brief professional career, Phelan went to Mount St. Mary's as an assistant in 1953. One year later he began his historical career as a head coach.

He led the Mountaineers to 16 Division II NCAA tournaments. Five times they advanced to the Final Four and he led them to the DII National Championship in 1962.

When he retired in 2003, after coaching for 49 years, he had amassed 830 wins (overall record of 830-524) in all divisions. In those 49 years, 19 of his teams amassed 20 or more wins in a season.

In 2008 he was inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame.

Phelan passed away on June 15, 2021, at the age of 92 at his home in Emmitsburg, MD.

JIM PHELAN AWARD FINALISTS

Randy Bennett	Saint Mary's
CHRIS BEARD	OLE MISS
Brad Brownell	Clemson
Greg Gard	Wisconsin
Dennis Gates	Missouri
Todd Golden	Florida
Penny Hardaway	Memphis
Tom Izzo	Michigan State
James Jones	Yale

Pat Kelsey	Louisville
Dusty May	Michigan
Grant McCasland	Texas Tech
Ben McCollum	Drake
Eric Olen	UC San Diego
Bruce Pearl	Auburn
Richard Pitino	New Mexico
Rick Pitino	St. John's
Kelvin Sampson	Houston
Jon Scheyer	Duke
Kevin Willard	Maryland

PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

Fred Hoiberg, Nebraska (2024); Chris Collins, Northwestern (2023); Mark Adams, Texas Tech (2022); Todd Simon, Southern Utah (2021); Steve Pikiell, Rutgers (2020); Ritchie McKay, Liberty (2019); Chris Holtmann, Ohio State (2018); Frank Martin, South Carolina (2017); Greg Gard, Wisconsin (2016); Bob Huggins, West Virginia (2015); Tim Miles, Nebraska (2014); Dana Altman, Oregon (2013); Mike Brey, Notre Dame (2012); Stew Morrill, Utah State (2011); Jamie Dixon, Pittsburgh (2010); John Calipari, Memphis (2009); Bo Ryan, Wisconsin (2008); Tony Bennett, Washington State (2007); Ben Howland, UCLA (2006); Tubby Smith, Kentucky (2005); Phil Martelli, Saint Joseph's (2004); Mark Slonaker, Mercer (2003).

ABOUT COLLEGEINSIDER.COM

Established in 1996, CollegeInsider.com has been at the forefront of promoting college basketball online. In the July 27, 1998, issue of ESPN the Magazine, College Insider was ranked No. 24 on the magazine's list of *99 Things to do Before you Die*. College Insider created the Mid-Major Top 25®, the measuring stick for men's and women's programs outside of the proverbial power leagues, and has 18 national awards presented annually, including the Lute Olson Award, Lou Henson Award, and the John McLendon Award. The CollegeInsider.com All-Access series has been nominated for 5 Emmy Awards and won 2013 Emmy, for its' feature on New York City Basketball (Iona, LIU-Brooklyn and Manhattan). CI also created *This Game No Secret*, which debuted during the 2016 CIT and now has become an annual event, which has included programs like Duke, Houston, Miami, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas and Virginia.

