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***Southern Living* Announces 17-Year-Old Shark Attack Survivor Lulu Gribbin
as Their 2025 “Southerner of the Year”**

*Lulu Is the Magazine’s Youngest Ever Honoree and Is Already Having an Impact
on Making the World a Safer, More Inclusive Place*

Birmingham, AL (November 19, 2025) – Each year since 2017, [Southern Living](#) has highlighted extraordinary folks from across the South who are determined to make a difference in the world. The honor goes to the trailblazers who uplift communities, drive positive change, and preserve the region’s people, places, and traditions. This year, the magazine is pleased to announce the 2025 Southerner of the Year is shark attack survivor, youth advocate, and internationally inspiring teenager, Lulu Gribbin.

At just 17 years old, Birmingham-based Lulu has already proven to be an extraordinary young woman who serves as a powerful model for resilience and purpose, channeling her life-altering experience into action aimed at making the world a safer, better place.

“We couldn’t be prouder to honor Lulu and share her inspiring story,” said Sid Evans, Editor-in-Chief of *Southern Living*, “Her strength, resilience, and passion for change embody the spirit of the South and make her the perfect choice for our 2025 Southerner of the Year.”

Since Lulu lost her left hand and right leg in bull shark attack in June 2024, this indomitable young woman has worked to pass Lulu’s Law at the state and federal levels to keep beachgoers safe from shark attacks like hers; launched the [Lulu Strong Foundation](#), which aims to improve life for people with limb differences; and become an accomplished adaptive golfer and water skier—all while still finding time to be a regular teenager.

“When I found out *Southern Living* chose me as their 2025 Southerner of the Year, I was speechless,” says Lulu. “Since my attack, I’ve tried to use my new platform to do what’s right and work to keep other people and their families from sharing my fate. The laws, my foundation, the speaking work I do, all of it is in service of the greater good: to improve life for people living with limb differences and to keep others from being attacked by sharks. I’m so grateful for this recognition and hope it inspires people to make a difference in our world, too.”

The Lulu Strong Foundation

The Lulu Strong foundation launched in September 2025 and applies what Lulu, and her family, have learned through her recovery process. It focuses on closing the tech gap for amputees by raising funds and awareness to accelerate access to and affordability of the tools that facilitated her remarkable recovery through [AI-powered prosthetics](#), VR therapy, and other emerging technologies. The foundation's ultimate goal is to bring down the cost of these treatments, expand their application to other limbs, and make them available to every amputee at every hospital in America.

Lulu's Law

When Lulu learned that another woman was attacked by the same shark who attacked her only 45 minutes before, she contacted her state Rep. David Faulkner and worked with him to pass the [Lulu Gribbin Shark Alert System Act](#), a law that provides for a real-time geocentric cell phone alert for shark sightings and attacks in Alabama. This legislation has also served as a blueprint at the federal level, and in July 2025, the United States Senate unanimously passed [S.1003](#), the bipartisan bill known as Lulu's Law, which is now awaiting action in the U.S. House of Representatives.

For more information on the Southerner of the Year award, visit the [website](#) and follow the magazine on [Instagram](#).

To learn more about Lulu's foundation visit [lulustrong.com](#) and follow her journey on [Instagram](#).

Photos from the feature can be downloaded [here](#); Lulu photo credit: Cary Norton.

ABOUT SOUTHERN LIVING

Southern Living celebrates the essence of life in the South, covering the best in Southern food, homes, gardens, and travel. Southern Living connects consumers to the region's rich culture through a robust multi-platform presence, including print, digital, social, and events, as well as its Biscuits & Jam and Ask Grumpy podcasts and many licensing partnerships. Headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, Southern Living is part of People Inc.

ABOUT LULU GRIBBIN

In June 2024, teenager Lulu Gribbin was attacked by a bull shark, severing her left hand and part of her right leg. Her first words after waking from lifesaving surgery were "I MADE IT"—a statement that has set the tone for her remarkable journey of recovery, strength, and tenacity. Since that time, Lulu has worked to pass the [Lulu Gribbin Shark Alert System Act](#) in Alabama and is working on the federal level to pass [S.1003](#), the bipartisan bill known as Lulu's Law. Lulu also founded the [Lulu Strong Foundation](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit accelerating progress and affordability of AI-powered prosthetics, VR therapy, and other emerging technologies that restore confidence and independence to amputees. Lulu is a gifted speaker, too, having spoken

before the Alabama State Legislature, at TEDx Youth, been featured on ABC's *Good Morning America* and *Nightline*, and spoken to crowds of up to 19,000 people.

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