

BUSINESS **FIRST**





THOMAS GRANING

With great enthusiasm, I share the 2024 issue of *BusinessFirst*. We hope you enjoy this magazine that showcases many of the wonderful programs at the Ole Miss School of Business Administration.

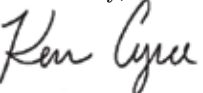
In this issue, you can read about our students learning the skills of negotiation, a nontraditional student's path to graduation (and launching of a business), our MBA students giving back to the community and our faculty's outstanding year in showcasing their research.

With record enrollment, we feature stories about the opportunities we offer at the business school, as well as stories about job fairs, competitions, graduate student leadership and the accomplishments of so many of our students.

We are most grateful to our generous donors. Here you will have the opportunity to read about some of this year's gifts that have benefited many of our premier programs and helped provide financial support to some of our most deserving students.

The Ole Miss School of Business Administration is an exceptional place to learn and to work. Together, our faculty, staff, alumni and friends keep us reaching new heights of excellence for our school and our university. I am grateful every day for their dedication to our mission.

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of *BusinessFirst*. I hope you enjoy these stories.

Sincerely,

 Ken Cyree, Dean

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SRIJITA CHATTOPADHYAY



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ON THE COVER

The CIE celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. CIE staff are (front, from left) Angelica Owens, Tong Meng, Clay Dibrell; (back, from left) Caitlin Moak and Rich Gentry

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Ya Xin Huang shows off her "Sing Sauce" (hibachi sauce), which she developed with the help of the CIE. Huang won the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneurship Award at this year's Gillespie Business Plan Competition.

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CIE 2014

Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Celebrates Decade of Success

2015
CIE wins GCEC Emerging Entrepreneurship Center Award



2017
Gillespie Competition
Rich Gentry preps judges for the 13th Gillespie Business Plan Competition

Gillespie Competition



2018
Haik Award



2019
Entrepreneurship Club meets in Conner 10



2020
Gillespie winner, Froomie, by Brea Givens



2021
CIE adds new Discovery Grant to programs

2014
CIE Kickoff event

Owens Alexander, Jon Maynard, Allen Kurr, Chancellor Daniel Jones



2016
CIE hosts Q&A panel to discuss the Center and what it offers



CIE Staff wearing Frazee Shades

2018
Tong Meng, director of programs, tabling with CIE graduate assistant Sarah Iser



EOY awarded to Edith Kelly-Green (in red)



2019
ENT in Residence



2020
16th Gillespie Business Plan Competition (virtual)

2021
Parker Brewster wins Mid-South Business Model Competition



The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Mississippi has been a driving force in the small business startup and entrepreneurship landscape for a decade, providing education, support and cutting-edge research to inspire students.

The purpose of the CIE is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to create innovative companies that provide valuable services, products and employment.

The School of Business Administration established the CIE, which is co-directed by Rich Gentry, FNC Founders Chair in Entrepreneurship, professor of management and chair of the Department of Management; and Clay Dibrell, professor of management and chair of entrepreneurship, in 2014.

“After 10 years and a lot of dedication from our faculty and staff, we have built some effective

programs to support our students,” Gentry said. “That support has led to some of the most exciting businesses we have ever seen here.”

The CIE staff and faculty moved into their new location at Conner Hall, Room 10, in 2015. The office was designed to provide a welcoming environment for students, featuring two student work centers, a conference/study corner and an entrepreneurial library.

It also is home to the student incubator, where students can gather, research and work on their entrepreneurial projects.

In October of the same year, the CIE received the Emerging Entrepreneurship Center Award at the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers conference. It was the CIE’s first time to compete for the honor.

Gentry and Dibrell brought their experience, knowledge and expertise to continue the success of the annual Gillespie Business Plan

Competition, the center’s flagship competition, which reached its 20th year in April.

“As we plan the 21st Gillespie Business Plan Competition, we honor two decades of Ole Miss student innovation and entrepreneurship that have transformed ideas into reality,” Dibrell said. “This milestone is made even more significant as we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the CIE, a beacon of creativity and enterprise for our Ole Miss student entrepreneurs, staff, faculty and Mississippi.”

The endowment supporting the Gillespie Business Plan Competition was established in 2006 to honor Edwin C. Gillespie, a 1943 UM graduate in business administration. Jean Gillespie, his widow, and Joe Gillespie, his brother and a 1950 graduate in liberal arts, played a key role in creating the endowment to support students in advancing entrepreneurial concepts.

Fifty-four teams of Ole Miss students participated in the 2024 edition of the competition, with seven advancing to the final round. Each of the seven finalists earned \$1,250 in funding.

Owen Ridgeway, a senior entrepreneurship major from Jackson; Preston Rollins, a senior business management major from Atlanta; and David Markham, a senior accounting major from Houston, Texas, are the creators of SellVNTG (pronounced Sell Vintage). Their startup won the Edward G. Francis Sr. Entrepreneur Award and claimed the first-place prize in the competition.

The team presented its idea for an online vintage marketplace to the CIE 18 months ago, Ridgeway said. Although the team participated in the 2022 business model competition, it did not make significant progress in that particular challenge.

Gentry emphasized the importance of support from judges, mentors, volunteers and donors in



2022

CIE student assistant
Meredith Heuring2023
Mississippi Day

2024

Social in the 'Sip



2022

Inaugural
Family
Business
Symposium

2023

2nd Annual PropelUp with
Mississippi State UniversityEntrepreneur
of the Year: Lois
LoveLady-Rayburn

making the program successful and providing budding entrepreneurs with valuable opportunities. By working together, they can motivate and support the next generation of leaders in creating positive change, Dibrell added.

Since 2018, the CIE has built a tremendous track record of successes including:

- More than 65 student ventures established
- More than 838 students advised
- 535 student teams participated in CIE business competitions
- About 25% of participants funded
- More than \$357,300 cash prizes awarded
- \$89,000 in scholarships awarded.

Gentry and Dibrell concur that the center's accomplishments reflect the backing of the university.

Besides co-directors Gentry and Dibrell, the CIE team is composed of Tong Meng, director of programs; Caitlin Moak, director of student marketing and communications; and Angelica Owens, director of external relations. Each team member is dedicated to a specific area of expertise while also providing support across all areas.

"These milestones reflect a decade of nurturing entrepreneurial spirit and two decades of inspiring entrepreneurial startups, setting the stage for future pioneers to transform ideas into impactful ventures," Dibrell said.

BY ANGELICA OWENS

STUDENT
NEWS

Business Fraternity Offers New Networking Opportunity

Alpha Kappa Psi hosts first 'Connect 'n' Sip: Business After Hours'

The University of Mississippi's chapter of Alpha Kappa Psi, a national business fraternity, hosted its first-ever "Connect 'n' Sip: Business After Hours" event on Nov. 1, 2023 at the Gertrude C. Ford Ole Miss Student Union.

The event kicked off with a networking session for students, local business figures and university faculty. President of the Ole Miss chapter, Erin McNary, a senior general business major from Lebanon, Illinois, expressed her enthusiasm for the event and its impact on the business students in attendance. "Everything turned out so well," she said. "I am hoping we can make this an annual event. We are always looking to help make each of our members more well-rounded."

Following the networking session, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions following a panel discussion with university leaders and members of the Oxford business community. Below is a list of the panelists:

Sara Lou Burney, *UM lecturer of accountancy*

Keith Carter, *UM vice chancellor for intercollegiate athletics*

Blake Dubinski, *CEO, co-founder of GenTeal Apparel*

Dean Douglas, *former CEO, Syniverse*

Tiffany Hawkins, *senior vice president, FCCI Insurance Group*

Allen Kurr, *vice president, OLC Economic Development Foundation*

Bill Salzman, *vice president, government relations, Nestle Purina Petcare*

Peyton Warrington, *associate administrator, Baptist Memorial Hospital*

The group discussion was the highlight of the event, as the panelists delved into various crucial topics relevant to the business world. Their discussions covered personal and professional transformations, the ever-evolving business landscape in the post-COVID pandemic era and strategies to develop leadership skills.

Several key points from the conversation revolved around the importance of associating



Kathryn Hall (left), a senior finance major from Hamilton, Mississippi, and Caroline Hopkins, a senior marketing and management double major from Madison, Alabama, visit with Blake Dubinski, CEO and founder of GenTeal Apparel.

with individuals who contribute to your personal growth. "You are only as effective as the people you surround yourself with," said Peyton Warrington. "Furthermore, the dynamic nature of the business environment can make embarking on a career seem daunting, but confronting risks with self-assurance is a fundamental component of achieving success."

The backgrounds and experiences of the panelists offered the audience a varied perspective on essential business topics and the opportunity to hear various viewpoints.

The event promises to remain a vital platform for students and professionals to connect, learn and thrive in the ever-changing business landscape as Alpha Kappa Psi sets its sights on making this an annual tradition.

Established in 1917, the Ole Miss School of Business Administration has a mission to improve business and society by inspiring students, business and community leaders through advancing business knowledge and capabilities.

BY SAMANTHA HENDRIX

THE SECRET IS IN THE SAUCE

Business student goes from immigrant to entrepreneur

This story was part of the 2024 Journey to Commencement series, which celebrates the pinnacle of the academic year by highlighting University of Mississippi students and their outstanding academic and personal journeys from college student to college graduate.

When Ya Xin Huang immigrated to the United States, she was in middle school. She had no idea at that time what kind of opportunities would be available to her for college.

She and her family arrived in Warrensburg, Missouri, from China in 2012, when she was 11. Huang not only had to learn how to adapt to a

new stage of life at an awkward age, but also to a new country, culture and language.

“We were eager to create a life where we were not reliant on others, a stark contrast from our previous experiences,” said Huang, who graduated in May from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor’s in entrepreneurship. “The opportunity to establish our own life and pursue our dreams without depending on anyone else was the driving force behind our move, ultimately leading us to settle in Mississippi.”

Huang has worked hard for her Ole Miss degree, and she has worked equally hard to develop and perfect her own hibachi sauce. The School of Business Administration has helped her through her journey to obtain both.

After two years in Missouri, Huang and her family moved to Clarksville, Tennessee, where her parents looked for work that didn’t require fluency in English. Eventually, they found employment in the restaurant business as back-of-house employees, handling tasks such as dishwashing, food prepping, cooking and running deliveries.

In 2015, after a year in Tennessee, the Huang family moved to Mississippi, settling in Forest, a small community near Jackson. Here, Huang attended Hawkins Middle School and Forest High School, where she excelled academically,

Huang delivers her pitch at the Servin’ the South Business Model Competition in November 2023 at the Jackson Avenue Center.



JOE WORTHAM



JIAN HUANG

Huang bottles a fresh batch of her hibachi sauce at her family’s restaurant, Hibachi Express, in Forest, Mississippi.

taking numerous AP classes and eventually graduating No. 6 in her class of 100 students.

During her freshman year of high school in 2016, Huang’s parents borrowed \$50,000 to finance their own restaurant, Hibachi Express. The family wanted the flexibility and stability of running their own business. The restaurant proved successful in the small town of roughly 5,000, and the Huangs have paid back their loans.

Most hibachi restaurants have their own form of “yum yum sauce,” but Huang had a vision for her own concoction.

“I knew I could make one that was better,” she said. Her Sing Sauce was born in the kitchen of her parents’ new restaurant.

Huang went from table to table, asking customers their opinions on the sauce. She tested it repeatedly, perfecting it for eight months, soliciting suggestions on spice, salt and various savory ingredients.

Within a year, the recipe was set.

During her senior year of high school, Huang applied to four colleges: UM, Mississippi State, Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia. She

toured the two campuses in Mississippi and was impressed by the beauty of the Ole Miss campus.

In 2020, Huang enrolled at UM as a member of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and a general business major. She received financial support through various merit-based and leadership scholarships.

The following year, she declared her major in entrepreneurship, and in 2023, competed in the Servin’ the South Business Model Competition and the 2024 Gillespie Business Plan Competition, the two marquee competitions sponsored by the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, housed in the business school.

In the Gillespie competition, she received \$1,250 as a finalist and won the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneurship Award worth \$5,000.

The center identified Huang as a promising entrepreneur with a good product. The center’s mentoring program pairs Ole Miss students with a successful professional in a similar field. Huang was matched with Karen Kurr of No Time to Cook.



Her discipline and perseverance are amazing. Having navigated the food industry myself, I know firsthand the obstacles to overcome. I have no doubt that we will see Ya Xin's sauce on grocery shelves in the future, and I will be a faithful customer, as her Sing Sauce is absolutely delicious!"

— KAREN KURR

"It was a delight working with Ya Xin on her Sing Sauce endeavor," Kurr said. "Of all the students I have worked with in the past, Ya Xin has been one of my favorites."

"Her discipline and perseverance are amazing. Having navigated the food industry myself, I know firsthand the obstacles to overcome. I have no doubt that we will see Ya Xin's sauce on grocery shelves in the future, and I will be a faithful customer, as her Sing Sauce is absolutely delicious!"

Huang plans to expand her sauce business after graduation. Her next steps include improvements in bottling, labeling and distribution.

"My immediate plans for the distribution and sales of the sauce involve several crucial steps," Huang said. "First, I aim to obtain all the necessary certifications and approvals required for packaging the sauce. This includes completing canning and Pathogen Reduction and Hazard

Analysis Critical Control Point classes at Mississippi State University this fall."

Once these regulatory milestones are achieved, she plans to broaden her distribution strategy, selling the sauce to grocery stores while simultaneously setting up an online shop for nationwide shipping.

"I first met Ya Xin in fall 2020 when she was a freshman taking my social entrepreneurship class, and when our paths crossed again three years later, she had her own sauce brand while managing her parents' restaurant," said Tong Meng, program director for the CIE.

"It's such a privilege for me to have witnessed her entrepreneurial journey through working with her in our business competitions and the CIE mentorship program. I wish her best of luck as she starts her new chapter of life."

BY HANNAH HOANG

Ya Xin Huang (center) celebrates with other winners of the 2024 Gillespie Business Plan Competition. They include (from left) University of New Orleans student Andrew Bradford and Ole Miss students Julien Bourgeois, Maryn Sifrit and Madison Hanna. Huang received \$1,250 as a finalist in the competition and \$5,000 for winning the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneurship Award.



ELIZABETH PARKER



STELLA CONNELL

Keith Morris, (back left), adjunct instructor of management, and Kenny Gowen (front left), president of Charter Medical, negotiate with Quirin Wild over a land deal. Live negotiations are a component of BUS 322: Negotiation and Dispute Resolution, a business course available to all Ole Miss students.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Former executive imparts importance of negotiation skills

Negotiation can be thought of as an art or a skill, but it is a necessary component of many business transactions. Keith Morris, formerly of Shell Oil, brought his skills of negotiation to the business school's classroom when he joined as an adjunct instructor in 2020.

For over 30 years in 38 countries, Morris provided commercial leadership, contract development and negotiations for Shell Oil and its global affiliates.

When Morris discovered that Ole Miss offered BUS 322: Negotiation and Dispute Resolution, he decided to use his experience in negotiation of commercial arrangements and take the class to a whole new level, providing students an opportunity to strengthen their skills in this important area.

"We learn in the course materials that the most dangerous negotiation is the one that you are in and don't know it because at that moment you are willing to accept what someone else thinks you should receive instead of what you may require," Morris said. "The live negotiation requires preparation in looking at the opportunity from all sides of the transaction, including the counterparty, tactics and an overall aspired deal frame presented persuasively to gain the best outcome."

Morris began the process of a live negotiation as part of the curriculum of the class, using his personal and professional contacts, inviting them to speak to his classes and serve as the voice across the table in the live negotiation setting.

"Keith Morris represents what is best about Ole Miss,"

said Rich Gentry, chair of the management department. "Upon joining faculty (during COVID), he recognized an important need for our students and built a marquee program to address that need while building stronger connections to local industry."

In November, Morris orchestrated a live negotiation with Kenny Gowen representing the fictional Downhome Properties in the sale of a one-acre lot on West Jackson Avenue. Gowen owns Charter Medical LLC and other local businesses in health-related fields in the Oxford area.

"The case study itself was developed due to my prior business experiences and recognizing many people may not prepare sufficiently for negotiations, and therefore the advantage it can bring to Ole

Continued on page 13

Retail Robots Should Bring Tidings of Comfort, Not Discomfort



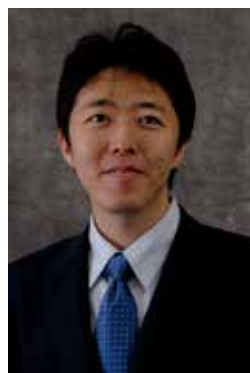
THOMAS GRANING

A customer interacts with a Starship food delivery robot at the University of Mississippi. Marketing professor Barry Babin has published a study on how robotic shopping assistants should look and act. The investigators say Ole Miss' implementation of food delivery robots is an example of widespread adoption of RSAs.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Barry Babin



Nobuyuki Fukawa

Study finds 'uncanny valley' may influence customer preference in robotic shopping assistants.

Holiday shoppers who venture into retail stores this season may find themselves asking robots, not human sales associates, for guidance.

But how should these robots look? And how should they respond? Barry J. Babin, University of Mississippi's Phil B. Hardin Professor of Marketing, gives insight into customer preference when it comes to robotic shopping assistants in a new study published in the *Journal of Consumer Behavior*.

"The research investigates how robotic shopping assistants, or RSAs, should be designed," said Babin, who also serves as chair of the Department of Marketing, Analytics and

Professional Sales. "Two basic questions are addressed: How human should a robot appear? Also, should the robot just try to solve a problem for a customer, or should the robot go beyond task completion and provide entertainment?"

Robots can be made with humanlike appearances and mannerisms, or they can be as simple as a flat-screen panel – even looking like an ATM, Babin said. They can provide a practical benefit, such as directing a customer to a product. They can also provide a personal or emotional benefit, even telling jokes.

Babin and his co-authors surveyed more than 200 customers who have interacted with SoftBank's Pepper robot, a humanoid robot launched in Japan almost a decade ago.

Skills, continued from page 11

Miss graduates in the marketplace," Morris said.

Four students participated in the negotiation with Gowen: James Alexander, a junior from Plainfield, Illinois, majoring in business management; Gregory Magone a senior from Naples, majoring in real estate; Drew Weber, a junior from St. Louis, majoring in finance; and Quirin Wild, a sophomore from Dresden, Germany, majoring in real estate.

Each student presented various scenarios for the purchase, including a combination of cash payments, owner financing, joint venture or retained

economic interests following the sale. Gowen reminded the students that he did not have to sell the property, and he would not negotiate against himself.

"The purpose of Keith's class is to impress upon his students that people who develop strong negotiating skills achieve more," Gowen said. "His premise is that preparation is key to negotiating.

"I was asked to transfer the student into an uncomfortable area that exposed any lack of preparedness. Also, I wanted to apply pressure to simulate an actual negotiating event to see how the student

responded. My goal was to help illustrate and reinforce all Keith was teaching."

The deal Gowen ultimately accepted after much give-and-take was from Wild that totaled \$2.6 million for the purchase of the property.

"Keith loves these students and simply could not let them leave without giving them his best effort," Gentry said. "Beyond being a great teacher, he is a great example of all we hope to accomplish in the classroom. I'm going to miss him."

BY STELLA CONNELL

The researchers conducted follow-up experiments examining customer responses to RSAs that could be controlled in the lab to reflect humanoid and nonhumanoid characteristics paired with practical or more personal attributes.

The results suggest that customers prefer humanoid RSAs with practical attributes over a humanoid RSA that provides entertainment.

"The consistent result across all studies is that humanlike RSAs' attempt to entertain did not result in favorable outcomes relative to other conditions," Babin said. "Thus, particularly when a robot is humanlike, it should just be designed to provide utilitarian (practical) benefits."

Anthropomorphism, or nonhuman objects taking on human characteristics, is a factor in the findings, Babin said.

"Our results suggest that the 'uncanny valley' theory is at play," he said. "Basically, when nonhuman things look or act too human, we react with a sense of creepiness.

"In highly anthropomorphic conditions, the sense of uncanniness can create a negative reaction. Thus, when the robot looks human and tries to joke around, it does not come across well."

Nobuyuki Fukawa is a co-author of the study and associate professor of marketing at the Missouri University of Science and Technology. The research employs a novel approach that analyzes both unstructured and structured data simultaneously, Fukawa said.

"A side benefit of our method is that the analysis software that we used allowed us to combine closed-ended, structured data, such as ratings, with unstructured data, like the written comments that coincide with a numbered rating," he said.

"Investigators may struggle to combine those things. Our method could be applied to a wide range of big data research."

Both Babin and Fukawa agree that the utilization of RSAs will increase and hope their study will give insight into how best to design them. Fukawa said even Ole Miss' implementation of Starship food delivery robots is an example of widespread adoption. In this case, the RSA is non-humanoid.

"There is a lot of successful marketing of RSAs, and I have no doubt they will be used more and more," he said. "There are all kinds of examples, such as cleaning robots that vacuum a store."

Deploying RSAs has been beneficial for many companies worldwide, Babin said.

"McDonald's in France – and in some other countries – has replaced counter service with a large touch-screen panel where customers place orders and pay," Babin said. "They step forward and their food drops into a chute. Chatbots are another illustration.

"The cost advantage will be difficult to ignore in the decision to deploy RSAs."

BY ERIN GARRETT

SHARING THE OLE MISS EXPERIENCE

Couple Commits to Scholarship for Risk Management and Insurance Majors

Longtime insurance agency owner William Glass and his wife, Meg, are working to ensure University of Mississippi students majoring in risk management and insurance have the resources needed to succeed.

The Collierville, Tennessee, couple has created the William L. and Meg Glass Scholarship Endowment in the School

of Business Administration with a gift of \$50,000. They described the Ole Miss risk management and insurance, or RMI, program as one of the best in the country.

“I think it’s a top-notch program and is well-respected throughout the industry,” said William Glass. “My son graduated from the program in 2020, and I was very pleased with the preparation he received.

“Education costs are fairly expensive, and the insurance business has been good to me. I felt like I should give back and help other people have the chance that I have had. I think it’s important to give back.”

The Ole Miss RMI program is one of only 34 Global Centers of Insurance Excellence that have been recognized across 11 countries. UM’s program is among the oldest and largest in the nation and boasts a

strong alumni network. Ole Miss is one of only two Southeastern Conference schools with a risk management and insurance major.

Andre Liebenberg, the Gwenette P. and Jack W. Robertson Chair of Insurance and professor of finance, said the result of the Glasses’ support will be felt in student recruitment.

“I appreciate the generosity of Meg and William Glass in providing scholarship support for our risk management and insurance students. As a result of their gift, and that of our other scholarship donors, we are better able to attract and retain excellent students. Scholarships significantly impact students’ lives by allowing them to concentrate on their schoolwork and reducing the amount of student debt they will have to repay.”

The RMI curriculum focuses on commercial risk management and culminates in a capstone course in which students perform a comprehensive risk management audit of a company, write a detailed report of risk control and transfer recommendations, and present their solutions to a panel of experts. Students determine where they would fit best in the industry by working as interns for six hours of academic credit.

RMI faculty gives students the knowledge and preparation they need to succeed in their careers. Advisory board members mentor students and help keep the program

SUBMITTED



Meg and William Glass, of Collierville, Tennessee, created an endowment at the business school to support the risk management and insurance program.

“

I hope the long-term impact of our gift is that there are students who will get into risk management and insurance and the program will help them develop rewarding careers and give them some direction for their future.

— WILLIAM GLASS

connected to the industry. Other highlights include RMI career fairs, an RMI resume book, an annual insurance symposium, an active RMI fraternity that hosts guest speakers and networking events, generous scholarships, an established summer internship program, opportunities to earn credit toward professional designations and funded student travel to conferences.

“I hope the long-term impact of our gift is that there are students who will get into risk management and insurance and the program will help them develop rewarding careers and give them some direction for their future,” said Glass, who earned his degree in business administration from Ole Miss in 1984. “The Ole Miss RMI program gives them the tools they will need.”

Glass has been a licensed insurance agent for over 30 years

and has owned his own insurance agency, The Glass Group, since 1997. His wife and son, Spencer, work with him.

“My Ole Miss degree prepared me well,” said Glass, who grew up in the boot heel of southeast Missouri with his dad and great uncle as UM alumni. “It gave me a good foundation for the insurance industry, effective communication skills and the ability to deal with people.

“I had a great experience as an undergraduate. I made lifelong friends and received well-rounded education thanks to experiences inside and outside the classroom.”

Meg and William Glass are involved in philanthropic service in Memphis, Tennessee, and combine their love for the outdoors with their love of travel.

BY TINA HAHN



AMY HOWELL

Participants at the Oct. 5 Ole Miss Risk Management and Insurance Career Fair learn about internship and career opportunities available in the industry. More than 30 employers sent representatives to the RMI Career Fair. The William L. and Meg Glass Scholarship will assist students in pursuing RMI degrees at Ole Miss.

To make a gift to the William L. and Meg Glass Scholarship Endowment, send a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund’s name written in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. To learn how to support the RMI program, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development for the School of Business Administration, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.



Speaker's Edge founding members (from left): JoAnn Edwards, Randy Harrington, Patty Harrington, Craig Sherman, Pilar Taylor and David Taylor; founders not pictured: Dex Edwards, Debbie Yancy, Larry Schnoor, Joan Andrews, Mitch Andrews, Mike Edmonds, Warner Alford, Morris Stocks, Brian Reithel and Steve Sinquefield

CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPEAKER'S EDGE

Sixty-five Ole Miss students show off public-speaking skills

After two decades, the annual Speaker's Edge workshop and competition at the University of Mississippi continues to help students gain confidence and skills in public speaking to jump-start their professional careers.

The 20th annual competition wrapped up this year's edition of Speaker's Edge on Jan. 11-12 at the Jackson Avenue Center. Master's-level students in business, accountancy and law competed individually by responding to ethical dilemmas and presenting their own marketplace pitches. They also worked with partners to deliver compelling team pitches.

Lee Baker, an accountancy and law student from Augusta, Georgia, took the overall award, which included a \$1,000 prize.

"Before taking this class, I was always anxious to speak in front of people, to the point I dreaded it," Baker said. "Speaker's Edge, through Dr. (Ellie) Moore's unique approach, with its blend of challenging competitions and practical skills training, made me a more confident speaker."

"I now feel I can speak with more clarity and conviction, even in high-pressure situations. I have no doubt that these skills will serve me well in my business career, and I consider Speaker's Edge one of the most beneficial classes I've taken at Ole Miss."

Moore, the program's coordinator and director of the university's Speaking Center, said the annual event fills a need for aspiring professionals.

"The founders of Speaker's Edge in 2003 aimed to answer this call by developing a course that leverages speaking assignments into a competition allowing graduates to 'road test' their professional communication abilities in an intensive two-week 'boot camp' for advanced public speaking," she said.

This year's winners in the ethical dilemma category were:

- Lee Baker, first place
- Mac McMullan, accountancy/law student from Kennett, Missouri, second
- Jackson Tournillon, MBA student from Covington, Louisiana, third.

For the marketplace pitch category, competitors created ideas that ranged from advanced air mobility for FedEx, at-place robot and AI-generated car dent repair, and chef-created meals at home. This year's winners are:

- Cole Runyan, MBA from Ashland, Alabama, first place
- Lee Baker, second
- Daniel Hinke, MBA, from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, third.

In the Team Pitch category, participating students randomly selected companies and applied the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, or SWOT, analysis to evaluate them. The goal was to determine and address points of vulnerability or opportunity and how best to present a solution or highlight a strength.

The winning pitch was for Vivint. This team created a new product line for a pet protection service that is both cost-effective and efficient while still in line with smart home technology and security, making sure customers are assured that their pets are safe while they are away.

Members of the winning team are:

- Emily Britton, accountancy major from Jackson
- Kit McCormack, MBA student, Jackson
- Jeremy Obregon, MBA student, Columbia, Illinois
- Marc Gorski, MBA student, Atlanta.

Speaker's Edge is co-hosted by the university's School of Business Administration, Patterson School of Accountancy, Trent Lott Leadership Institute, Department of Writing and Rhetoric, and Division of Outreach and Continuing Education.

BY JEANINE RAUCH
PHOTOS BY LAUREN DAVENPORT



Among the attendees at the 2024 Speaker's Edge competition were Ellie Moore (left), the program's coordinator and director of the university's Speaking Center, and Rebecca McCarty, corporate communications director at Paul Moak Automotive in Jackson and the first Speaker's Edge winner.



Lee Baker, accountancy/law student from Augusta, Georgia (overall Speaker's Edge champion), and Melissa Jones, director of the Lott Leadership Institute and awards presenter

SUPPORTING BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS

Rebel Student Venture Fund Assists Ole Miss Teams

When University of Mississippi student Eli Allen, of Collinsville, received a grant in 2015 from the Rebel Student Venture Fund, it allowed him to concentrate fully on creating Curtsy, a mobile application that makes it easy to thrift and sell clothing, shoes, accessories and more. Curtsy has grown into a nationwide business with a projected 2024 revenue of \$30 million.

Producing successful entrepreneurs and boosting the economy — a goal of the UM Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship — is dependent on financial startup support for student business ventures. That's where the RSVF, an

Other Student-Created Ventures See Success

Besides Curtsy, other Rebel Student Venture Fund-supported businesses have achieved success. Among them are:

- **Rumie App**, created by Tanner McCraney and Patrick Phillips — a college-exclusive marketplace app that allows students to buy, sell and rent safely and securely within and between campuses
- **SellVNTG LLC**, created by Owen Ridgeway, Preston Rollins and David Markham — a digital marketplace for vintage clothing
- **Altar'd Socials**, created by Claire Ficek — a social media management company that works with service providers to elevate their social media platforms
- **Shielded Security LLC**, created by Cale Spies — a security company serving the Ole Miss Greek life system, party promoters, campus events and the Oxford community
- **Abbakadabbi's Baking Co.**, created by Abbi Nichols — a business offering custom-decorated sugar cookies for any occasion

alumni-established nonprofit that awards seed grants, comes into play.

"I was in graduate school, and my business partner William Ault was doing odd jobs to pay the bills," said Allen, who is now based in San Francisco, with his company. "We worked on Curtsy in our spare time. Receiving the grant gave us enough money so we could turn our full attention to the project; it also gave us legitimacy, which allowed us to attract other angel investors."

"Soon after receiving the Rebel Student Venture Fund grant, we were both working full-time on Curtsy, and we also brought in David Oates, a talented designer with startup experience as our CEO. Starting a company requires 1,000% commitment from everyone involved, and that was possible because of that initial cash grant."

Curtsy co-founders — Allen, Ault, Oates and Clara Agnes Ault, who were named to the Forbes 30 under 30 list in 2021 — spoke at the sixth annual CIE REDe Entrepreneurship Summit about their entrepreneurial journey.

The start provided by the RSVF and the pro-entrepreneurial community at Ole Miss made all the difference in the company's founding, Allen said.

"From networking and collaborating on business pitches at the Entrepreneur Club to the wonderful office accommodations we were granted at Insight Park, we had a super-solid foundation to get started," he said. "We built relationships with countless university faculty and local business owners who freely offered guidance, and some of them even became investors."

Curtsy is a peer-to-peer marketplace, which means it must attract customers to fill both the supply and demand sides of the business.

"These types of companies are notoriously hard to start, but thanks to the strong social aspect of the Ole Miss Greek system, we were able to jump-start our growth as our early customers shared Curtsy with their sorority sisters," Allen explained.

"My dream was always to create something that people love. Millions have bought or sold

Curtsy founders William Ault (left), Eli Allen, Clara Agnes Ault and David Oates benefited from the Rebel Student Venture Fund, which supports aspiring entrepreneurs at Ole Miss.



SUBMITTED



AMY HOWELL

Julien Bourgeois (left), a sophomore at Ole Miss, tosses a ball to Andrew Bradford, his partner from the University of New Orleans, in their Rebel Student Venture Fund pitch for Automatic AI LLC. Business school board members awarded \$2,000 to Automatic, a company that aims to use the Apple Watch motion sensor technology to contribute to the improvement of athletes in recreational sports. Its first app is a basketball trainer.

something on Curtsy, and I love that I get to work on something every day that's so important to so many people."

The RSVF exists because of gifts contributed by UM alumni and friends interested in supporting Ole Miss student-startup businesses, and the School of Business Administration is working to increase this private support. Since the fall of 2014, the Venture Fund has awarded \$123,684 to 49 student businesses.

Clay Dibrell, professor of management, chair of entrepreneurial excellence and co-director of the CIE, described the fund's impact.

"The RSVF funds are instrumental in giving our student entrepreneurs the resources needed to better understand who their customer is and to build products and services that customers want. In exceedingly early stage development, these student-led ventures have a better probability of success with these grants."

The RSVF Investment Committee evaluates applications for grants from qualified student-led startup businesses. Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000, but those who win them receive more than monetary resources. One of the RSVF Investment Committee board members becomes an informal adviser to the company.

"We have had such a variety of interesting ideas come forward," said Gus Ezcurra, a volunteer leader for the RSVF and senior vice president of mid-market sales at Equinix in San Francisco. "Many of them have been ideas that take advantage of the latest technology."

"Entrepreneurship and innovation help individuals become independent and channel their creativity into building something of their own in this competitive world," said Ezcurra, a member of UM's Business Advisory Board who joined alumnus Bill Fry to establish the RSVF. "Studying entrepreneurship and innovation enhances students' analytical and logical skills, enabling them to solve any problem. This type of experience drives economic growth by creating new markets and innovation and contributing to local communities."

The RSVF has been moved from a community foundation to the University of Mississippi Foundation, a development Dibrell said will produce positive results due to quicker disbursement of funds and awards to support the student entrepreneurs.

BY TINA H. HAHN

To support the Rebel Student Venture Fund, send a check to the UM Foundation, with the fund's name written in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. For information on supporting the fund, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development for the School of Business Administration, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.

Babin Completes Journey From Military to Academia

Professor develops community engagement and leadership skills in transition

Laurie Babin's career is marked by service, and the University of Mississippi instructional associate professor of business administration is sharing that passion with her students.

Babin, who helped recharter the Ole Miss Rotaract, the collegiate version of Rotary International, shortly after joining the university faculty in 2019, is the new president of the Oxford Rotary Club. And one of her goals is to strengthen the connection between city and campus organizations.

"By being a Rotarian, I can make a difference in my local

community as well as the world through the Rotary Foundation," she said. "When I was looking for a Rotary club to join in Oxford, I was informed that there was a student who wanted to get Rotaract rechartered at Ole Miss. That inspired me to help him make it happen."

"My experiences with Rotaract started when I was in high school and was involved with Interact Club (high school version of Rotary)," said Matt Eddy, a 2019 graduate of the marketing program who lives in Mobile, Alabama. "When I transferred to Ole Miss, I learned there was not a Rotaract club on campus."

He contacted the Oxford Rotary Club, which put him in contact with Babin, who served as adviser for University of Louisiana at Monroe's Rotaract club.

"Dr. Babin's previous experiences were instrumental in establishing the Rotaract club at Ole Miss," said Eddy, who served as the first president of the Ole Miss Rotaract organization.

The Rotarian life is not new to Babin. She first joined a Rotary club 10 years ago while living in Louisiana. She has also spent much of that time fostering the next generation of community leaders.



Matt Eddy (left), first president of the Ole Miss Rotaract club, reviews Rotary International banners from clubs in New South Wales and Victoria regions of Australia with University of Mississippi marketing professor Laurie Babin in 2019. Babin helped recharter the Ole Miss Rotaract and has been active in leadership with the Oxford Rotary Club.

LOGAN KIRKLAND

She helped to charter a Rotaract at ULM and played a pivotal role in rechartering the Alpha Theta chapter of Pi Sigma Epsilon at UM earlier this year. Pi Sigma Epsilon is the national co-ed professional fraternity focused on marketing, management and sales.

"Dr. Babin is a wonderful example of a mentor and leader who gets things done," said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. "She has the heart of a servant-leader and gets involved when she sees the opportunity."

"She is active in the community, as shown by her president role in the Rotary Club, and she has been instrumental in starting two student organizations. She has also continued to publish research and serves as a thesis adviser, among many other acts of service."

Babin's path to academia has been unconventional. After graduating with an engineering degree from Michigan State University, she taught thermodynamics and nuclear physics at the U.S. Naval Nuclear Power School.

"The students were very attentive because they really needed to understand how it works," she said. "Imagine operating a nuclear power plant inside of a submarine – you better know what you are doing or you could all die."

The move was motivated by a desire to avoid snow.

"Honestly, it was the opportunity to move to Orlando," she said. "The Nuclear Power School at the time was located in Orlando. I was born in Michigan and hated winter my entire life."

She earned an MBA from the University of Central Florida five years later, which sparked her interest in marketing and led her to seek a doctorate from Louisiana State University so she could teach. She credits her background in engineering for the ability to take the qualitative concepts and apply them quantitatively.

"My engineering background helped because I've always liked the quantitative analysis side of things, and that is really important in

conducting and publishing empirical research," she said.

Before landing in Oxford, she taught at the University of Southern Mississippi and ULM.

As president of the Oxford Rotary Club, Babin said her goal is to maintain the club's status as a premier civic organization. To do that, she seeks to increase membership by merging the club with another local Rotary club and host a golf tournament to benefit the Oxford Medical Ministries Clinic.

"I was motivated to start two student organizations because I see my role as a professor as one to create opportunities for students to succeed and mentor them along the way," she said. "I didn't seek a leadership role in Rotary, but when asked, I was honored to serve in that role. Having a great leadership team in our club is what makes it so successful."

"I think Rotary's official mottoes regarding service sum it up best for me: 'Service above self' and 'One profits most who serves best.'"

BY SAMANTHA HENDRIX



Joe Ashbee (left), former national president of Pi Sigma Epsilon honorary, and PSE consultants Erin Suhajda (second from left) and Caroline Mang (right) present a charter for the Ole Miss Alpha Theta chapter to Laurie Babin (center) and Barry Babin, chair of the Department of Marketing.

JOE WORTHEN

GROVE PLAZA

Haik family honors mother with new signage, landmark

SUBMITTED



A mother's great affection for the University of Mississippi and the Grove was celebrated with the construction of a plaza, signage and landscaping in the iconic 10-acre park.

Sunny and Mac Haik of Houston, Texas, made a \$1.5 million gift to the university to create the new campus landmark, where a plaque will read, "In memory of Frances Haik. She loved Ole Miss and the Grove." The Grove Plaza was dedicated May 14.

"Mother was born into a very poor family and was never able to attend school as she had to go to work to help support her family," said Mac Haik, a UM alumnus and

Mac Haik (left) and his mother, Frances, enjoy time on the University of Mississippi campus, including the beautiful, iconic Grove. This photo was taken when Haik, an Ole Miss alumnus and pro football player, was inducted into the M-Club Hall of Fame. Reflecting on the day, his mother said, "You know honey, this is the most fun I have ever had in my whole life!"



Grove Plaza memorial in memory of Frances Haik given by Sunny and Mac Haik. She loved Ole Miss and was fascinated by it. She always said it was the most beautiful place she had ever seen.

former student-athlete. "She did not receive an education, but I never saw anybody who had the people skills she had. She legitimately loved everyone and saw only the good in people.

"I think Mother would be delighted and shocked to know her name was on a plaque in the Grove. She loved Ole Miss and was fascinated by it. She always said it was the most beautiful place she had ever seen."

Chancellor Glenn Boyce praised the couple's vision for the gift.

"We look forward to having this new area, which will honor a cherished parent and help celebrate our beloved Grove," Boyce said. "We are grateful to Sunny and Mac Haik for this generous support, which will add to the beauty of our

campus and also transform areas of need."

The remaining funds after the construction of the Grove Plaza will be held within the University of Mississippi Foundation as conversations continue with the donors about how to use the resources to benefit the university.

Frances Haik Jordan, of Meridian and Decatur, died in September 2012. For 20 years, she provided leadership as vice president and business development officer of Peoples Bank of Mississippi. She also served as manager for Roth Department Store for 18 years.

She was active in her church and community and was

selected as Decatur's "Citizen of the Year" in 2009. Haik's father, Joseph Albert Haik, died when Mac was 8 years old.

"My mother was an extremely positive influence on my life," Haik said. "She deserves all the credit for anything that my sister or I have accomplished. One of the values she placed great importance on was respect for other people. She always said, 'Nobody is better than you, but just remember young man, you are not better than anyone either.' She was extremely honest and loving and was still going strong when she died at 91 years old."

Haik's athletic prowess was recognized by Ole Miss football coaches Johnny Vaught and Frank "Bruiser" Kinard, who offered him a full scholarship to play for the Rebels.



Nobody is better than you, but just remember young man, you are not better than anyone either."

— FRANCES HAIK JORDAN

UM marketing professors find positive correlation between power and profitability

Granting more power to female executives in retail management teams leads to improved profitability, according to a study from the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration.

Cong Feng, Morris Lewis Lecturer and associate professor of marketing, and Kexin Xiang, instructional assistant professor of marketing, analyzed more than 100 publicly listed retailers and found a positive association between female executives' structural power – their influence and control of key organizational resources – and company profitability. *The Journal of Business Research* published their research in its November 2023 issue.

"When we talk about structural power, we refer to the power endowed to a female executive," Feng said. "If we were in a meeting, a person may or may not be able to express his or her opinion – structural power allows people to speak out and give their concerns."

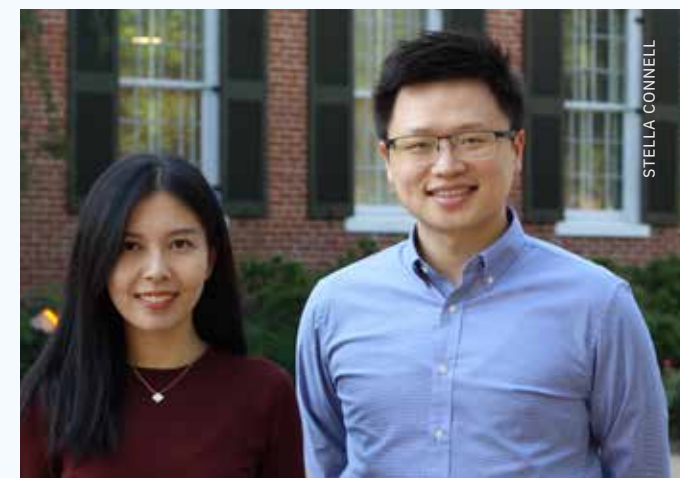
While women make up a significant portion of retail management compared to other sectors, the study suggests female leaders require sufficient structural power to drive top performance.

"To increase the percentage of female presence is good, but how much weight of power would you give to this female?" Xiang said. "All kinds of companies are trying to increase the number of women managers, but not a lot of studies look at female executives' power distribution and how many have speaking power."

Feng and Xiang acknowledge that challenges still exist with representation. In 2019, around the time their research began, *Forbes* released "America's 100 Most Innovative Leaders." The list featured only one female executive: Barbara Rentler, CEO of Ross Stores.

"She is an extremely successful CEO," Feng said. "Every major city you can find a Ross store. If you look at her senior management team, the structural power for females is very high. Their profitability is also way above industry average."

"It was a surprise to see only one woman to make that list. So, we need to have this discussion about the contributing factors in how businesses understand gender diversity."



Marketing professors Kexin Xiang (left) and Cong Feng have determined that retailers that empower their female executives enjoy higher profits. They analyzed more than 100 public companies for their study, which is published in the November 2023 issue of *The Journal of Business Research*.

Xiang and Feng credit colleague Saim Kashmiri, Mr. and Mrs. James E. King Lecturer and associate professor of marketing, for his previous research that showed women executives have a positive impact on customer orientation. Their intention was to take this idea a step further.

"Kexin and I were talking about gender diversity and equality in society in general and then also in an organization," Feng said. "We tried to come up with ideas to think about – a lot of the past research is just trying to make a business case for gender presence. Once you have a woman, then that's it."

"They don't care about how a woman should be endowed with sufficient power so she can have a say in a meeting. What if you look at two retailers with the same number of female executives? The structural powers endowed to female executives really matter."

The authors hope to expand this research in the future.

"It would be interesting to go beyond the retail industry – to look at other industries and management levels, such as lower-level managers," Xiang said. "We could also observe other factors like personalities, confidence, narcissism and risk aversion."

BY ERIN GARRETT



SRIJITA CHATTOPADHYAY

The new campus landmark dedicated by Chancellor Glenn Boyce pays tribute to Frances Haik Jordan of Meridian and Decatur, who was influential in Mac Haik's life and loved her son's alma mater.

"They came to Meridian to talk to Mother and me about playing football at Ole Miss," Haik recalled. "I couldn't get a word in the conversation because my mom was so charming. Finally, I decided to jump in and sign my contractual agreement because I was afraid she might want to go to Ole Miss on my scholarship."

Haik enjoyed an impressive academic and football career at Ole Miss, earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1968 and completed work toward a master's degree in marketing. Later, he was named to the Ole Miss M-Club Hall of Fame and the Ole Miss Alumni Hall of Fame.

At his M-Club Hall of Fame photo session, Haik's mother said, "You know honey, this is the most fun I have ever had in my whole life!" That picture taken in the Grove of the mother and son still sits on Haik's desk.

Haik's new life and career in Houston began in 1970 when he was the top draft choice of the Houston Oilers. Shortly after a variety of injuries hastened his retirement from pro football, he established Mac Haik Enterprises.

MHE has grown from a start-up entity of two people to an organization with 11 affiliated companies that employ some 3,250 associates, generate revenue in excess of \$3 billion per year and own land, commercial office buildings, retail space, medical facilities, restaurants, hotels and 1,200 billboards.

MHE also includes Mac Haik Automotive Group – the largest independent automotive group in Texas and the 15th largest independent group in the United States. Of the

company's 19 dealerships, five are in Jackson.

At Ole Miss, the Haiks have provided support to athletics and academics. Haik's interest in starting businesses inspired another of his commitments: a major gift that supports the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship within the School of Business Administration.

Additionally, the gift established two scholarships – the Sunny Sue Haik and the Francis Haik Jordan awards for entrepreneurship – honoring Haik's wife and mother, respectively, and benefiting qualified freshman and sophomore business students.

Haik also serves on CIE's advisory board.

BY TINA H. HAHN

To learn more about supporting Ole Miss programs, contact Nikki Davis, assistant vice chancellor for development, at nineely@olemiss.edu or 662-915-6678.



Business School Hosts Student Leader Luncheon

Inaugural event recognizes students for achievements in leadership

The University of Mississippi School of Business Administration recognized its student leaders set to graduate in May at an inaugural luncheon April 9 at the Paul B. Johnson Sr. Commons.

Some 80 students, faculty and staff were on hand for the event, which recognized business students who have served as club officers or student ambassadors for the 2023-24 academic year.

“The demand for innovative and inspirational leaders in the business world is rising,” said Meg Barnes, instructor of management, director of career preparation services for the school and adviser to the Women in Business club. “We are proud to support our students in their pursuit of becoming inspiring leaders of tomorrow.”

Danielle Ammeter, Barnes, Sumali Conlon, Charles Hilterbrand, Tong Meng, Maurie Morris and Kim Phillips, all in attendance at the luncheon, each serve as advisers to one of the school’s 11 clubs or organizations.

John Cooper, from Atlanta, outgoing president of the student real estate society, and Jackson

Erminio, outgoing vice president of the entrepreneurship club, received recognition for their leadership over the past year.

Cindy Maupin, assistant professor of management, served as the keynote speaker and delivered a message on the four components of transformational leadership: individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and idealized influence.

“By thinking of each person you interact with as an individual with their own strengths and opportunities for improvement, you can cater your leadership style to help each person uniquely in reaching their goals,” Maupin said. “By creating high standards and helping your followers to understand why those standards are important, you can help them to achieve success that is even greater than they thought possible.”

“If you set high standards for your followers, they need to see that you also strive for those standards.”

Top: Kim Phillips (left) with the outgoing business school student ambassadors. Phillips serves as adviser to the organization.

The school’s student ambassadors are selected by the president and vice president of the organization. They assist the school in recruiting high school and transfer students. Phillips served as the group’s adviser for about 10 years.

“We are very fortunate to have a group of impressive, articulate business students that help us with the recruiting of prospective students and help us host events for alumni and friends of the university,” Phillips said. “They are able to effectively communicate what it’s like to be a current business student and give their perspective on getting involved on campus, what it is like in the classroom and give helpful advice to prospective students.

“They are all very approachable and have honed their presentation and networking skills; it has been incredibly fun to watch them participate in all our events.”

Ambassadors recognized were Lauren Bender, a risk management and insurance major

from Nashville, Tennessee; Tanner Broyles, a finance major from Siloam Springs, Arkansas; Jane Campbell, a finance and accounting major from Monroe, Louisiana; Joy Faith Jennings, a finance and management major from Hattiesburg; Khloe Jones, a management major from Oxford; Case Kempthorne, a management major from Jackson; Erin McNary, a general business major from St. Louis; Finley Rock, a general business major from Rockford, Illinois; Breyanna Satcher, a management major from Laurel; Eric Thieret, a marketing and communication strategy major from St. Louis; Reed White, a management information systems major from Madison; and John Dylan Wilcher, a management major from Jackson.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STELLA CONNELL

Right: Sumali Conlon (left) and Tong Meng, advisers to the management information systems and entrepreneurship clubs, at the first annual business students’ leadership recognition luncheon.



Below: Students listen to keynote speaker Cindy Maupin at the inaugural business school student leader recognition luncheon at Paul B. Johnson Sr. Commons.



INSURING THE FUTURE

New Gift Supports Students in Risk Management and Insurance

A recent gift from University of Mississippi alumni Chad and Kristen Greer (Class of 1996), of Nashville, Tennessee, will help ease the burden of tuition expenses faced by many college students.

The couple's \$50,000 gift will establish the Greer Family RMI Scholarship Endowment within the School of Business Administration. It will be matched for a total of \$100,000 by Northwestern Mutual, Chad Greer's employer for the past 27 years.



The Greer family (from left) are Kate, Caroline, Chad, Kristen and Mary Hayes.

SUBMITTED

The scholarship will provide income to qualified juniors and seniors in the risk management and insurance major, with preference going to students from counties in Middle Tennessee, including Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson or Wilson.

As a junior at Ole Miss, Chad Greer knew he wanted to work in risk management. After graduating in 1996 with a bachelor's degree in business administration, he began an internship at Northwestern Mutual, where he continues to work nearly three decades later as a wealth adviser.

"It's always been a goal to give back to the school," Greer said. "Going into Ole Miss, I wouldn't have been considered for a scholarship. This is for juniors and seniors who are doing well while at school. You don't need a perfect GPA right out of high school."

In his time at Northwestern Mutual, Greer has been recognized by *Forbes* as a best-in-state wealth adviser and a top financial security professional. Recently, he was asked to join the Ole Miss Alumni Association board of directors.

During his freshman year at Ole Miss, Greer met his then-future wife. They began dating the following year and have been together for 25 years. Kristen Greer, a native of Jackson, Tennessee, graduated in 1996 with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

"The university has meant so much to us," Chad Greer said. "Two of my daughters now attend Ole Miss and are part of the Chi Omega sorority. I have pledge brothers who also have daughters in the same sorority."

The Greers and Patrick Salter, associate director of development, began discussions about the endowment over a year ago.

"We're thankful for their commitment and being able to impact students' lives with this scholarship," Salter said. "We're happy to have Chad and Kristen as part of the Ole Miss family."

The scholarship will allow students to benefit from the Greers' generosity immediately, said Andre Liebenberg, holder of the Robertson Chair of Insurance and professor of finance.

"Their gift will help our program to better attract and retain excellent risk management and insurance students," Liebenberg said. "As a result of their support, scholarship recipients will have greater financial freedom and a better chance for academic success."

For the Greers, the gift symbolizes a way to give back to a place they hold in high esteem.

"We're excited to be able to give back to the university and a major that has meant so much," Greer said. "As an entire family, we're excited about it."

“

It's always been a goal to give back to the school. Going into Ole Miss, I wouldn't have been considered for a scholarship. This is for juniors and seniors who are doing well while at school. You don't need a perfect GPA right out of high school."

— CHAD GREER

BY ANDY BELT

To make a gift to the Greer Family RMI Scholarship Endowment, send a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the name written in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655 by giving online at give.olemiss.edu.

For more information on how to support the School of Business Administration, contact Patrick Salter, associate director of development, at psalter@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2712.

Wall Street Prep Workshop Prepares Students for Future Finance Careers

Industry professionals provide knowledge about the world's financial future

University of Mississippi students majoring in banking and finance and related fields were able to learn from professionals and sharpen their skills at a Wall Street Preparation workshop hosted Feb. 1-2 by the School of Business Administration.

Erica Cordeiro, a senior from Spencer, Massachusetts, who is double majoring in finance and real estate and minoring in economics, said she gained valuable information from the daylong sessions.

"We worked on a case study, similar to what we do in class, to evaluate the performance of the company Apple in February of 2019," she said. "First, we used their (Form) 10-K to find historical data and build a balance sheet and income statement for the years 2016-18."

The workshop allowed students to better understand financial aspects within financial statement modeling, but also to improve their skills in the Excel software platform, which is regularly used in many components of the financial industry.

"After collecting past data, we used it to forecast these statements through 2023 and built our third statement, the statement of cash flows," Cordeiro said. "By the end of our modeling, we acquired tips for when working in Excel that you would not have discovered without the knowledge of someone else."

Not only did students learn how to use Excel in a variety of ways; they also learned how to observe and use data they may be given in class and in their careers.

Kyle Major, a sophomore finance major from Allendale, New Jersey, is an aspiring investment

WESLEY DICKENS



Bill Fry, managing director at American Securities (left), and Pittman Phillips, investment associate at Live Oak Merchant Partners (right), with Maren Egging, of Pella, Iowa, a risk management and insurance and real estate major, and Lukas Jaeger, of Brandon, a finance and accounting major.

banking analyst who learned how to determine which information in a company's 10-K is important, how to interpret it and how that data could benefit or harm a company.

"This course gave me an outlook on what to expect as an investment banker and an idea of what a project looks like for an analyst," Major said. "This will benefit me tremendously going forward because now I will be able to answer the 'Excel proficiency' question when it comes to internships."

This workshop was also created to prepare students for not only interviews but to see better what their everyday life may look like in the financial industry.

"The attendance and participation in these workshops were tremendous and reflect the students' exceptional commitment to their career development," said Wesley Dickens, associate director of experiential learning and partnerships with the business school. "This achievement could not be possible without the support of our alumni and the business school by providing quality educational experiences in and outside the classroom."

The event also included a session hosted by the Financier's Club, featuring advice and reflections from Ole Miss alumnus Bill Fry (BBA 80), managing director at American Securities, and Pittman Phillips (BBA 18), an investment associate with Live Oak Merchant Partners.

Fry encouraged students to take advantage of their resources at Ole Miss and hone the analytical and quantitative skills that are critical in finance. He also gave advice on how students could stand out as they seek internships and networking opportunities in this competitive field.

BY LAUREN MUNNELL

COLLEEN CLARK



Wesley Dickens, associate director of experiential learning and partnerships (left), with attendees of the Wall Street Prep Workshop held at the UM Jackson Avenue Center in early February.

Focused on the Center

UM business graduate's gift to support innovation, entrepreneurship

Austin Lafferty's gift to the University of Mississippi will help School of Business Administration students participating in the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The Kingfisher, Oklahoma, resident's \$50,000 gift establishes the Lafferty Family CIE Endowment.

The CIE's mission is to inspire UM students to create innovative businesses through excellent teaching, exceptional service and world-class research.

"Overall, our purpose is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to become successful entrepreneurs who create innovative companies that provide valuable services, products and employment,"

said Clay Dibrell, co-director for the CIE, chair of entrepreneurial excellence and professor of management.

An alumnus of and longtime donor to the university, Lafferty said he wanted to support an area of greatest need with the business school.

"Hopefully, this will help enhance the likelihood of attracting bright and forward-looking students into the program," said Lafferty, who earned a bachelor's degree in managerial finance from the school in 1988 followed by a master's degree in business administration in 1989.

"If students see something that's brought them into the program like this, maybe when they leave they'll have an entrepreneurial focus that allows them to grow financially and hopefully return the favor," he continued.

Dibrell expressed gratitude for Lafferty's gift.

"We are fortunate to have alumni and friends like Austin who have a vision for the future of the CIE and an interest in the work we're doing with our students, preparing them to make a transformative impact on our world as future business leaders," he said.

Lafferty is co-CEO of his family business, Wheeler Brothers Grain Co., founded in 1917 in Watonga, Oklahoma, by his great-grandfather. Lafferty and his brothers, Todd and Ladd, are fourth-generation executives of the company.

Lafferty is chairman of the Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association board of directors. At Ole Miss, he was an active member of Sigma Chi fraternity and the Wesley Foundation.

BY BILL DABNEY



Kerri and Austin Lafferty's gift helps School of Business Administration students participating in the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The Lafferty Family Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Endowment is open to support from businesses and individuals. Gifts can be made by sending a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund's name noted on the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655 or by giving online at give.olemiss.edu.

For more information about supporting the School of Business Administration, contact Patrick Salter, associate director of development, at psalter@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2712.

THOMAS GRANING



Online MBA Program Ranks Among Top 25 in Nation

School's online degree demonstrates competitive edge

The University of Mississippi's online Master of Business Administration program has been named as one of the nation's best by *U.S. News & World Report*. The rankings place Ole Miss in a five-way tie for No. 25 among public universities and No. 29 overall.

UM is tied with Florida International University and the universities of Iowa, Delaware and Nebraska at Lincoln for the No. 25 spot. The University of Florida, at No. 4, and Auburn University, No. 18, were the only Southeastern Conference schools ranked ahead of Ole Miss.

"The online MBA program continues to be an outstanding educational experience and a wonderful value for students looking to enhance their business skills," said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. "We have been teaching online in the MBA program for almost two decades, and therefore our professors have

***U.S. News & World Report* has ranked the University of Mississippi's online MBA program in the top 25 nationally for 2024.**

the experience and commitment to be able to deliver the content in an engaging and productive way to create an effective learning environment."

Master's programs in business administration are by far the most popular graduate business degree programs, according to *U.S. News*. The publication examines data from 345 schools to compile its rankings of distance education MBA programs annually.

"Our online MBAs include very impressive professionals across the country," said Ashley McGee, director of MBA programs. "Many of our students are currently in mid to upper management positions, yet they want to continue to grow as they recognize the importance of being 'top notch' in their fields."

One of those students is Ryan Eckert, owner and CEO of Eckert Eagle LLC in Winter Garden, Florida.

"The online MBA program at Ole Miss has allowed me access to talented and knowledgeable professors that care about my education," said Eckert, who is on track to complete the program this summer.

"My classes are challenging, well organized and deliver knowledge on a diverse core of relevant subjects, which I have been able to utilize immediately in my career. I feel part of the Rebel community rather than simply an online student."

The publication selects factors, called ranking indicators, to assess each program. For the 2024 edition, *U.S. News* ranked online MBA programs using five categories: student engagement, peer assessment, faculty credentials and training, student excellence, and services and technologies.

BY STELLA CONNELL



SUBMITTED

Student-athletes and MBA candidates (from left) Justine Fournand, of Erstein, France (women's golf); Nikola Slavic, of Stockholm, Sweden, and Lukas Engelhardt, of Augsburg, Germany (both men's tennis); Caden Davis, of Coppell, Texas (football); and Ava Hrastar, of Duluth, Georgia (women's tennis), hold their Charity Challenge fundraiser at the Oct. 29 Ole Miss volleyball match. They raised \$952 for their charity, the Good Sports: Play for All initiative.

UM MBA STUDENTS EXCEL IN CHARITY CHALLENGE

Graduate Students Raise Thousands for Diverse Causes

Ole Miss MBA students recently raised more than \$9,000 benefitting seven different charitable causes in a first-of-its-kind “charity challenge” project. The “charity challenge” was the brainchild of Kristin Cullen-Lester, business school fellow and assistant professor of management, who made the project a centerpiece of the MBA program’s Leadership and Ethics course, which she taught for the first time this year.

“The results achieved by the class surpassed my expectations in several ways, demonstrating our MBA students’ remarkable dedication and capabilities,” Cullen-Lester said. “I am equally proud of the awareness generated for the causes and organizations they championed.”

For the project, students organized themselves into seven teams based on shared

altruistic interests, such as child welfare, clean water or mental health and wellness, and developed a plan for a one-day-only event to raise funds for a nonprofit organization within their areas of interest.

Cullen-Lester provided each team with \$50 of seed money to put toward its event, which the students later reimbursed, and each team had a day to

hold its event between Oct. 28 and Nov. 10, 2023.

Aside from setting the goal of teams raising as much money as possible for their charities, Cullen-Lester intentionally left the parameters of the project open-ended.

“Managing the responsibility for designing and executing their event provided opportunities for students to develop ethical decision making, creative problem solving, leadership, collaboration and networking skills that they will need in a dynamic professional landscape.”

Students got creative with the events they decided to host, which ranged from profit-share nights at local

establishments, a pickleball tournament on campus and even the opportunity to “pie” the faces of team members in the Grove with a small donation. The students were given a week to raise awareness for their events through online campaigns and posts on social media. Donations were collected online after the events as well.

The challenge’s winning team raised a staggering \$4,023 for the Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children of North Mississippi by hosting a hybrid cornhole tournament and raffle at the Library Sports Bar in downtown Oxford. The

team was able to secure many highly valuable prizes for the event, including a football signed by Ole Miss head football coach Lane Kiffin.

MBA candidate and winning team member Grant McCullough credited his team’s success to its attention to detail in planning every aspect of the event.

“We acquired highly desired items to auction off and spent time walking around the venue to spread the word about our ongoing event,” he said. “The setting, prizes and outreach all together ultimately led to a successful charity event for our team.”

Among the other charities benefiting from the challenge were the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Good Sports’ Play for All initiative, the Hydrocephalus Association, the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, the NFL Alumni Youth of America and the UM William Magee Center for Wellness Education.

The students learned to leverage their individual strengths while also embracing shared leadership responsibilities within their teams. Participating in the challenge facilitated student involvement both on campus and within the broader Oxford community. The project’s outcomes have established a benchmark for future success.

BY LANDRY SUTTON AND LINDSEY WHITE



Jackson Tournillon (left), of Mandeville, Louisiana, and Reese Johnson, of Belle Chasse, Louisiana, both attended Ole Miss for undergraduate studies and were members of the 2023-24 class. Their charity of choice, the Hydrocephalus Association, came in second place receiving \$2,128 as part of the MBA Charity Challenge.



(From left) Natalie Sullivan, of Ellington, Connecticut; Annie Parkes, of Jackson; Lindsey White, of Oxford; Pearce Simmons, of Ruston, Louisiana; Tripp Gouras, of Madison; and Marc Gorski, of Atlanta, hosted a raffle contest benefiting the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as part of the 2023 MBA Charity Challenge. Four of them attended Ole Miss for undergraduate studies, while Gouras attended Mississippi State.

SUBMITTED

Ole Miss Business Professor Receives Hodgetts Award

JOHN BERNS



Milorad Novicevic with his wife, Olga, at the Marriott Copley Place on Aug. 6, one of the Boston-area hotels where the Academy of Management held its 2023 annual meeting. Novicevic is an associate professor of management at the UM's School of Business Administration.

Milorad Novicevic is third recipient of award from Academy of Management

The Academy of Management has bestowed a rare honor on Milorad Novicevic, associate professor of management at the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration.

Novicevic received the Richard M. Hodgetts Award for his contributions to management history research, excellence in teaching and service to the academy and its management history division.

The academy's management history division established the award in 2002 in memory of Hodgetts. The former University of Nebraska and Florida International University faculty member was an innovator in distance learning and an active member of the academy.

The award is given only when a recipient is deemed worthy by the division, and Novicevic is just the third recipient in its history. Previous recipients include Arthur G. Bedeian, of Louisiana State University, in 2007 and Robert Ford, of the University of Central Florida, in 2014.

"I am delighted that my contributions in all three areas – education, research and service – have been recognized at a time when the academy has

about 20,000 members, with the majority of them international," Novicevic said.

"I am also proud that not only my name, but also the name of the University of Mississippi, will be carved on the awards wall of the Academy of Management."

Novicevic came to Ole Miss in 2003. He has taught courses at the undergraduate, MBA and doctoral levels, including Principles of Management, International Business, International Management, Organization Theory, Strategic Management, Global Business, Management History, and Leadership and Ethics.

He has twice won awards for outstanding teaching in the undergraduate program and twice for outstanding

teaching in the MBA on-campus program.

With the academy, he served as a member of the executive committee of management history division from 2011 to 2015, during which time he was chair of the division. He has also served the academy as the reviewer of strategic plans submitted by five other divisions.

"(Novicevic) provides mentorship for doctoral students and early career scholars," said Trish McLaren, past chair of the division and associate vice president of academics at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, Canada. "He has actively worked to broaden the disciplinary scope of the division and welcome scholars from a variety of paradigms,

and he always has a smile and a laugh to enliven the room."

Novicevic has published more than 170 articles in numerous journals. He won the John F. Mee Award, and Halloran Award for Best Paper in Ethics, from the academy's management history division. He also won the SAGE Award for Best Paper in Leadership from the International Leadership Association.

"(Novicevic) sets the standard for both service, scholarship, and mentorship for the management history division," said Jeffrey Muldoon, of Emporia State University, the MHD chair-elect who presented the award at the academy's annual meeting Aug. 7 in Boston.

BY STELLA CONNELL

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Williamses Provide Major Gift to Ole Miss Business School

Rosemary and Sandy Williams, who have been actively involved in various community-building initiatives over the years, are giving \$250,000 for University of Mississippi student scholarships and faculty support.

The Corinth couple's gift will establish the Rosemary and Sandy Williams Scholar Endowment with \$150,000 and the Williams School of Business Administration Excellence in Teaching Endowment with \$100,000.

"For years, we have considered doing something that would at least make us feel like we were showing appreciation and the love we have for the university and our experiences there," said Sandy Williams, one of several members of his family who have earned degrees from Ole Miss. "I want Ole Miss to remain the No. 1 university in Mississippi and rank highly among national institutions of higher learning."

The Williamses have spent their lives focused on making a difference in their city, county and state.

"It is extremely important for the Ole Miss School of Business Administration to have professors who will maintain the quality and principles that have made it successful over the years and make it even better in the future," Sandy

Williams said. "I hope our heirs will be inclined to increase the funding we allocated to faculty support."

The Williamses believe education is the key to creating a better future for everyone, and they hope their new scholarship — like others they have helped create — will inspire future generations of students to pursue college degrees.

"I think even a modest scholarship can make a differ-



It is extremely important for the Ole Miss School of Business Administration to have professors who will maintain the quality and principles that have made it successful over the years and make it even better in the future."

— SANDY WILLIAMS

ence in whether a student is able or inclined to seek higher education. And it may help a student decide to go to Ole Miss rather than another college and could play a big part in their decision as to whether they live in Mississippi or not," Sandy Williams said.

The chair of Corinth Coca-Cola Bottling Works Inc., Williams was instrumental in establishing two other scholarships for Ole Miss business students: the Corinth Coca-Cola Business School Scholarship Endowment and the Refreshments Inc.

Partners in Business Scholarship Fund. He also helped found the national Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, which has supported scholarships totaling about \$81 million since 1989.

"We are extremely grateful for this amazing gift," said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. "Securing faculty support is one of our top priorities, and the scholarships will help

transform students' lives. The Williams family has invested in our business school for years, and their legacy will impact generations of students."

Ole Miss has long been part of the Williams family's story. Sandy Williams earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1957; Rosemary, a bachelor's degree in family and consumer sciences in 1960.

"I attended her graduation from Ole Miss and gave her a ring that day," he said. "Our next wedding anniversary will be our 64th."



Rosemary and Sandy Williams, of Corinth, have made a \$250,000 gift for scholarships and faculty support in the UM School of Business Administration. The family includes (seated from left), Spencer Yoder, Rosemary Williams, Sandy Williams, Reid Williams and Matt Williams; and (standing from left), Cooper Yoder, Bill Yoder, Lane Williams Yoder, Lee Williams, Drew Williams and Clay Williams.

Williams and his brother Kenneth Williams — president and CEO of Corinth Coca-Cola — are both founding board members of Corinth-Alcorn Reaching for Excellence, the city's only community foundation, and are lifelong members and former presidents of the Corinth/Alcorn Chamber of Commerce. The two were joint recipients of CREATE's George McLean Award for Philanthropy in 2009 and were honored with the Red Raspberry Humanitarian Award from the Regional Rehabilitation Center in 2020.

Sandy Williams also was the recipient of the 2020 Jack Reed Sr. Northeast Mississippi Community Leadership Award from the CREATE Foundation and was named Outstanding Citizen of Corinth in 1998.

Rosemary Williams' many areas of service led her to several state and national awards, and she was chosen Corinth's Outstanding Citizen in 1984.

She has been very active in her community and the state, particularly in the areas of preservation and economic development. She led the effort for the establishment of the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center and the preservation and operation of the historic Coliseum Civic Center and the historic Veranda-Curlee House.

Rosemary Williams was co-founder of Corinth's Symphony Orchestra, now in its 25th year, and served 20 years on the board of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

"It's important for everyone to do their best to help their

community develop and make things better than they were before, to help improve the standard of living for everyone; I think that's a debt we owe our communities," Sandy Williams said. "We encourage young people to do the same thing."

The Williamses are the parents of two grown children, Lane Williams Yoder (Bill) and Harry "Lee" Williams III (Tara), all of Corinth, and the grandparents of Cooper Yoder, Spencer Yoder, Clay Williams, Drew Williams, Matt Williams and Reid Williams.

BY TINA H. HAHN

To make a gift to the Rosemary and Sandy Williams Scholar Endowment or the Rosemary and Sandy Williams School of Business Excellence in Teaching Endowment, mail a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund's name noted in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford MS 38655, or give online at give.olemiss.edu. For information on ways to support the School of Business Administration, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.



At the BASE 2024 spring summit, students meet with hiring managers from several different industries and hone their networking and interviewing skills.

Third annual BASE Sales Summit and Career Expo Biggest Yet

Employees provide students with insights into sales industry

The third annual Business Analytics, Sales and Supply Chain, or BASE, Summit and Career Expo, hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration, brought together a record number of students with potential employers in the field.

The event, held March 5 in the Paul B. Johnson Commons, featured numerous employees from 49 Financial, AT&T, Dell Technologies, Harrah's Gulf Coast, Insight Global, Modern Woodmen of America, Mylo, Result Group, Strategic Financial Partners and Trane.

"Our career and networking events are great learning opportunities for students interested in sales, supply chain or business analytics careers, and we continue to gain traction every

semester," said Matt Shaner, director of the BASE program and assistant professor of marketing. "We had a record student turnout last fall, and we more than doubled our fall attendance this spring."

Mary Katherine Womack, business development partner at Result Group, and Morgan Ball, the firm's director of business operations, discussed the early phases of their careers and what they have learned. They emphasized that sales is more than finance; it also includes a focus on building relationships and connections with clients.

"Ole Miss builds people up to be social people, work a room and apply knowledge learned in a classroom for the real world," said Womack, a Nashville, Tennessee, resident who earned her



We want students to have every opportunity to succeed in their careers, including developing both analytical acumen as well as effective communication skills."

— MATT SHANER

degree in integrated marketing communications at Ole Miss. "Sales is a people-oriented job and you learn quickly."

Serving your community is another important consideration, said Laura Avant, representing Modern Woodmen, a holistic financial service company. Modern Woodmen handles everything from life insurance and investment funds to retirement planning and estate planning. But more importantly, the client-owned company focuses on giving back to communities across the country, she said.

"The difference between us is that we are a fraternal based company, which just means that we are not owned by stockholders," Avant said. "So, we are owned by our members and by our clients, which allows us to do more for them."

"Like last year, we put \$1.2 million back into the state of Mississippi."

The company also has been assisting with rebuilding efforts in the Monroe County town of Amory, following a tornado last year.

The large number of companies represented allowed students to talk one-on-one with employees and understand more about each company and what hiring managers look for in prospective employees.

"We want students to have every opportunity to succeed in their careers, including developing both analytical acumen as well as effective communication skills," Shaner said. "These events are designed to give them exposure to industry recruiters, as well as the practice and polish they need to develop the kind of executive presence that will serve them well long after they've graduated."

BY JACQUELYN DELAVALDENE
PHOTOS BY AMY HOWELL



Representatives from AT&T's business-to-business group in New Orleans interview students at the BASE Summit and Career Expo.

Alumnus Doug Wilson Named 2024 AMS Distinguished Marketing Practitioner

The Academy of Marketing Science, an international scholarly organization, has named Charles Douglas “Doug” Wilson, CEO/president of Gulf South Management Inc. and a UM School of Business Administration alumnus, the AMS Distinguished Marketing Practitioner for 2024.

This marks the second consecutive year that an Ole Miss business school graduate has been tapped for the award, recognizing marketers who distinguish themselves in business and/or public policy through success, integrity and high ethical standards. The award was presented

during the 2024 AMS 49th annual conference, which took place in Coral Gables, Florida.

The Academy of Marketing Science Foundation is an international, scholarly, professional organization. It is dedicated to promoting high standards and excellence in the creation and dissemination of marketing knowledge and the furtherance of marketing practice through a leadership role within the discipline of marketing worldwide.

Wilson delivered a presentation during the conference on the importance of treating customers fairly. He provided insights into the way sales professionals should be trained and

motivated. In particular, Wilson was among the first automotive retailers to move away from a margin-based sales commission model to a salary-based model, giving sales professionals more reason to listen to customers’ needs and desires.

On hand from the Ole Miss business school were Ken Cyree, dean and Frank R. Day/Mississippi Bankers Association Chair of Banking, and Barry Babin, chair of the Department of Marketing and Phil B. Hardin Chair of Marketing.

“Doug was a perfect fit, given the eligibility requirements for the award,” Babin said. “He has shown significant leadership in directing auto dealerships that he owned and has a noteworthy track record of achievements recognized by his franchisors for excellence in sales and service. He also epitomizes integrity and ethics in his marketing actions.”

Wilson responded, “Sales and marketing form the backbone of our free enterprise system, and as they say, ‘Nothing happens until someone sells something!’ As businesses consolidate, entrepreneurs and innovators are hard at work creating the next genre of businesses and even entire industries.

“This is especially true in marketing because we live in exciting times where artificial intelligence, targeted digital marketing, big data, social media marketing and good old-fashioned personal selling are sorting out the real winners via the best economic system ever created — the free enterprise system.

“My wife, Melanie, and I enjoyed our time at the Academy of Marketing Science conference,” Wilson continued. “Seeing the best and brightest from all over the globe who are hard at work finding marketing avenues that create sales and therefore wealth against a fast-changing, dynamic marketing ecosystem was an inspiration that our market-based free enterprise system is in good hands for many years to come.”

Wilson is CEO/president of Gulf South Management Inc., which manages the Wilson Auto Group Inc.; Wilson Kia in Flowood; Collierville Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep and Ram in Tennessee; Wilson Real Estate LLC; Wilson Real Estate

“

Doug was a perfect fit, given the eligibility requirements for the award. He has shown significant leadership in directing auto dealerships that he owned and has a noteworthy track record of achievements recognized by his franchisors for excellence in sales and service. He also epitomizes integrity and ethics in his marketing actions.”

— BARRY BABIN

Tennessee LLC; and Gulf South Real Estate Development LLC. Wilson won the Chrysler 5 Star Award for Service Excellence and the Kia President’s Club Award. Wilson Auto Group was named in Mississippi’s Top 40 Fastest Growing Private Companies.

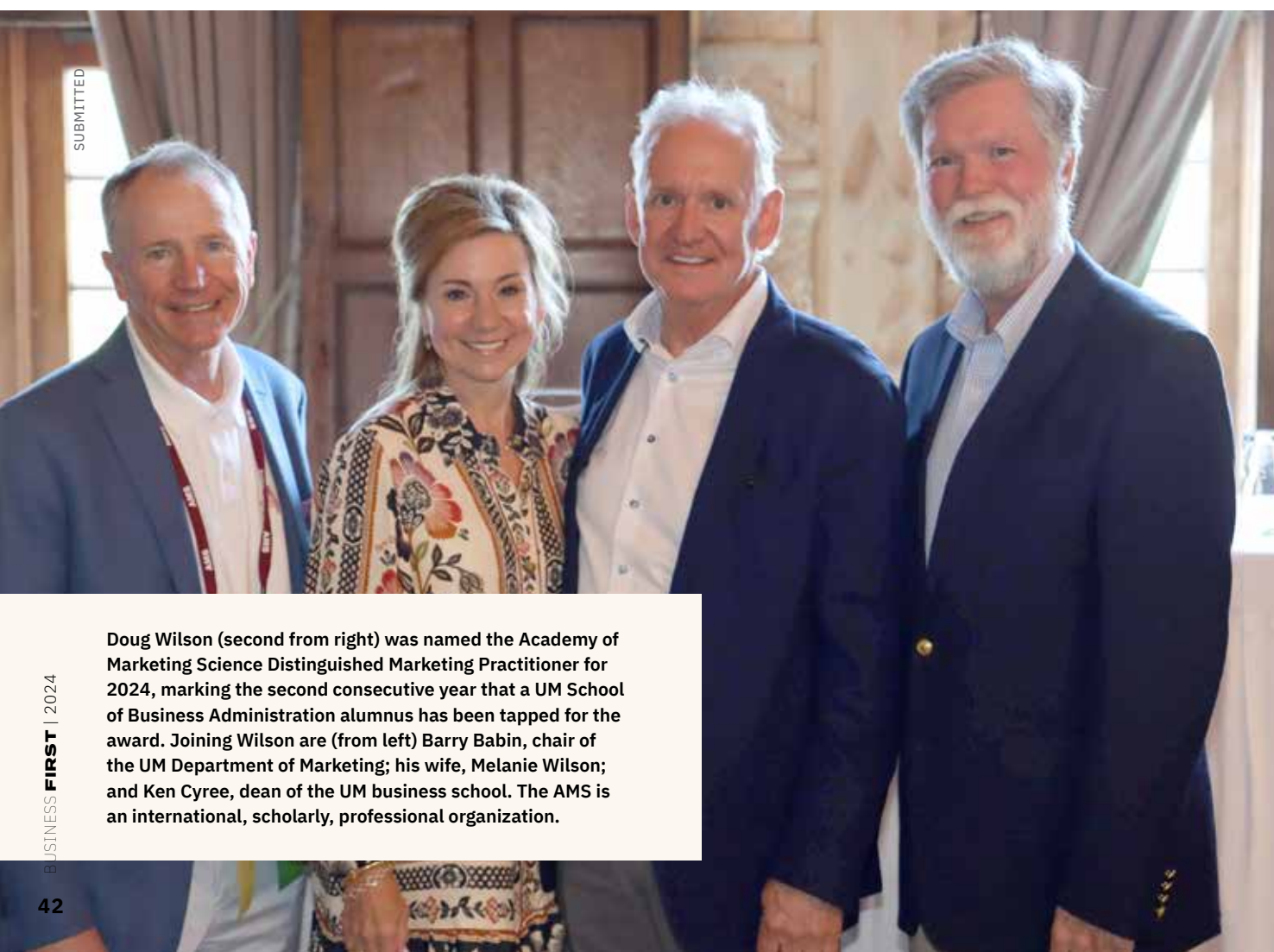
The business leader was born in Jackson in 1960, attended Jackson Public Schools, earned a degree in managerial finance from Ole Miss in 1982 and resides in Destin, Florida. He began working as a young man at his father’s car dealership, built four dealerships from the ground up and recently sold two of his dealerships.

The Melanie and Doug Wilson Entrepreneur Award Fund was established in 2023 at Ole Miss to assist the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship through the annual awarding of a \$20,000 first-place prize. The CIE issues this award during the Gillespie Business Plan Competition to a student entrepreneur venture team or individual who exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit through a venture driven by innovation in a product, process or service.

Wilson also gives his time and expertise to the School of Business Administration, serving as a judge on the “Shark Tank”-style entrepreneurship competitions and speaking to MBA-level classes on entrepreneurship and innovation.

Wilson joins an accomplished list of recent AMS Distinguished Marketing Practitioner award winners, including Ole Miss alumnus Lyttleton “Lyt” Harris, of Harris Investment Partnership, Scott Smith, of Qualtrics, Jeffrey S. Zehnder, of Zehnder Communications, Ben Lee, of Pierry Software, and numerous Fortune 500 executives.

BY TINA H. HAHN



Doug Wilson (second from right) was named the Academy of Marketing Science Distinguished Marketing Practitioner for 2024, marking the second consecutive year that a UM School of Business Administration alumnus has been tapped for the award. Joining Wilson are (from left) Barry Babin, chair of the UM Department of Marketing; his wife, Melanie Wilson; and Ken Cyree, dean of the UM business school. The AMS is an international, scholarly, professional organization.

To make a gift to the Melanie and Doug Wilson Entrepreneur Award Fund, send a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund’s name noted on the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655 or online at give.olemiss.edu. For more information, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.



BILL DABNEY

Charles Doty (center) participates on a panel, judging the Gillespie Business Plan Competition. 2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the competition.

A BOON FOR BUSINESS

Business Grad's Gift to Benefit Young Entrepreneurs

Charles Doty's recent gift to the University of Mississippi will help School of Business Administration students participating in the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The Atlanta resident's \$150,000 gift establishes the Charles R. Doty CIE Support Fund to provide resources for business plan competitions and Career Treks, which connect students with employers

to find sought-after job and internship opportunities.

"I knew I wanted to do something for Ole Miss, and I spent time considering the issues and areas that mean something to me," said Doty, co-CEO of Asset Preservation Advisors, an investment advisory firm that specializes in managing municipal bond portfolios.

"I felt like the CIE was a great option because it would allow

me to share my experiences — both good and bad — with students pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors," said Doty, who recently served as a judge of the CIE-hosted program Gillespie Business Plan Competition, in which students pitch ideas Shark Tank-style for the chance to win cash awards.

Doty himself offers a \$10,000 prize to a student entrepreneur venture team or individual who exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit through a venture



I believe in the four T's of treasure, time, talent and ties. So I look forward to spending time, sharing my learned talents and earned treasure at the university where I have developed many ties."

— CHARLES DOTY

driven by innovation in a product, process or service.

The CIE's mission is to inspire UM students to create innovative businesses through excellent teaching, exceptional service and world-class research.

"I have enjoyed getting to know Charles through his service on our advisory board, and I appreciate his desire to participate in the many great things we have here in the CIE," co-director Clay Dibrell said. "I'm equally grateful for his generous gift, which will greatly help in continuing our innovative interactions with our students, preparing them to become highly successful in the businesses they establish."

After graduating from Ole Miss in 1983 with a B.B.A., Doty joined Trust Company Bank in the Capital Markets Division. He also founded Atlanta Washer and Dryer Leasing, which turned into Appliance Warehouse and was ultimately sold to Coinmach Laundry.

"I have started a couple of businesses and have experience — from raising capital, running and growing the business and selling the business to a publicly traded company," Doty said. "I believe in the four T's of treasure, time, talent and ties. So I look forward to spending time, sharing my learned talents and earned treasure at the university where I have developed many ties."

"I am very impressed with what the CIE has accomplished. The leadership, faculty, staff and students have all done outstanding work. I am excited to be involved and look forward to contributing for years to come. I just hope my gift can make a difference

to someone who's getting started in the business world."

Doty has been with APA since 2002 and in the municipal bond business for over 35 years. He worked for SunTrust Equitable Securities for 16 years, eventually serving as director of national institutional municipal sales. In 1999, he co-founded Municipal Trade, an online public finance investment bank, as president and COO.

The donor is a former board chair of Prevent Blindness Georgia and a past advisory board member at Skyland Trail, George West Mental Health Foundation. He is a member of the National Federation of Municipal Analysts and the Southern Municipal Finance Society.

Doty has been included in Barron's list of Top 100 Independent Wealth Advisors and Top 1,200 Advisors. Additionally, he has appeared on CNBC to discuss topics related to the municipal bond market.

Doty is a lifelong Rebel fan, having grown up in Senatobia, only 45 miles from campus.

"I grew up going to Ole Miss football games," he said. "I remember watching Archie play from 1968 to 1970. I knew then that I wanted to attend Ole Miss and never thought about going anywhere else."

Doty and his wife, Carol, have three grown children: Lanier and Charles, both UM graduates, and Virginia.

BY BILL DABNEY

To make a gift to the Charles R. Doty CIE Support Fund, mail a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund's name noted in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford MS 38655.

For information on ways to support the School of Business Administration and the CIE, contact Patrick Salter, associate director of development, at psalter@olemiss.edu or 662-915-1584.



SUBMITTED

School of Business Administration Dean Ken Cyree (left) and Charles Doty (right) are pictured with business students Maryn Sifrit and Madison Hanna, the 2024 winners of the \$10,000 Charles R. Doty Entrepreneur Award, and second-place winners of the Gillespie Business Plan Competition.

OLE MISS ALUMNI ENCOURAGE
STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS AT SUMMIT

More than 250 students gather to gain insights from local success story

The University of Mississippi graduates responsible for introducing a groundbreaking marketplace app that has made thrift fashion more accessible for college students encouraged budding entrepreneurs and offered advice at the sixth annual REDe Entrepreneurship Summit.

Hosted by the UM Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the annual summit celebrates and enhances entrepreneurial initiatives undertaken by Ole Miss students from various disciplines, with a unique theme being emphasized each year.

“The sixth annual REDe Summit was about inspiring our students to find their calling and to better understand where their passion lies,” said Clay Dibrell, CIE co-director. “As we celebrate the University of Mississippi’s 175th anniversary, we want our students to be inspired by their calling and to better understand how

passion can pull them through difficult times by having their life callings drive their passion.”

More than 250 students gathered to hear from Claire Ficek, an Ole Miss integrated marketing communications junior from Maple Plain, Minnesota, as well as William Ault, Clara Agnes Ault and Eli Allen, all Ole Miss alumni and co-founders of Curtsy, along with their CEO, David Oates, who moderated the panel discussion.

“Meeting the Curtsy team and hearing their story about how they got their start right here at Ole Miss inspired me and many of my peers who were in attendance,” said Ficek, founder of Altar’d Socials, a social media management company that she started in high school. “I think it’s safe to say that the CIE equips their students to be successful entrepreneurs, no matter what field of business they may enter.”

Ficek, the summit’s opening speaker, was also the first-place winner of the 2023 Gillespie Business Plan Competition in April.



More than 250 students gather to hear the success story behind Curtsy, a marketplace app for college students to buy, sell and rent clothing items from other college students.



Claire Ficek, an Ole Miss integrated marketing communications junior from Maple Plain, Minnesota, and founder of social media management company Altar’d Socials, was the opening speaker for the REDe event.

As head of growth for Curtsy, William Ault focuses on developing the business through marketing and product initiatives to reach more customers.

“I enjoyed visiting Ole Miss and speaking with students interested in starting businesses,” he said. “I was excited to share our challenges

and experiences starting a company in Oxford, hoping it would help students avoid making the same mistakes.”

Julia Frazer, a junior marketing major from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Scholar for the Grisham-McLean Institute for



The Curtsy team gather for a photo after the breakfast meet and greet with the CIE team and students. (From left) Clara Agnes Ault, William Ault, Eli Allen and David Oates.

Public Service and Community Engagement, attended a meet-and-greet breakfast with the Curtsy team before the summit.

“The occasion was profoundly inspiring,” Frazer said. “It offered firsthand insights from the founders of Curtsy, each with a unique, light-hearted and incredible take on their journey.”

“Their collective ability to pool ideas and create Curtsy showcased the power of converging passionate minds.”

After honing their concept at Ole Miss and landing a grant in 2015 from the Rebel Student Venture Fund, the Curtsy founders moved to San Francisco, where they have raised more

than \$15 million in capital. The company has grown into a nationwide business and has a projected 2024 revenue of \$30 million.

“It is just great to see our former student entrepreneurs follow their calling and become so highly successful through their passion and hard work,” Dibrell said. “Given the engagement and questions from the audience, I could see they were inspiring our students for what comes tomorrow.”

“These are the lessons that we want our Ole Miss student entrepreneurs to embrace.”

The Curtsy team also served as judges for the 2023 Servin’ the South Business Model Competition the following afternoon.

“I loved seeing all of the student businesses and how the startup community in Oxford has grown so much just in the few years since we were in school,” said Allen, Curtsy’s chief technology officer.

“It really speaks to the level of commitment by the university and the CIE faculty; I’m excited to see it continue to flourish in the years to come.”

BY ANGELICA OWENS
PHOTOS BY JOE WORTHEM

UM alumnus William Ault (right) speaks about the establishment of marketplace app Curtsy, along with co-founder Clara Agnes Ault.



Ralph and Pat Doering enjoy Phi Delta Theta Casino Night 2022 at The Jefferson in Oxford with their son, Henry.

‘NIL’ for Academics

Parents of UM student make gift to help attract top-tier faculty

A recent gift to the University of Mississippi from Pat and Ralph Doering will help attract top talent to teach and research within the School of Business Administration.

The Fort Lauderdale, Florida, couple’s \$50,000 gift will establish the Doering Family Endowment for the School of Business.

Though the Doerings attended other universities, they are members of UM’s Family Leadership Council, having joined when their son, Henry, enrolled at Ole Miss two years ago. Henry Doering is a sophomore business major and history minor who hopes to have a career in real estate. He also is an active member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

“Dean Ken Cyree has made it clear that building an endowment, a war chest, if you will, to give him more opportunity to attract and retain the best faculty for the business school is one of his top priorities and initiatives. This resonated with our family,” said Ralph Doering, a real estate investor based in Fort Lauderdale.

“We understand that in the sports world, business world and academic world, the competition to attract and retain top talent is fierce. If Ole Miss wants to attract top talent for the business school, it needs to have the resources

to make it happen, and that means money. Think of this faculty support endowment as NIL for academics.”

Cyree said the Doerings’ gift will transform the lives of hundreds of students every semester.

“Having a stellar faculty is crucial to providing the incredible educational opportunities we offer our students,” the dean said. “The formal part of education is performed by the faculty, and the extent to which we can attract and retain world-class faculty greatly determines our future as a university.”

In addition to supporting academics, the Doerings have also made gifts to Ole Miss athletics.

“Ole Miss is hot right now,” Ralph Doering said. “Whether it is the baseball championship, the 10-2 football team heading to the Peach Bowl, the climbing academic profile or the record-breaking student enrollment numbers, it is easy to see that Ole Miss is hot and firing on all cylinders. There’s no better time than now to make an investment in the University of Mississippi.”

“Our family is going to keep supporting this endowment on an ongoing basis, and we hope others will see the value in contributing to Dean Cyree’s faculty support initiative.”

BY BILL DABNEY

The Doering Family Endowment for the School of Business Administration is open to support from businesses and individuals. Gifts can be made by sending a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund’s name noted on the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655 or by giving online at give.olemiss.edu. For more information about supporting the School of Business Administration, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181. For information on joining UM’s Family Leadership Council, contact Brett Barefoot, executive director for central development, at bmbarefo@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2711.



Participants hear from industry representatives at a panel discussion during the 22nd annual Banking and Finance Symposium. The 2023 symposium set a record for the event with more than 250 registrants.

Banking Symposium Provides Insights Into Timely Challenges

Event draws largest crowd ever as participants eye impact of technology on industry

Leveraging digital assets, mergers and acquisitions, trends in fintech and the use of artificial intelligence in banking were among the timely topics addressed at the 22nd annual Banking and Finance Symposium, hosted by the UM School of Business Administration.

The conference, held Oct. 27 at the Oxford Conference Center, drew its largest audience ever, with more than 250 professionals from 17 states.

Looking to a future in the industry that will include changes in technology and the introduction of fintech and artificial intelligence, symposium organizers made important additions to the event's content, said Stan Viner, chair of the school's Banking and Finance Advisory Board.

"This year technology panels – Fintech, AI and Blockchain – were added to the lineup to offer more variety as banks continue to employ a 'technology first' strategy," Viner said.

Christopher Mihok, managing director at Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, spoke as part of a panel examining the future of mergers and acquisitions in the industry. When asked about red flags in the financial environment and how they will affect the future of mergers and acquisitions, Mihok offered an optimistic outlook.

"To me the biggest thing is to sit tight until we have less uncertainty, more clarity (on) what the Fed is doing, more clarity as to the path of inflation, and ultimately an election that will lead to more M&As in the future," he said.

During an afternoon session addressing digital assets and the use of artificial intelligence in

financial institutions, the conversation revolved around how to regulate and manage the growth of AI.

"Companies need to set guidelines on how to use this and who can use it," said Larry Pruss, managing director at Strategic Resource Management. "There are problems with internal inherent biases, and it could really create problems for a financial institution if your employee is using AI without some rules and guidelines."

The closing session shifted to strategic talent planning, with a panel of experts exploring vital facets of human resources, employee recruitment and retention.

"People want to be on the winning team," said Sean O'Neal, partner in financial services/real estate at Chartwell Partners. "People want to enjoy the people they're with and not focus on politics. Be flexible where you can and you'll open up the talent pool."

With a focus on fostering positive workplace cultures, panelists discussed how to create a more positive and welcoming work environment.

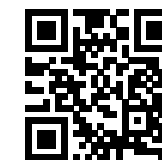
"It starts from the top down," said Marcus Malory, executive vice president and chief banking officer at BankFirst. "It takes time for that culture to be developed."



Business school interns Lauren Munnell (left), a senior from Nashville, Tennessee, majoring in finance, and Samantha Hendrix, a senior from Sacramento, California, majoring in integrated marketing communications, who, with Jacquelyn Delavaldene (not pictured), a 2024 marketing graduate from Dallas, wrote this story.

BY JACQUELYN DELAVALDENE,
SAMANTHA HENDRIX AND LAUREN MUNNELL
PHOTOS BY STELLA CONNELL

The 2024 Banking & Finance Symposium will be held November 8. Scan here to register.



Stan Viner (left), chair of the Banking and Finance Advisory Board, and Ken Cyree (second from right), dean of the UM School of Business Administration, congratulate Milton Ray 'Hoppy' Cole Jr. (second from left), recipient of the 2023 Distinguished Finance Executive Award; and Charles Clark Jr., recipient of the 2023 Emerging Finance Executive Award. The awards were presented at the school's annual Banking and Finance Symposium.

Student Entrepreneurs Win \$20,000 at Gillespie Competition

More than 50 Ole Miss student teams competed for top prize

A digital marketplace for vintage clothing that allows sellers to elevate their brand through a shared customer base won first place during the 20th Gillespie Business Plan Competition at the University of Mississippi.

Hosted by the UM Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the annual competition allows Ole Miss student entrepreneurs to pitch their business to expert judges for a chance to win \$20,000 and an office space at Insight Park.

Fifty-four student teams competed in the event, with seven teams advancing to the final round. All seven finalists received \$1,250 in funding.

Owen Ridgeway, a senior entrepreneurship major from Jackson; Preston Rollins, a senior business management major from Atlanta; and David Markham, a senior accounting major from Houston, Texas, are the founders of SellVNTG (pronounced Sell Vintage), which took home the Edward G. Francis Sr. Entrepreneur Award as well as the competition's first-place prize.

The team members developed the concept of an online vintage marketplace and pitched it to the CIE 18 months ago, said Ridgeway, CEO of the startup. They entered the 2022 business model competition but did not progress far in that challenge, he said.

They honed their business plan and made the finals of both the 2023 Gillespie competition and Business Model Competition.

"A year and a half of mentorship, hard work and consistency has positioned us perfectly to compete and win the 2024 Gillespie Business (Plan) Competition," Ridgeway said.

This year's competition was the largest ever, with some \$80,000 in cash prizes and awards, said Clay Dibrell, CIE co-director.

"One of the amazing aspects of the Gillespie Business Plan Competition is to watch the growth from one year to the next, such as SellVNTG going from a finalist in 2023 to winning the \$20,000 Melanie and Doug Wilson 2024 first-place prize and incubator space at the UM Innovation Hub at Insight Park," he said.

Ole Miss students Madison Hanna and Maryn Sifrit, co-founders of the Collegemate App, won

SRIJITA CHATTOPADHYAY



(From left to right) Preston Rollins, David Markham and Owen Ridgeway, co-founders of SellVNTG (pronounced Sell Vintage), were winners of the 2024 Gillespie.

the Charles R. Doty Entrepreneur Award and second place in the competition. The Collegemate App is an online platform that connects incoming college freshmen to prospective roommates.

"Preparing for the Gillespie Business Plan Competition was beneficial in mapping out our business's future," Hanna said. "The guidance from our mentors and pitch coaches was super helpful, along with the feedback from the judges."

"Collegemate has grown immensely over the past year, and it would not have been possible without all of the support from the CIE," Sifrit said.

Runners-up in the competition included:

- **Ya Xin Huang**, a senior entrepreneurship major from Forest, founder of Sing Sauce
- **Julien Bourgeois**, a freshman computer science major from New Orleans, co-founder and CEO of Automatic AI LLC
- **Claire Watkiss**, a senior entrepreneurship major from Chicago, founder of Needle
- **Stephanie Handford**, a senior mechanical engineering major from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and **Evan Lampsa**, a senior entrepreneurship major at the University of Miami, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, co-founders of Ketchup Please
- **Will McEwan**, a senior accounting major from Memphis, Tennessee; **Alex Bailey**, a senior accounting and finance major from New York; **Eric Russ**, a senior accounting and economics major from Nashville, Tennessee; and **Carson May**, a senior finance major from Austin, Texas, co-founders of Sticky Boobs.

"We are excited to see what each of these teams will do going forward," Dibrell said. "Entrepreneurship is alive and well in Mississippi."

BY ANGELICA OWENS

ELIZABETH DANIELLE PARKER



Gillespie awardees and their awards

ELIZABETH DANIELLE PARKER

Ben Burnett (center) visits with real estate board member Kendall Davis (right). Burnett (BBA 22) is an associate broker with Matthews Real Estate Investment Services in Nashville.



Third Annual Real Estate Career and Internship Fair a Success

UM School of Business Administration welcomed real estate employers to campus

The UM School of Business Administration hosted its third annual Real Estate Career and Internship Fair at the Jackson Avenue Center in November 2023.

“The fall Career and Internship Fair is open to all majors who have an interest in real

estate,” said Charles Hilterbrand, instructional assistant professor of finance/real estate.

“An interesting point to this career and internship fair is that members of the Ole Miss Real Estate Advisory Board will be actively participating in the career fair.

“This is an excellent opportunity for employers, students

and board members to expand their networks.”

Real estate professionals displayed material on dedicated tables, and interview rooms and sponsorship opportunities were available upon request.

Companies represented at the event included Mississippi Title Group, Oxford Rental Properties Co. PLLC, Henry

S. Miller Co., BBG Real Estate Services, Hillwood Investment Properties, Cushman & Wakefield and Matthews Real Estate Investment Services.

A Certified Commercial Investment Member, or CCIM, Institute table included members from the Randall Commercial Group LLC, NAI UCR Properties, Overby Commercial and The Estes Group Inc. The UM Croft Institute also presented a Freeman Grant internship opportunity for those who wish to work with property in East Asia.

“This is a great way for students to meet companies that are looking to hire young professionals that want to be in the real estate business,” said Steve Donosky, president of Henry S. Miller Co. and chair of the UM Real Estate Advisory Board.

“We specialize in all different types of commercial real estate from office, retail, industrial, corporate services, appraisal

“

The real estate career fair, changed my life in that I was able to make the connection that led to my current career and first job out of college.”

— BEN BURNETT

management, etc. It is a great way for students to meet companies that want to hire and potentially get a job offer.”

Recent Ole Miss alumnus Ben Burnett attended the career and internship fair in 2022, where he made connections that led to his first job postgraduation.

“As for my experience with the real estate career fair, for one, the event changed my life in that I was able to make the connection that led to my current career and first job out of college,” Burnett said. “But secondly, the special thing about the event is that you’re able to meet face-to-face with Ole Miss alums who not only had the same desire to get into

CRE after college, but more importantly tap into the vast network of Rebels who are in all aspects of the industry across the country.”

Burnett works at Matthews Real Estate Investment Services in Nashville and represented the company at the event.

“The Ole Miss real estate major is one of the oldest and largest in the country,” Hilterbrand said. “In the 2022-23 school year, there were 61 Ole Miss students who received a degree in real estate.

“The curriculum is heavily focused on real estate investment and valuation. The fall Career and Internship Fair is a forum for our students to interact with real estate professionals to aid students in the formulation of plans for their future career paths.”

BY LAUREN MUNNELL
PHOTOS BY
SRIJITA CHATTOPADHYAY



Peyton Adams (left), of Cannon Cleary Real Estate in Oxford, with George Haymans, of Haymans & Co. PLLC, also in Oxford, at the third annual real estate career fair on the UM campus.

UM HOLDS INAUGURAL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING WEEK

Events showcase experience as fast track to success

The University of Mississippi hosted its first Experiential Learning Week Sept. 12 and 14 on the UM campus. Faculty and students from across campus joined together for seminars, workshops and a resource fair, all providing insights on the importance of experiential learning in today's world.

"Experiential learning allows students to learn by doing and can help them confirm their strengths and interests,"

said Wesley Dickens, associate director of experiential education and partnerships for the School of Business Administration. "This week was dedicated to highlighting the many forms of experiential education, such as internships, study abroad, volunteering and student leadership in campus organizations, as well as campus resources that support students in gaining this valuable experience."

To commence the week, the business school brought in Michael True, founder of

InternQube.com and an expert in the field of experiential learning, to give faculty members a presentation on the importance of internships for their students' future success.

"[Faculty] have the ability to impact the lives of students in a very significant way by helping them find and successfully proceed through an internship, and hopefully more than one internship, which will prepare them for the workplace," True said.

Following the presentation, True hosted a student



Alyssa Taylor (right), a senior from Panama City, Florida, majoring in general business, visits with an attendee at the internship showcase at the Student Union. Taylor interned for Weatherford International in Houston, Texas, over the summer helping to develop a facilities-transfer plan.

KEVIN BAIN



Mike True (third from left), founder of InternQube.com, with members of the UM business school's career preparation team. They are (from left) Wesley Dickens, director of career services; Meg Barnes, former director of undergraduate career preparation; and Colleen Clark, career events coordinator.

SUBMITTED

workshop focused on helping students map the most efficient pathway to their desired postgraduate career. Among the topics covered were resume building, interview preparation, internship conduct and learned marketing experiences to demonstrate to future employers.

The week culminated with the internship showcase, sponsored by the UM Division of Outreach, where students discussed internships with representatives from the UM

Internship Experience, the UM Career Center and eight student interns from six different academic units.

The eight student interns, each a senior undergraduate, were chosen by their department for completing an outstanding internship over the summer.

"My internship was exactly what I wanted," said Alyssa Taylor, a general business major from Panama City, Florida, who plans to work in the oil and gas industry. "I interned

for Weatherford International at their headquarters in Houston, Texas. They really allowed me to explore the oil industry and what I could see myself doing in the future."

Students of all classifications attended the showcase, and they greatly appreciated the opportunity to talk internships peer-to-peer.

"It was encouraging to speak with fellow students who have already accomplished so much at their internships," said Aaron Wyckoff, a sophomore finance major from Plainfield, Illinois. "Right now, it's early, but I'm already looking to line up internships."

"I think the classroom can only teach so much, and I believe that getting real work experience will give me a great competitive edge in the job market."

“

Right now, it's early, but I'm already looking to line up internships. I think the classroom can only teach so much, and I believe that getting real work experience will give me a great competitive edge in the job market.

— AARON WYCKOFF

BY LANDRY SUTTON



School of
**Business
Administration**

At the heart of the University of Mississippi's School of Business Administration is the mission to produce exceptional business leaders today who will make a positive impact on the world tomorrow. We are proud of national rankings and more than 107 years of lasting experience. Our commitment to preparing students for rewarding careers demands innovation and dedication, and we continue to put our students first to make an impact for the future.

The School of Business Administration has proven worthy of your investments. Over the last five years, our school has excelled more than ever with the impact of the career preparation initiatives. Ole Miss undergraduate business students reported average starting salaries of more than \$57,000. An impressive 97% of undergraduate students earn their diplomas and are employed or pursuing additional degrees after graduation.

Whether you are interested in providing student scholarships or support for faculty, staff, career services, experiential learning or facilities, find out more about the various ways you can support the business school by contacting Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-801-0569.

Be a part of fueling the momentum in the School of Business Administration for generations of Ole Miss business students to come. You can make a gift online at umfoundation.com/GiveToBusiness. Please remember gifts of all sizes combine to have a powerful impact.



FACULTY Updated 7/25/24

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- Dr. Bahram Alidaee;** Professor, School of Business Fellow
- Dr. Tony Ammeter;** Director of Outreach and Continuing Studies, Assoc. Provost, Dean of General Studies, Associate Professor of Management and MIS
- Dr. Laurie Babin;** Instructional Associate, Professor
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- Dr. Melissa Cinelli;** Assistant Professor
- Dr. Sumali Conlon;** Associate Professor
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- Dr. Cong Feng;** Associate Professor, Morris Lewis, Jr. Lectureship
- Mr. RJ Hill;** Instructional Assistant Professor
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- Dr. David Mathis;** Assistant Professor
- Dr. Christopher Newman;** Self Chair of Free Enterprise, Associate Professor
- Dr. Tim Overton;** Instructional Assistant Professor
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- Dr. Carla Rego;** Instructional Assistant Professor
- Dr. Cesar Rego;** Professor
- Dr. Matt Shaner;** Instructional Assistant Professor, Director of BASE
- Dr. Nicholas Sullivan;** Assistant Professor
- Dr. Kexin Xiang;** Instructional Assistant Professor
- Dr. Da Xu;** Assistant Professor

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- Mr. Jason Ware;** Instructional Assistant Professor
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- Dr. Seong Won Yang;** Assistant Professor

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- Dr. Jihoon Hwang;** Assistant Professor
- Dr. Ken Johnson;** Professor, Endowed Chair of Real Estate
- Dr. Lynn Kugele;** Instructional Assistant Professor
- Dr. Andre Liebenberg;** Professor, Robertson Chair of Insurance
- Dr. Ivonne Liebenberg;** Instructional Assistant Professor
- Dr. Jingshu Luo;** Assistant Professor
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- Dr. Robert Van Ness;** Director of Graduate Programs, Bruce Moore Scholar, Professor
- Dr. Mark Walker;** Associate Professor

STAFF Updated 7/25/24

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