

BUSINESS **FIRST**





KEVIN BAIN

We hope you enjoy the magazine that showcases many of the great things going on in the Ole Miss School of Business. It has been a difficult year and a half as we experienced the challenges of COVID-19 that disrupted all of our lives. However, in the tradition of the Ole Miss spirit, we have pressed forward as faculty, staff, students and alumni to create excellent educational opportunities and great success stories that we share with you in this issue.

In this issue of *BusinessFirst*, you can read about our students' organizing club sports, winning contests and giving back to the community. We have stories about the generosity of our alumni in gifts to our school and programs, and we share with you the impressive achievements of our faculty. Much of the success of the business school is the daily work of our staff to keep us all moving forward together.

I hope you enjoy these stories. We look forward to being with you again soon.

Sincerely,

Ken Cyree
Dean

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Early Career Award

Kristin Cullen-Lester, assistant professor of management at the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration, has been selected to receive the 2021 Distinguished Early Career Contributions Award – Practice from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Cullen-Lester was invited to present at the 2021 annual conference, April 14-17, in New Orleans. She presented, with winners of several other awards, in a “Best Practice and Application” session.

“Throughout my career, I have worked to advance scientific thinking regarding leadership development practices through my research and by working with leaders to improve themselves and their organizations,” Cullen-Lester said. “I am excited and honored to receive this recognition.”

The winner of this award is selected based on the breadth and depth of the nominee’s contributions to advancing the science and, particularly, the practice of the psychology of work. Award recipients demonstrate not only a record of publications and presentations, but also have advanced the adoption of evidence-based practices and produced transformational change within organizations.

“When Dr. Cullen-Lester came to us in the fall of 2020, we knew that we were hiring a talented researcher and excellent teacher,” said Paul Johnson, associate professor and chair of the management department. “Her selection by SIOP as someone who is impacting how businesses operate early in her career only confirms that.

“Kristin is already working with companies and organizations locally and globally to help them be successful, while also influencing management practice through her research and teaching. She is a respected and valued member of the University of Mississippi, and we’re fortunate to have her here working with us.”

Cullen-Lester joined the School of Business Administration in 2020 after serving as an assistant professor of management in the Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston



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Kristin Cullen-Lester

for two years and leading the Center for Creative Leadership’s research and development work incorporating networks into leadership development for six years.

She earned her Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology in 2011 from Auburn University. Her research focuses on improving leadership effectiveness by helping leaders develop their networks, improve complex collaboration and enact strategic, large-scale change.

“We are pleased that Dr. Cullen-Lester is receiving this recognition of her accomplishments,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the Ole Miss business school. “We are fortunate to have dedicated scholars such as Kristin who have been so impactful in publishing and industry.

“Dr. Cullen-Lester’s work is an important bridge between academic scholarship and industry practice, and we are excited for her future impact on our students and the business school. We are fortunate to have her join our faculty, and I appreciate her dedication to the profession.”

Cullen-Lester is advancing this work through a research grant supported by the National Science Foundation. She also serves on the editorial boards of *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and *Journal of Business and Psychology*.

The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology is the premier professional association for the science and practice of industrial and organizational psychology. While an independent organization with its own governance, SIOP also represents Division 14 of the American Psychological Association and is an organizational affiliate of the Association for Psychological Science.

BY STELLA CONNELL

Online MBA in Nation's Top 10

The University of Mississippi's online Master of Business Administration program has been named as one of the best in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*. The rankings, released Jan. 26, place Ole Miss in a five-way tie for No. 7 among public universities and No. 10 overall.

UM is tied with the universities of Arizona, Maryland and Washington and the University of Wisconsin MBA Consortium for the No. 7 spot. The University of Florida, at No. 3 among public universities, and Auburn University, at No. 15, were the only other Southeastern Conference schools included in the top 25 of the 2021 rankings.

This is the third consecutive year the Ole Miss program has ranked in the top 10.

"We are pleased that our efforts to provide an outstanding educational experience for our students is recognized externally," said Ken Cyree, dean of the UM School of Business Administration.

"This year has been challenging with COVID-19, but our experience in the online MBA program for more than a decade has allowed us to successfully meet these challenges. Our students are highly qualified and engaged, and their efforts in partnership with our faculty, staff and alumni have paid dividends, as this ranking reflects."

MBA programs have a greater enrollment than any other type of graduate business degree program in the country, the *U.S. News* release noted. Prospective students often narrow their research exclusively to programs that award MBAs.

To aid their efforts, the publication compiles annual rankings of distance education MBA programs. This year's rankings include 329 schools nationally.

2021-22 MBA Officers and Graduate Student Council Senators



STELLA CONNELL

Front row, from left: Tressa Presley McLeod, Graduate Student Council senator, Mobile, Alabama; Elizabeth Tettleton Mason, president, Oxford; Anna Gregory, vice president of finance, Tupelo; Rebecca Eyiaro, vice president of community service, Lagos, Nigeria

Back row, from left: Cole Barnhill, vice president of communications/ PR, Union, Kentucky; Maia Dooley, vice president of recruitment, Biloxi; Will Gentry, vice president of social events, Memphis, Tennessee; Claire McClure, Graduate Student Council senator, Jackson

"Our program emphasizes excellent instruction and innovative learning opportunities," said Walter Davis, faculty adviser to the program. "Our ranking reflects not only the exceptional faculty but also a diverse and highly qualified group of students."

For the 2021 edition, *U.S. News* ranked online MBA programs using five categories: student engagement, expert opinion, faculty credentials and training, student excellence, and student services and technologies.

The publication selects factors, called ranking indicators, to assess each program in the five categories. A program's score for each ranking indicator is calculated using data that the program reported to *U.S. News* in a statistical

survey and from data collected in a separate peer-reputation survey.

"We feel that it's important to ask incoming students why they chose to pursue their MBA at Ole Miss," said Ashley McGee, the program's director. "They recognize the flexibility of our online program, the content of the curriculum, the national ranking and reputation, and the competitive tuition.

"With every class, we are energized and inspired. From biochemistry to business backgrounds, to students across the country from New York to California, the resumes of our online MBAs are impressive. It is a true pleasure to see our university continue to attract high-caliber students."

ANNOW

Del Hawley Retires after 35 Years of Leadership

When Del Hawley arrived at the University of Mississippi, Ronald Reagan was president, gasoline cost 86 cents a gallon, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 1,793. No one could have imagined – least of all, Hawley – what the next 35 years would bring.

In August 1986, he left East Lansing, Michigan, to start the fall semester at Ole Miss. He had planned to return to Michigan over the Labor Day weekend to move his wife, Rita, and 9-month-old daughter to Oxford. Meanwhile, he was staying at the Alumni House because their new house was not finished.

At the end of his first week on campus, feeling lonely and missing his wife and daughter, Hawley decided to walk to a gas station to get a six-pack of beer, where he discovered he couldn't buy cold beer in Oxford. He had accepted a job in a "dry" county in Mississippi.

"What kind of place is this, and what have I gotten myself into?" he thought.

Despite a disorienting start, Hawley would lead teaching and technological innovations, and serve at the helm of the construction of Holman Hall, the business school's home for nearly three decades. He ends his tenure at the school as senior associate dean and associate professor of finance.



Hawley in his office in the new Holman Hall, 2000. Hawley had been associate dean for seven years.

All who have worked with him have seen his abilities throughout many different challenges over the past three decades.

"Del is an institution at the business school," said Dean Ken Cyree, who has worked with Hawley for 14 years as dean and 17 years as a finance faculty member. "While no fan of bureaucracy, he has amazing institutional knowledge

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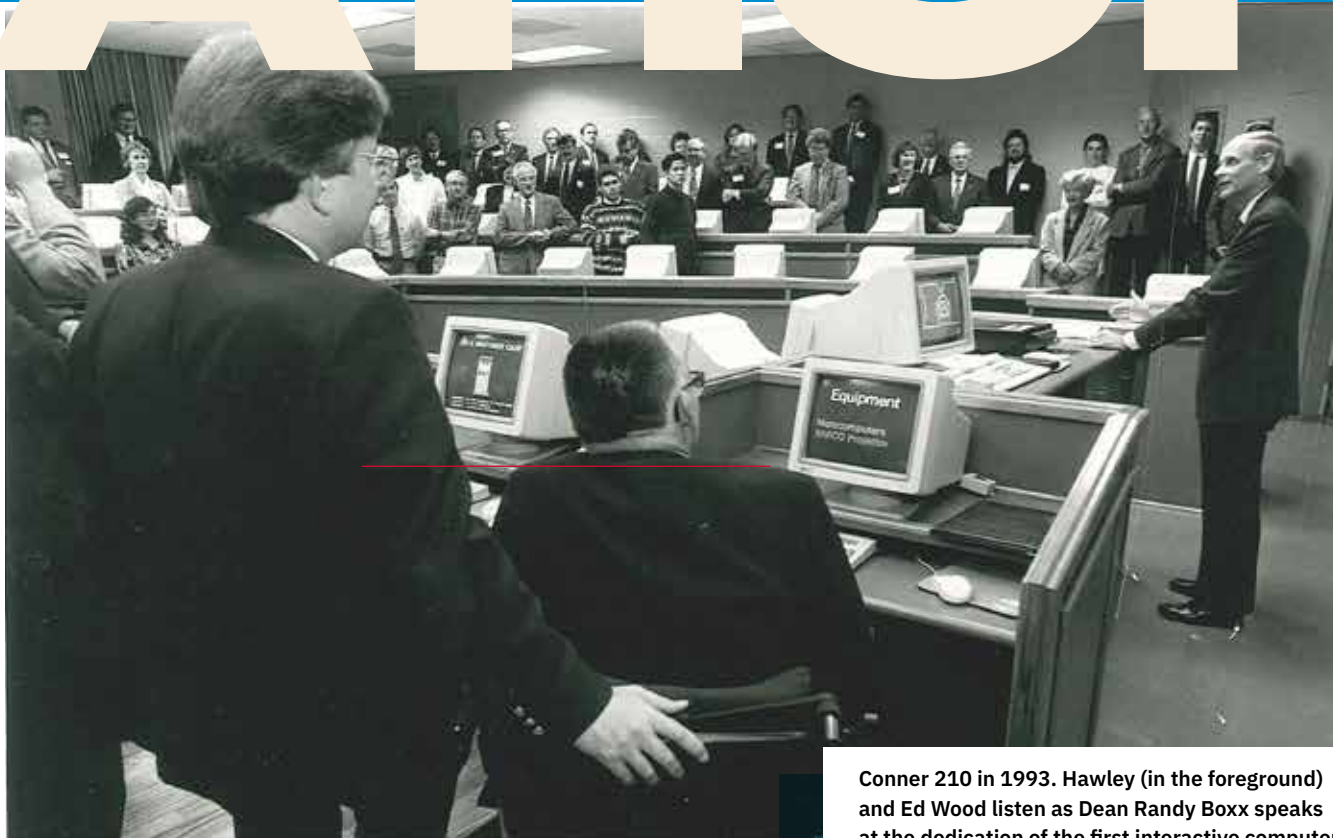
I have always admired and respected the fairness he demonstrates in decision making and the support he has provided me even if we disagree on a matter. He is leaving this place better than he found it, and that is always a testament to someone's resiliency and hard work."

— KEN CYREE

and is able to get things done that no one else can, because he knows who to call when something needs to be done. He is a very selfless person and truly wants what is best for the school and all the people who work here.

"I have always admired and respected the fairness he demonstrates in decision making and the support he has provided me even if we

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SUBMITTED

Conner 210 in 1993. Hawley (in the foreground) and Ed Wood listen as Dean Randy Boxx speaks at the dedication of the first interactive computer classroom at the University of Mississippi.

disagree on a matter. He is leaving this place better than he found it, and that is always a testament to someone's resiliency and hard work."

INNOVATION BEGINS

Hawley began leaving his mark at the business school right away. He was spotted in 1987, wheeling a Zenith personal computer, connected to a huge Sony video projector, to display financial spreadsheets. It was nothing exceptional by today's standards, but it was considered cutting edge and revolutionary at that time.

In the late 1980s, a group of young professors, including Hawley, Phil Malone, Joe Paolillo and Keith Womer, led the school into a new decade under the leadership of Dean Rex Cottle.

Taking advantage of a program called the UM

Associates Grant program, Malone, a finance professor, and Hawley bought computers and printers and built a lab for shared equipment in Conner Hall. Soon thereafter, the business school built and housed its first computer work lab for faculty, which started the regular use of technology in teaching.

In August 1991, the school welcomed another young professor, Brian Reithel, from the University of South Florida, to the management information systems division. Shortly after that, Hawley, Malone and Reithel installed network wiring and systems to connect the faculty offices in Conner Hall.

In 1993, soon after Hawley was appointed associate dean, the school launched the first PC-based email system on campus. This was a breakthrough in higher learning

globally. Cornell University had a system in place, but it was very unusual for an academic unit, such as the UM School of Business Administration, to have its own email server.

Then, in fall 1994, Bart Garner came from California and was hired to serve as the first network administrator for a separate unit on the Ole Miss campus.

HOLMAN HALL

Beginning in 1961, Conner Hall was home to the business school. As the school grew, alongside the accountancy program, it couldn't house all the faculty and students enrolled, so construction of a new building, Holman Hall, started in 1996.

Holman was completed in 1997, and renovations to Conner were completed in 1998. The result was a

state-of-the-art learning center with more than 100 miles of cable and 2,000 network connections throughout the complex, two 45-seat computer classrooms, and a distance-learning center with two interactive video conference classrooms and a control center.

Garner and Hawley helped establish technology for the new building. Garner was forward-thinking in instructional technology to support the faculty and give them the tools to do their best work.

“Del and others had a vision of new technology for the school,” Garner said.

“He and Brian had been to other institutions and were very aware of the new technologies. The new building and renovation of Conner Hall gave us a chance to be on the cutting edge of classroom and networking technology.”

A MENTOR AND A FRIEND

In 2000, Sam Hammoud, a young man from Lebanon, left his home city of Beirut to travel more than 6,200 miles to join his brother at Ole Miss. He first encountered Hawley

at his graduation in 2006, when Hawley was reading the names of the graduates.

“He actually pronounced my name correctly,” said Hammoud with a laugh. “After I received my diploma, I slipped him my card.”

After a short time in the private sector, Hammoud decided he wanted to return to the university to work in information technology. A former instructor suggested he go see Hawley, so he headed to the business school, resume in hand, and cold-called Hawley by knocking on his door unannounced.



It took me almost 20 years to become a U.S. citizen. Del stayed with me through the process and never gave up regardless of how tedious or bureaucratic things got. I will always be grateful for his support during that time.”

— SAM HAMMOUD



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Randy Box (left), dean; Ann Canty, assistant dean; Brian Reithel, co-chair of the UM Sesquicentennial; Sue Hodge, director of advising; and Del Hawley, associate dean, with the School of Business Administration’s new sesquicentennial banner on Dec. 3, 1999. The university (via the business school) was hosting the finale of William F. Buckley Jr.’s ‘Firing Line’ debate television show that evening. The debate resolution was ‘The Federal Government Should Not Impose a Tax on Electronic Commerce.’

“

Helping the business school get better and stronger year after year has been my greatest joy and honor. But it's always important to remember that the business school is not the building or the furniture or the technology. It's the people. It's all of the people who give their time and effort to work with all of the other team members to make our business school the best that it can be.”

— DEL HAWLEY

Hawley looked over the resume and said, “I’ve been looking for a person with your skills.”

Hammoud has worked with Hawley for over a decade.

“Del is the ultimate professional in the office,” he said. “He inspires me to work as hard as I do because he values that in people. He has been a friend, a mentor, and I trust him with all that I have professionally and personally.

“It took me almost 20 years to become a U.S. citizen,” said Hammoud, who received his citizenship in 2019. “Del stayed with me through the process and never gave up regardless of how tedious or bureaucratic things got. I will always be grateful for his support during that time.”

LEAVING A LEGACY

One of the hallmarks of Hawley’s legacy will be his fairness and respect of everyone who has had the opportunity to work with him. He empowers the faculty and staff to be their best by giving them the tools to succeed.

“Del has become the ultimate collegiate business

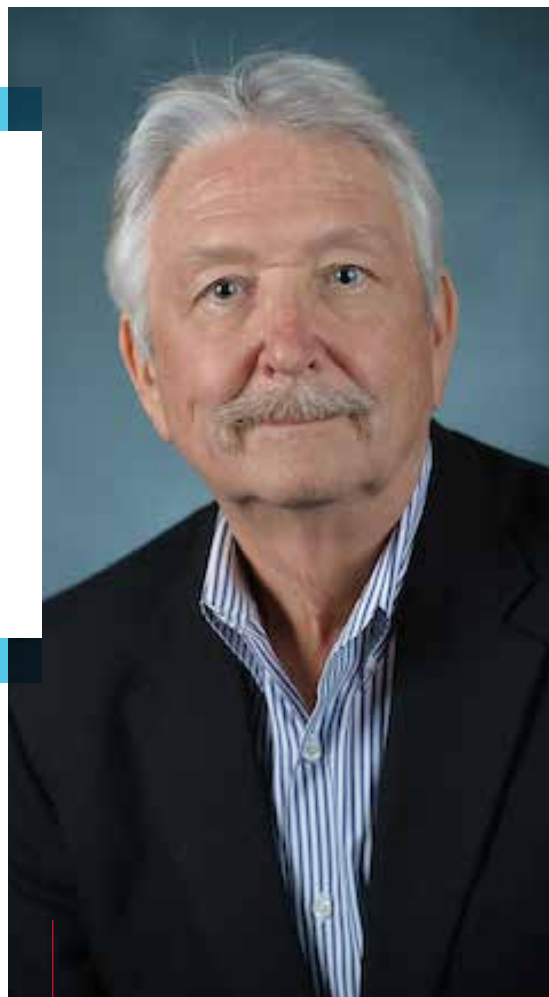
school administrator,” Reithel said. “He is trusted, respected, thoughtful, seasoned and extraordinarily effective. His service as senior associate dean has helped the Ole Miss School of Business become a nationally recognized leader in undergraduate, master’s and doctoral education.”

As Hawley steps into retirement after three-and-a-half decades of service, there is no denying much has changed for the better since his arrival. He has served under five chancellors and six deans. Through it all, he has worked quietly, behind the scenes, to make extraordinary transformations possible.

“Helping the business school get better and stronger

year after year has been my greatest joy and honor,” Hawley said. “But it’s always important to remember that the business school is not the building or the furniture or the technology. It’s the people. It’s all of the people who give their time and effort to work with all of the other team members to make our business school the best that it can be.

“Our tremendous faculty and staff members are the reason our business school is unique and exceptional,” Hawley said. “I am proud to have been able to serve on a team with so many wonderful people for so many years.”



KEVIN BAIN

Hawley has worked for the Ole Miss business school for 35 years. He began in August 1986 and will formally retire in December 2021.

BY STELLA CONNELL

Gift to Bridge Generation Gap

University of Mississippi alumnus Matthew Murphy, of Nashville, Tennessee, hopes a recent gift to his alma mater will encourage more students to study banking and ultimately bridge a generational gap he has noticed in the mortgage industry.

The 2015 graduate's \$100,000 gift will establish the Matthew C. Murphy Scholarship Fund and the Matthew C. Murphy Fund for Excellence in the School of Business Administration.

"Being able to give back to my alma mater so early after graduation and really establishing a firm relationship with the university was always at the top of my list," said Murphy, who serves as COO at the Commonwealth Group, based in Memphis.

"When I was analyzing the mortgage finance industry roughly six years ago and plotting a massive career change, I noticed an enormous age differential between upper-level and executive management versus the rest of the mortgage banking industry.

"This sparked my jump into mortgage banking, where the average age of a mortgage banker is roughly 58 to 60 years old.

I realized very quickly that I could climb the executive business ladder, while bypassing the typical corporate ranking structure and timeline required to obtain such status, and all the while by doing so at an extremely early age."

At 29, he is qualified to sit for the Certified Mortgage Banker designation, the highest offered by the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, and has already obtained the Accredited Mortgage Professional, Certified Residential Underwriter and Certified Mortgage Compliance Professional designations.

Murphy credits Ole Miss business school faculty for helping him find his place in the marketplace, leading him to found Murphy Capital Management, of which he is also president and CEO.

"Dr. Ken Cyree was, without a doubt, my favorite professor

and is still to this day one of my all-time favorite speakers," Murphy said. "I was lucky enough to take both his Finance 537 and 538 bank management classes, which are two of the best courses I have ever taken.

"I still have the hard copy of the 'Bank Management' book sitting by my desk in my office."

Cyree, dean of the business school, remembers Murphy from the classroom and is grateful that he is contributing to his alma mater.

"We are thrilled to have such a wonderful commitment to our faculty and students from such a young alumnus," Cyree said. "It is very satisfying to me to see one of the students I taught giving back.

"I think it speaks volumes to Matthew's dedication and appreciation for the education he received at the Ole Miss business school."

Growing up in an Ole Miss household kept the university close to Murphy's



It is very satisfying to me to see one of the students I taught giving back. I think it speaks volumes to Matthew's dedication and appreciation for the education he received at the Ole Miss business school."

— KEN CYREE



KEVIN BAIN

“

I will always hold the professors who taught me, the students who helped me and the university staff who assisted me through my years at Ole Miss close to my heart, and I will continue to give back as much as I possibly can.”

— MATTHEW MURPHY

heart. Both his father, Dr. Garnett Murphy of Memphis, and brother, Dr. Drew Murphy of Germantown, Tennessee, completed undergraduate degrees at the university.

When it came time to select his college home, Murphy said the memories of football games with his family, along with the strong reputation of the finance and accounting programs in the business school and Patterson School of Accountancy, made his decision to attend UM easy.

“I will always hold the professors who taught me, the students who helped me and the university staff who assisted me through my years at Ole Miss close to my heart, and I will continue to give back as much as I possibly can,” Murphy said.

“I cannot stress this enough: the cost of a great education – which Ole Miss gave me – is priceless.”

Gifts such as Murphy’s create opportunities for students and open doors to their future careers, said Sally Rychlak, development officer for the School of Business Administration.

“This incredible gift not only will support student success in the business school but also will display the commitment to excellence among our young alumni base,” Rychlak said. “We are so grateful for Matthew’s generosity and dedication to the business school.”

Murphy describes his philosophy of giving with an analogy: “You’ll never see a turtle sitting on a fence post that got there by itself. He had to have



SUBMITTED

some help. Being a student at such an extraordinary university allows you to receive this needed help and assistance and find your niche and specific interests that will ultimately pave your way for future success upon graduation.”

To make a gift to the Matthew C. Murphy Scholarship Fund or the Matthew C. Murphy Fund for Excellence, send a check, with the fund name written in the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655; or online at <https://give.olemiss.edu>.

BY MARY STANTON KNIGHT

For more information about supporting the School of Business Administration, contact Sally Rychlak, development officer, at sallyr@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3084.

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH GIVING

Transfer Student Brings Passion for Service to Ole Miss

MATT EDDY

JOHN RILEY WILBANKS

When Matt Eddy completed his first two years of college at Coastal Alabama Community College in Bay Minette, Alabama, he already had a list of service accomplishments and honors to take with him on his journey.

Eddy was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, an organization that recognizes high achievement at the community college level, where he served as vice president of service. In this role, he organized events, such as local blood and book drives that gave back to the campus and the surrounding community. He worked with a local Marine Corps unit to organize a Toys for Tots program to supply toys for families in need.

By the time graduation rolled around, Eddy was named the Business Administration Student of the Year and graduated magna cum laude. He had received a full scholarship to CACC and had made his mark. But, what was next? Where would he finish?

“I selected the University of Mississippi because of the great educational opportunities and, specifically, the top-rated business school,” he said. “I also decided on Ole Miss because I enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and

close interactions the students had with their professors.

“Additionally, Oxford has a lot to offer – similar to my hometown of Fairhope, Alabama.”

Community involvement and service have been a passion for Eddy for as long as he can remember. He was a volunteer firefighter in high school, as well as the president of the Interact Club, the high school version of Rotary International, and served as a board member of Project Outreach, a program that worked with special-needs children.

So, it’s no surprise that the past two years have been busy for Eddy.

“Since arriving at the university, I have made it my goal to become active on campus,” he said. “When I got to Ole Miss, I noticed there was not a Rotaract Club (the college version of Rotary International).”

Around this time, he met marketing professor Laurie Babin, who was also new to campus. Babin had helped establish a Rotaract Club at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, where she worked before coming to Ole Miss.

Eddy and Babin got together to re-establish a Rotaract at Ole Miss.

“We created the club and built an executive board,” he said. “In October 2019, we got

TOP: Eddy splitting wood at Camp Hopewell at the UM Big Event in March 2021

BOTTOM: Eddy as a volunteer firefighter in Fairhope, Alabama, in April 2017

approval from the Student Union as an RSO (registered student organization) and from Rotary International.

“We were just beginning to rapidly grow our club and start service projects when the pandemic hit.”

The group met via Zoom and YouTube to stream their monthly meetings, and participated in online service projects in which they wrote letters to children in hospitals. They also held a week of service where members could conduct a range of socially distanced activities in their respective communities, such as cleaning up trash in Oxford neighborhoods and on campus, donating food to the local food pantry, and taking food to fire stations and the Mississippi State Veterans Home.

“Matt’s initiative to reinstate Ole Miss Rotaract demonstrates not only his passion but also his leadership abilities,” Babin said. “He didn’t just start something that would fall apart after he graduates, but rather he built an executive team and created a sustainable organization impacting our community that is led by students.”

Besides his work with Rotaract, Eddy has served the university and the business school as a chief emissary officer. These students represent the school’s student body and help recruit high school and transfer students. He also has been involved with the Student Marketing Association and the Transfer Leadership Organization.

Eddy’s journey has been filled with great opportunities to meet people and to serve.

“My advice to any incoming student is to make the most of your time in college,” he said. “Go to things; get involved. College will be over before you know it.”

BY STELLA CONNELL



JOHN RILEY WILBANKS



JODI DUNBAR



TEACHING WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

Companies Donate Real Estate Software

Real estate students at the University of Mississippi have access to information available only to industry professionals, thanks to a gift from the CoStar Group, a leading provider of commercial real estate information, analytics and online marketplaces.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the technology company has donated 50 licenses to the School of Business Administration, giving students access to in-depth analytical information on commercial real estate properties – even many near UM campuses.

“CoStar Group is honored to partner with the Ole Miss School of Business

Administration to extend access to a special version of our nearly limitless data platform, which can help students further their education,” said Michael Lese, sales associate with CoStar/LoopNet.

“Access to these helpful tools will give Ole Miss real estate students an edge with the experience of using and analyzing CoStar Group data, which goes hand-in-hand with the development of the next generation of real

estate professionals and possibly even future CoStar Group employees.”

The platform will add value to the nationally recognized business school by enhancing experiential learning for students, said Sergio Gárate, assistant professor of real estate.

“CoStar Group is a data provider largely used in the industry for investment analysis,” he said. “Any real estate professional will encounter this data set at some point



BILL DABNEY/UM FOUNDATION

Sergio Gárate, UM assistant professor of real estate, teaches students in the School of Business Administration to use ARGUS Enterprise analytic software.

in their career to aid in their market research.

“Having CoStar helps our students understand how the commercial real estate market evolves, while gaining access to information about market supply and demand.”

UM senior Alex Gross, of Houston, Texas, a double major in real estate and finance, enjoys using the platform.

“The ability to use and learn CoStar while conducting market research for commercial development was incredible,” he said. “Being able to learn how the program works before entering the workplace is definitely beneficial and is an opportunity very few schools can provide to their students.

“I’m thankful for the experience and hope CoStar will continue to support a relationship with the university and its real estate students.”

In late 2019, the business school also received a technology gift from the ARGUS/Altus Group of Houston, Texas.

The gift, valued at more than \$330,000, is intended to train UM real estate students to use the same data and analytic software used daily by commercial real estate professionals.

“We want to ensure that students are prepared with the knowledge they need to enter the industry with the understanding of our software and how it’s used in different roles,” said Kari Mayfield, education coordinator for Altus Group. “Learning it while still in school creates a relationship with the students early on that sticks with them when they become the decision makers of tomorrow.”

ARGUS Enterprise allows developers and investors to

evaluate, analyze and gauge the risk of an investment as well as facilitate the transaction of properties. Investors then use the information provided by the Argus analysis to keep track of their budgets and benchmark performance of multiple assets simply and visibly.

Students who learn to use the ARGUS technology will enter the industry with a competitive edge, Gárate said.

“Working on a case study using this tool helps students polish their analytical skills and apply the theoretical concepts learned in the classroom in a practical manner,” he said. “We are really excited and grateful to the Altus Group for giving our students this opportunity, and we believe it will help them land gainful employment once they graduate.”

To learn more about supporting the real estate program in the Ole Miss School of Business Administration, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.

BY MARY STANTON KNIGHT
AND BILL DABNEY

Scoring a

Business school helps alumnus realize ‘hoops’ dream

University of Mississippi alumnus Jordan Wyton grew up playing basketball and became a walk-on for the Ole Miss Rebels. These days, he has turned his love for the game into a business that helps others enjoy it as well.

Wyton began HoopAtlanta in 2020 to provide fun,

organized and fast-paced basketball sessions for people to play with no long-term commitment. For a fee, participants sign up online to play and then have access to a gym, referee, jersey and other players.

Wyton has expanded the business to include HoopCharlotte and HoopNashville and has plans to start HoopTexas and HoopColorado.

“The game has given a lot to me, and I want to make sure that I’m able to give back to the game and help grow that passion for basketball for other people,” he said.

Wyton’s passion for basketball inspired him to start the business, but it was funding from the UM School of Business Administration and its Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship that helped him expand it.

“The (business school and CIE) have

been very instrumental in helping develop my plans further,” said Wyton, who graduated from UM with a bachelor’s degree in multidisciplinary studies in May 2021. “They’ve taken a lot of my ideas and helped me create actionable steps to improve my business and take it to the next level.”

While in college, Wyton successfully pitched to the Rebel Venture Capital Fund, an alumni-established nonprofit that supports student startup businesses with seed money grants. He was also a winner of the Landshark Tank Pitch Competition, which provides funding to individuals with successful pitches.

Wyton also received the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneur Award, which grants a \$5,000 prize annually to selected students in the CIE’s Gillespie Business Plan Competition.

Rowell attributes Wyton’s success to his ability to explore the “red zone” and said his interaction with Wyton reminded him of an article, “Quit Getting Comfortable,” by organizational psychologist



SUBMITTED

Jordan Wyton, a UM alumnus from Grayson, Georgia, is the inaugural recipient of the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneur Award for his business, HoopAtlanta, which hosts organized pickup basketball games in the Atlanta area. The organization has grown and moved into new markets in the Southeast.



Net Profit



JOELAN HOWES PHOTOGRAPHY

Players Jamel Alston (left), Keshawn Gibbs and Dre Anthony in Atlanta, May 2021

and CEO adviser Lee Colan, who wrote “It’s pretty safe in the comfort zone. There is little or no risk; a misstep here or there is not very costly. But like the football team that’s trapped between the 20-yard lines, we cannot win in the comfort zone.

“Because the risk is small, so is the reward. Learning and growth occur when we are uncomfortable. Think of the defining moments of learning and growth in your life. Were you hanging out in your comfort zone? No, you were hanging over the edge.”

“After my conversation with Jordan about his business, it’s safe to say he is definitely hanging over the edge!” Rowell said.

The CIE and business school hope to help more people like Wyton by giving them resources they need to expand their businesses.

“Jordan has done an amazing job taking his passion for

basketball and turning it into a viable startup with exponential market growth throughout the Southeast,” said Clay Dibrell, co-director of the CIE and professor of management.

“He took advantage of the opportunities presented to him at Ole Miss and has made entrepreneurial magic. We can’t wait to see what is next for Jordan and his HoopAtlanta venture.”

As far as next steps, Wyton does not only want to continue expanding, but he also wants to do so in a way that will build a respectable brand.

“I want to help grow the basketball community in a positive and inclusive way, where everyone can be involved, not just the elite,” he said. “I want to be able to give anyone who loves the game an outlet to participate and fall in love with it again.”

“

Jordan has done an amazing job taking his passion for basketball and turning it into a viable startup with exponential market growth throughout the Southeast. He took advantage of the opportunities presented to him at Ole Miss and has made entrepreneurial magic.”

— CLAY DIBRELL



BY RABRIA MOORE

Marketing Master MENTORING

Besides financial support, the Lyttleton T. Harris IV Endowed Scholarship at the University of Mississippi is providing mentoring from a marketing expert for its recipient.

In February, Lyt Harris, of Houston, Texas, added \$100,000 to the scholarship endowment he established in 2016. In addition to this and previous gifts to his endowment, Harris made an estimated \$2.5 million planned gift in 2019 to support the scholarship after his lifetime.

“I am very grateful to be the recipient of this scholarship,” said Anna Pratt, of St. Louis, a junior sales and marketing major with a minor in management information systems. “Not only have I been given the financial opportunity to focus solely on my schoolwork, it also gave me the opportunity to connect and get advice from Mr. Harris.”

When Harris established the scholarship, the 1962 graduate of the UM School of Business Administration said he hoped to meet his recipients. With Pratt, his wish came true ... sort of. Because of the threat of COVID-19, the meeting was virtual.

“I greatly enjoyed getting to know Anna,” Harris said. “I could see a lot of myself in her, especially in the way she’s driven to succeed, and I believe

she will be very successful in her chosen profession.”

On the Zoom call, Harris told Pratt he admired her work ethic, shared some of his own experiences and offered career-path advice.

“Mr. Harris motivated me to set larger goals,” said Pratt, who hopes to work in marketing for a company focused on consumer behavior or advertising. “His words have also increased my confidence in what my future is capable of being.”

Much like Harris’ own career.

Years ago, after spotting the potential for great success in a small-town popcorn grower, Harris’ own marketing efforts helped make Orville Redenbacher a national sensation.

Recognizing the same potential in business students, Harris has established endowments at Ole Miss and three other universities that he trusts will help prepare scholarship recipients achieve success.

Angela Brown, senior director of development for the School of Business Administration, said she is already

beginning to witness Pratt’s achievements.

“Anna is eager to apply herself and gain experience in her career field of interest prior to graduation,” she said.

During the virtual call that Brown arranged between Harris and his scholar, Pratt expressed interest in securing a summer internship using her marketing and communication skills and talents.

“Following our conversation, I introduced Anna to the business school’s career preparation team, the development office internship coordinator and the marketing department chair, Dr. Barry Babin, who all connected her with available opportunities,” Brown said. “I have enjoyed being a point of contact and resource for her. She is part of our Ole Miss family.”

After completing graduate school at Louisiana State University in 1963, Harris rose through the ranks of Scott Paper Co., where he became project manager for the first disposable diapers, which he took from test market to national distribution. Later, he joined a large division of Hunt Wesson Foods as director of marketing.



If we get together, we can do some great things and probably make you the Colonel Sanders of the popcorn business.”

— LYT HARRIS



LYT HARRIS



ANNA PRATT

SUBMITTED

On a business trip to Chicago, Harris and his colleagues visited Marshall Fields department store, where they spotted a Mason jar of popcorn labeled “with a picture of a funny little man with a bowtie,” he said, adding that a manager told them the product was a best-seller in the store.

Intrigued, Harris conducted laboratory tests at Hunt Wesson and found the product to be all that Redenbacher claimed and more.

“So we went and contacted Orville in person and said, ‘You’ve come up with this strain of corn that everybody likes, and we’re marketing experts,’” Harris recalled. “If we get together, we can do some great things and probably make you the Colonel Sanders of the popcorn business.’ That’s exactly what we ended up doing.”

Orville Redenbacher’s popcorn has grown into the nation’s No. 1-selling brand.

“If he’d never met us and we’d never met him, it probably

would have never happened,” Harris said. “He wasn’t a marketing person at all. He was just having fun with it and didn’t realize its potential.”

After Hunt Wesson, Harris worked several years as a senior executive in the banking and finance industry before moving to Houston in 1982 to become president and, eventually, CEO of Southwest Management and Marketing Co. There, he met his wife in 1984 at an art exhibition; both were avid collectors.

Harris sold his company and retired in 2004. He serves as managing partner of the Harris Investment Partnership, specializing in venture capital investments, including specialty foods, residential real estate, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers.

Always active in civic and charitable activities, Harris has served on the boards of a number of nonprofit organizations, including the Kidney Foundation, Junior Achievement, Boy Scouts of America, Big Brothers

Big Sisters and St. Luke’s United Methodist Church. During his business career, he was listed in Who’s Who in America, Who’s Who in Finance and Industry, and Who’s Who in the South and Southwest.

He has served as a mentor for MBA students at the Ole Miss business school and was named an Otho Smith fellow in 2008. He is also a mentor for middle and high school students in the Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston.

“Lyt’s generous gifts encompass the scope of work we do here by meeting the financial needs of students who want to pursue an education in business,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the business school. “We are very grateful for his time and long-term commitment and for our many loyal donors like him who offer crucial private support to the university and specifically the School of Business Administration.”

 BY BILL DABNEY

The Lyttleton T. Harris IV Endowed Scholarship is open to gifts from individuals and organizations. To contribute, send checks, with the endowment name noted in the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., University, MS 38655; visit <https://give.olemiss.edu> or contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.



LIN GE

Financiers Club up to TVA Challenge

UM Financiers Club members present their investment thesis virtually for the Tennessee Valley Authority's Investment Challenge. They are recent UM graduate Lauren Winstead (left), of Collierville, Tennessee; Jon Taylor, a senior managerial finance and economics major, of Wiggins; recent UM graduate Diane Lim, of Suwanee, Georgia; and Kendal Outwater, a senior managerial finance and banking major from Houston, Texas.

Eleven sectors of students from the Financiers Club at the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration brought new ideas and insights to the Tennessee Valley Authority's Investment Challenge, making history in the rankings.

The Financiers Club placed second out of 24 schools for the first time since the inception of this competition. Sector leaders planned to represent the university by presenting their investment theses in front of TVA executives in late March, but that event was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The TVA challenge is an excellent experiential learning opportunity for investment-minded students," said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. "It is using real funds in a competitive environment, similar to what these students will face when they graduate.

"It is a great way for students to understand the nuts and bolts of financial analysis and how to invest. It is wonderful that the faculty are dedicated to providing these educational opportunities to our students."

Ole Miss has been a part of the TVA's investment program/challenge for universities since it was created in 1998. As one of the nation's largest student-managed investment plans, the program has expanded to 24 universities and more than \$10 million in funds.

Students in the Ole Miss Financiers Club manage a \$500,000 investment fund for TVA while inviting executives from the finance community to speak and network with club members. The club includes 80 student members, many of whom are sophomores and juniors, who have opportunities to learn from older members.

"The sheer size and the club members' diversity helped bring new ideas and insights, often the key ingredients to generating a portfolio return above the return of the market," said Lin Ge, a faculty adviser to the Financiers Club.

With two female sector leaders in place, more female analysts are being recruited to the club.

"Dr. Ge has advocated for underrepresented females in finance, and it is inspiring to see her mentor future women in their education and personal futures," said Kendal Outwater, a senior from Houston, Texas, who is double majoring in banking and finance and managerial finance. "I encourage my fellow peers to consider membership and am eternally grateful to the Tennessee Valley Authority for facilitating a means to professional development."

The club's planning process for the TVA competition was not severely affected by the pandemic because the Financiers Club was able to conduct weekly meetings via Zoom since the pandemic began.

"We were most proud of our students," said Arup Ganguly, another faculty adviser to the club. "It is always very gratifying to see students successfully apply the tools that they have learned in our courses to manage real money. We were thrilled to see their hard work and passion for finance being rewarded."

Financiers Club students generated a portfolio return that was 5.5% above the return of the market, beating teams from Vanderbilt University, University of Kentucky, Mississippi State University and the University of Memphis.

For this performance, the TVA has awarded the university \$7,449 for student scholarship funds.

BY HALEY YOUNG

ALEX BOWENS

B.B.A., MANAGEMENT

A change of heart, and major, leads to a dream career.

Often the unexpected path forward is the best path forward.

Alex Bowens grew up in an Ole Miss family. The Memphis, Tennessee, native always wanted to go to the university and walk in the footsteps of her mother, aunts, uncles and plenty of cousins. She even knew (or thought she knew) her major would be in pharmacy or a related area of science.

Halfway through her junior year, she realized she wasn't in the right major. Her grades were suffering. She wasn't interested. She still loved being at Ole Miss but was unfulfilled with her major at that time.

Bowens took the winter break to consider her options. She spoke with her family members and consulted with her adviser in the School of Business. Ultimately, she decided to change her major to management. That decision paid off almost immediately.

"I realized how much I loved my new major," she said. "I was selected for an internship and joined numerous organizations on campus."

The change of major allowed Bowens to find her passion. Now, she's making her own legacy as a human resources associate for a substance abuse treatment facility in her hometown. She loves waking up each day to help others find their own path.

"I want to inspire everyone to never let fear stop anyone from finding his or her dream."

Ole Miss Wins SEC MBA Case Competition

The University of Mississippi won first place in the eighth Southeastern Conference MBA Case Competition, conducted virtually for the first time in SEC history and facilitated by the Raymond J. Harbert College of Business at Auburn University.

The winning team is Lauren Cherep, of Chicago; Drew Johnson, of Monroe, Louisiana; Andrew Raspo, of Modesto, California; and Haley Young, of Charlotte, North Carolina. Walter Davis, professor of management and faculty director of the university's MBA program, advises the Ole Miss team, which captured its first-ever SEC competition championship.

"I almost didn't believe my eyes when I saw our names on the first-place slide because the moment was so surreal," Young said. "Gaining recognition for an event like this is special, and knowing all of our hard work paid off is a feeling like no other."

The competition spanned three days, April 15-17, and began with the four-person teams being randomly drawn into four divisions on Thursday evening. On Friday morning, a representative from Aflac, the case company, presented a real-world challenge to the students, who then had about 24 hours to outline an approach to the challenge while also organizing a related presentation.

"The competition was like procrastinating on level 1,000," Cherep said. "You had to work under pressure with little to no breaks."

"Although it was stressful, I enjoyed the fact that I was able to work under the pressure. Honestly, I did not realize my own ability to get such a well-done presentation finished in less than 24 hours."

Senior executives from Aflac, including Frederick J. Crawford, president and COO, made up the judging panels.

The judges considered each presentation, and the top four teams advanced to the finals on Saturday afternoon. The panel was truly impressed by all the teams, said Michael DeVore, vice president for corporate development at Aflac and a leading coordinator with Auburn.



STELLA CONNELL

The Ole Miss MBA Case team took first place at the Southeastern Conference MBA Case Competition, which was conducted virtually this year. The team is (from left) Andrew Raspo, Haley Young, Lauren Cherep and Drew Johnson.

"My favorite part of the competition was the Q&A following our presentations," Raspo said. "It was really cool to answer questions and talk to the high-level executives from Aflac."

Although team advisers were not able to communicate with their students after the case was presented, they observed the presentations and were able to offer support and suggestions for improvement after the competition concluded.

"I was elated to hear our team won, and this is a great honor for the Ole Miss MBA program," Davis said. "The team devoted a lot of time and energy to preparing for the competition, and I was excited to work with them."

"This is a great experience for our students, as it gives them an opportunity to develop and exercise the creative and analytical skills that will be so important to their professional careers."

Last year's winner, the University of Alabama, finished second this year, followed by the universities of Kentucky and Tennessee.

The SEC MBA Case Competition began in 2013 and provides a high-level experiential learning opportunity for SEC business schools to showcase their students' skills at solving simulated or real-world problems. The 2022 competition is scheduled for the University of Kentucky.

BY THE SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

Landshark Tank Competition

Nestor Delgado, a third-year student at the University of Mississippi School of Law, took first place in the sixth annual Landshark Tank Pitch Competition, which was, for the first time, held virtually, on Oct. 30, 2020.

The competition is sponsored by the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Ole Miss.

Delgado, a Pascagoula native, is a licensed drone pilot who hopes to specialize in air and space law upon graduation. His company, ROTR Drone Solutions, aids businesses that wish to integrate existing drone technology into their day-to-day operations.

“During my time at the University of Mississippi School of Law, I have been exposed to the world of unmanned aircraft technology through my studies with the Center for Air and Space Law,” Delgado said. “As a result of my legal studies, ROTR Drone Solutions was created as a solution to an existing gap that I identified in the drone industry.

“I am extremely grateful to the Ole Miss CIE for providing platforms for me to share the idea of ROTR with others. Both the Landshark Tank Competition and the Business Model Competition were run in such a professional manner, and they were incredibly rewarding experiences.”

The competition often serves as a precursor platform for more advanced competitions such as the Mid-South Business Model Competition and the Gillespie Business Plan Competition, the center’s marquee competition in April.

“This year, an alumnus suggested that we take advantage of the adversity with the pandemic to make it a truly open event,” said Rich Gentry, co-director of the CIE and associate professor of management. “We advertised for entries from across campus and made a very easy competition for students to develop their presentation skills.”

Since August 2014, the CIE has assisted roughly 60 student-led startup businesses, and four of the past five winners of the Gillespie Business Plan Competition are still thriving.

“The Landshark Tank Pitch Competition is an elevator

pitch competition, where any Ole Miss student can pitch their business idea in one minute,” said Tong Meng, CIE director of programs. “This year the LST pitch took a virtual format, and we asked students to enter with their one-minute video pitches.

“We posted the top five pitches on social media and received almost 1,000 votes in just two days.”

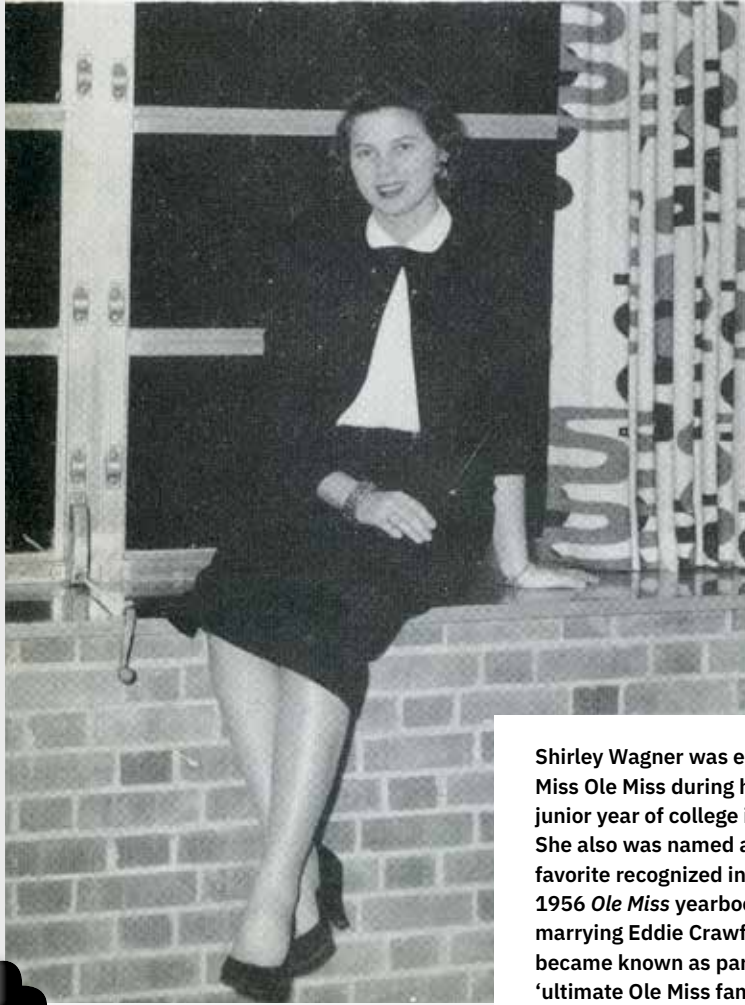
Other final participants in the competition were Anne Kendall Outland, a senior from Birmingham, Alabama, majoring in elementary education; Brea Givens, a senior from Austin, Texas, majoring in managerial finance; Jordan Wyton, a senior from Grayson, Georgia, majoring in multidisciplinary studies; and Julia Zidek, a senior from Avon, Ohio, majoring in business management.

BY STELLA CONNELL



Nestor Delgado, a third-year Ole Miss law student from Pascagoula, won the sixth annual Landshark Tank Pitch Competition hosted by the university’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship with his concept for ROTR Drone Solutions. Delgado is specializing in air and space law at the UM School of Law.

SHIRLEY WAGNER



SUBMITTED

Shirley Wagner was elected Miss Ole Miss during her junior year of college in 1956. She also was named a class favorite recognized in the 1956 *Ole Miss* yearbook. After marrying Eddie Crawford, she became known as part of the 'ultimate Ole Miss family.'

Shirley Crawford

REMEMBERED

Longtime staff member leaves her stamp on beloved university.

University of Mississippi alumna Shirley Wagner Crawford (BSHPE 57), who died Nov. 8 of last year, is remembered for her unflinching optimism.

In summer 1953, Shirley Wagner left Grenada and headed 45 miles northeast to Oxford to enroll as a freshman at the University of Mississippi. Along with her suitcase, she brought her

skills in women's basketball, the pep she exuded in cheerleading and her joie de vivre.

She immediately threw herself into the process of Ole Miss rush and joined Delta Delta Delta sorority, where she became a devoted member and alumna for life.

"Shirley and I became friends in 1956, when I met her and Eddie for the first time," UM Chancellor Emeritus Robert Khayat said. "For

64 years, we continued that friendship as it enriched with time and memories. She and Eddie became the ultimate Ole Miss couple, and with the arrival of Kim and Kip, the Ole Miss family.

“She was enthusiastic about living, Ole Miss, her friends and sports ... particularly football and baseball,” Khayat said. “She loved to cheer, applaud and celebrate success but deeply mourned loss and failure.

“However, her interests were not limited to athletics. A mainstay at the School of Business, she was a friend and counselor to generations of students and faculty members. She approached her work just as she lived: enthusiastically.”

She was like a second mother, said Ken Cyree, dean of the Ole Miss business school.

“When I moved to Oxford in 2004, I was the banking chair,” Cyree said. “Shirley was my then-assistant, and I had some documents I needed filed. I asked her to file them, and she said, ‘Oh, I don’t do that.’

“I asked, ‘Well, who is going to do it?’ She replied, ‘I guess it will be you.’

“Another time, I was having a difficult issue with a faculty member. Shirley noticed I was upset and asked what was wrong. When I told her, she stood up, named the person, and said she would go and take care of it, gesturing with clenched fists that she was ready to fight.”

Her grit and determination were exemplified in many ways, including her refusal to go on a date with the man who would eventually become her partner in life, her beloved husband, Eddie.

“I kept asking, and she kept saying no,” Eddie told Rick Cleveland, of *Mississippi Today*, in July 2017.

“Then, on a Saturday night at Tiger Stadium in Baton

Rouge, his junior season, Crawford scored four touchdowns to help Ole Miss win a huge football game against LSU,” Cleveland wrote. “That night, amid the wild, post-game celebration, Eddie asked Shirley still again for a date.

“That time, she said yes.”

Her family, Ole Miss, First Presbyterian Church and her work were among her priorities and passions. And, then there were the legions of close friends and admirers – young and old – through her beloved sorority, Delta Delta Delta.

“Shirley is revered by generations of Tri Deltas and is remembered as a loving mentor, a trusted friend, an enthusiastic cheerleader, an ever-present supporter and an exemplary role model,” said Jan Farrington, who served as president of the Tri Delta Foundation from 2006 to 2008 and as president of the Ole Miss Alumni Association in 1998-99.



Shirley Crawford attends a surprise party, hosted by the Tri Delta Alumni, Chi Chapter advisory board and members of the Chi Chapter House Corp., to announce the creation of the Shirley Crawford Leadership Scholarship on Sept. 9, 2016. The award is an endowed scholarship through the Tri Delta Foundation.



Rod Taylor (left), president of Taylor & Co., and Ken Cyree, business school dean, present Shirley Crawford with the Distinguished Finance Executive Award from the Banking and Finance board of the Ole Miss business school in 2013.

“There is a Tri Delta scholarship named in her honor and, in 2004, the chapter room was named for her in recognition of her lifelong commitment to her beloved sorority.”

She will be missed by many Oxford residents and university associates from athletics, business, Greek life and the student body, many of whom remembered that she represented the good in all that she did and enjoyed.

“Shirley loved being the secretary to the chair of banking,” said Mary Sharp Rayner, a longtime friend and fellow Tri Delta, who served as president of the Ole Miss Alumni Association in 2003-04. “She enjoyed the students who came by her office to talk or to get help.

“She was a wonderful mentor to so many business students as well as Tri Deltas, who she had in her home every year. There were very few university functions she didn’t attend. She and Eddie were always the university representatives at numerous funerals. Bottom line, she was a most important ‘face of the university.’”

Crawford touched many people during her lifetime, said Del Hawley, senior associate dean at the business school.

“My memories of Shirley will always be emblazoned with her ever-present smile,” said Hawley, who worked with her for 30 years. “Every day, day after day, and year after

year, she was always a beacon of cheer and optimism.

“She was never down, cross or self-absorbed. I don’t think I have ever met a person with a more positive attitude, and I certainly have never met one who was a better example of what it means to be a good person. She set a shining example for me and for anyone else she met for how to be an inspiring, humble, caring and compassionate human being.”

Sixty-seven years after her drive from Grenada to Oxford, Crawford’s joy for life still permeates the university and town.

Crawford was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, Eddie. She is survived by her son, Kip, and his wife, Whitney; her daughter, Kim, and her husband, Brett; her grandsons, Logan and Slater, and Slater’s wife, Nina. She is also survived by her sister, Barbara Wagner Murray.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Shirley Crawford Staff Excellence Endowment or the Ole Miss Women’s Council for Philanthropy Shirley Wagner Crawford Council Scholarship endowment, both through the UM Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. Contact Angela Brown, senior director of development for the School of Business Administration, at browna@olemiss.edu.



Shirley is revered by generations of Tri Deltas and is remembered as a loving mentor, a trusted friend, an enthusiastic cheerleader, an ever-present supporter and an exemplary role model.”

— JAN FARRINGTON

BY STELLA CONNELL

SHAMESSIA LEE

B.B.A. MARKETING

ALUMNI
SUCCESS

From Ole Miss to China to FedEx, a sales account exec learns the ropes.

In the summer of 2012, high schooler Shamessia “Meme” Lee attended a StarTalk Chinese language and culture program at Ole Miss. It was her first visit to campus, and for a native of a “small corner” in Columbus, Georgia, the experience broadened her worldview and solidified her decision to attend the university.

Once on campus, she chose the School of Business. The encouragement and direction of the business school faculty and staff helped put her on a career path that led her around the world.

In Shanghai, she interned at a digital marketing agency.

“I was able to utilize what I learned in the classroom, from my marketing professors, to work with brands such as GOAT, Estée Lauder and Tourism Australia on refining their branding strategy for the Chinese consumer,” Lee said.

She is now a business sales account executive at FedEx Services in Memphis, where she works with small-business customers. She still draws on knowledge she learned at Ole Miss.

UM Completes 17th Annual Speaker's Edge Competition

COVID-19 protocols, mask wearing, Zoom etiquette, abuses of remote working and the effects of the global pandemic dominated the topics in the 17th annual University of Mississippi Speaker's Edge competition held remotely for the first time, Jan. 14-15.

More than 100 graduate students in business, accountancy and law tackled issues ranging from disclosing co-workers' exposure to the coronavirus to employees being encouraged to work in the office for preference in performance reviews and promotion consideration, all during a global pandemic.

They were joined virtually by 86 judges and 19 coaches for this year's speaking competition, a partnership between the university's School of Business Administration, Patterson School of Accountancy and Trent Lott Leadership Institute.

After two days of competition, Drew Johnson, an MBA candidate from Monroe, Louisiana, was declared the overall winner.

"Speaker's Edge was a fantastic experience, and I am thankful to all of the coaches, mentors and professionals that made it possible, in spite of the enormous challenges that had to be navigated due to COVID-19," said Johnson, who received his bachelor's degree in management from Ole Miss in 2017. "The skills we learned from this competition will have immeasurable value as we go into our future careers.

"I will always remember the important advice and lessons I was given through this experience. I was surrounded by peers, who all put in so much hard work and did an amazing job. I am so grateful for this recognition."

Johnson placed first in Ethical Dilemmas and third in Team Pitch.

"Speaker's Edge is an outstanding opportunity for students to compete in a speaking competition to hone their presentation skills," said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. "This is the first year we have held it virtually, due to the pandemic, and it was a huge success.

"We have prepared our students to communicate through the online environment that all of us have been



Speaker's Edge was a fantastic experience, and I am thankful to all of the coaches, mentors and professionals that made it possible, in spite of the enormous challenges that had to be navigated due to COVID-19."

— DREW JOHNSON

The judges watched the videos, ranking and providing feedback on the presentations, from all over the world, including one in Europe and another in Asia. Students competed in two rounds in three different categories: Ethical Dilemmas, Marketplace Pitch and Team Pitch.

using since March 2020, and this competition will help them in the future as we continue to innovate in our workplace design and communication platforms. Our staff, faculty, coaches and judges were amazing and helped our students grow in their communication opportunities.”

In the Ethical Dilemmas category, following Johnson was Graham Llivina, an MBA candidate from Birmingham, Alabama, who received his bachelor’s degree in entrepreneurship and family business from Auburn University in 2020, and Chanel Dagmar Thomas, an MBA candidate from Scottsdale, Arizona, who received her bachelor’s degree in managerial finance from Ole Miss in 2020, in third.

In this category, participants presented their best solutions for workplace challenges, where issues of expense abuse, gender discrimination, oppressive governments as clients, use of forced labor and lying on resumes were addressed.

Johnson’s dilemma posed a situation where an employee of a hospital had knowledge that the chief financial officer received the COVID-19 vaccine ahead of frontline medical workers, who were to be the first to receive it, and whether this breach should be addressed.

In the Marketplace Pitch category, Hunt Coleman, an MBA candidate from Madison, took first place, followed by Thomas Wilson, an MBA candidate from Birmingham, Alabama, who received his undergraduate degree in marketing from Ole Miss in 2020. In the third spot was Ben Rush, an MBA candidate, also from Birmingham, who received his undergraduate degree in agricultural business and economics from Auburn in 2020.



SUBMITTED

Drew Johnson, of Monroe, Louisiana, is the winner of the 2021 Speaker’s Edge competition. Johnson, a 2017 graduate of the School of Business Administration with a bachelor’s degree in management, emphasis in human resources, is a candidate in the MBA program.

“Participating in Speaker’s Edge was a fantastic experience, and the competitive environment of MBA, accounting and law graduate students made the experience all that more enriching,” said Coleman, who received his bachelor’s degree in sport and recreation administration from UM in 2020. “I am so happy I was able to represent the MBA program in the competition.”

Coleman’s pitch proposed an endorsement program for student-athletes, given the eventual passing of the Fair Pay for Play Act that would contractually obligate student-athletes to compete in postseason play and support the sponsor’s advertising campaign for their bowl game, in return for financial compensation.

The competition provides an exceptional vehicle for students to enhance their verbal communication skills, said Mark Wilder, UM accountancy dean.

“Thank you to JoAnn Edwards and the faculty, coaches,

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

YANIK ETAN

B.B.A., FINANCE

A decision to transfer to Ole Miss leads to a highest academic honor.

From growing up in St. Lucia to living and working in Memphis, Tennessee, Yanik Etan's professional journey has been interesting.

He initially attended the College of Central Florida in Ocala, where he was invited to join the honor society of Phi Theta Kappa, an organization that recognizes exceptional students at the community college level.

That success caught the eye of Ole Miss recruiters, and Etan was encouraged to visit campus. The beautiful campus and communication from staff sold him on the university, but he said it was his interactions with faculty that made his decision such a good one.

Etan graduated in 2018 and received the Taylor Medal, the highest academic honor an Ole Miss student can receive in an area of study.

He now lives in Memphis, where he is employed at International Paper as an IT business specialist.

THOMAS GRANING/OLE MISS DIGITAL IMAGING SERVICES

judges, staff and sponsors for a highly successful Speaker's Edge 2021," Wilder said. "I know that it was very challenging for all involved, due to the virtual format, but was an outstanding learning experience once again for our students.

"Having strong presentation abilities is a clear differentiator in the marketplace, and the Speaker's Edge program does an exceptional job in enhancing the verbal skills of our students."

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

Tourist destinations, automobiles, vacation rentals, entertainment venues, cruises and airlines, food products, and hotel chains were examples of businesses in the Team Pitch area. The winning team's pitch represented the Walt Disney Corp. The second- and third-place teams represented Honda and Airbnb.

The winning pitch involved introducing virtual reality into Disneyland through implementation in three phases to bring people back into the parks, while also being innovative and looking toward the future.

Members of the winning team were Shadi Alhihi, an MBA candidate from Jordan, who received his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from UM in 2019; Anna Kate Joyce, an MBA candidate from Oxford, who received her bachelor's degree in integrated marketing communications from UM in 2019; Brian Joyner, a Master



Speaker's Edge has always had the amazing elements of collaboration and transformation. Now, with this year's virtual setting, we can add innovation to the list."

— ASHLEY MCGEE

of Accountancy and Data Analytics candidate from Brandon, who received his undergraduate degree in accounting from UM in 2020; Margaret Anne Montgomery, a Master of Accountancy candidate from Shreveport, Louisiana, who received her bachelor's degree in accountancy from UM in 2020; Kaden Ryan, an MBA candidate from Gulfport, who received his undergraduate degree in accountancy from UM in 2020; and Isaac Tyre, an MBA candidate from Madison, who received his bachelor's degree in risk management and insurance from UM in 2020.

The competition helps students gain an advantage as they prepare to launch their careers, said Walter Davis, MBA program faculty adviser.

"Many students point to Speaker's Edge as a highlight of their experience in the MBA program," Davis said. "Students develop unique skills as individual speakers but also as team presenters, skills that are becoming increasingly important in today's professional communities."

The competition was launched in 2004 by Ole Miss alumni. It brings together industry professionals, retirees, working alumni and students, requiring students to adapt their message to different audiences.

"Speaker's Edge has always had the amazing elements of collaboration and transformation," said Ashley McGee, director of the MBA program. "Now, with this year's virtual setting, we can add innovation to the list."

In preparation, participants spent a week and a half working with volunteer communication coaches to discover strengths and weaknesses of their personal presentation styles in front of multiple judges.

"The students, instructors, coaches all were simply exceptional," said JoAnn Edwards, speech instructor and director of forensics and special projects manager at the Lott Leadership Institute.

"Collectively they modeled resiliency for all of us. They displayed the power of the human spirit to form relationships, even in a virtual setting, the power of the spoken word to connect always."

Rooming App Rules Gillespie Competition

When Brea Givens transferred to the University of Mississippi as a junior in 2019, she had a difficult time finding a compatible roommate, so she began developing her own app to streamline the process and deliver better results.

That led to Froomie, which provides roommate and housing solutions for college students, and which won first place in the university's 17th annual Gillespie Business Plan Competition in April. Givens, the founder and CEO, will receive \$10,000 toward her LLC and a year of complimentary office space, valued at \$3,600, at the Innovation Hub at Insight Park.

She also won the Lynn and Ron Samuels Student Entrepreneur Award, which includes an additional \$5,000.

A senior finance major from Austin, Texas, Givens was unable to find a suitable

roommate when she transferred to Ole Miss from Austin Community College and had to resort to random placement. This experience exposed her to the lack of resources available to students in finding roommates and off-campus housing.

"It is great to see Brea Givens' idea for Froomie grow into an LLC; she applied the judges' feedback from last year," said Clay Dibrell, co-director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. "Through her hard work and those who have worked with her, she is looking to launch Froomie in the near future."

Givens won the sixth Mid-South Business Model

Competition in November 2020 and has worked to expand the company since then.

"Since the BMC, I've been focusing on finalizing Froomie's initial mobile platform features by working with a UI/UX designer as well as speaking with potential customers and users," Givens said. "It's great knowing that I have support from the school and its alumni."

"The CIE has played a huge part in helping me get to where I am today, and I could not have done it without their continued support and mentorship."

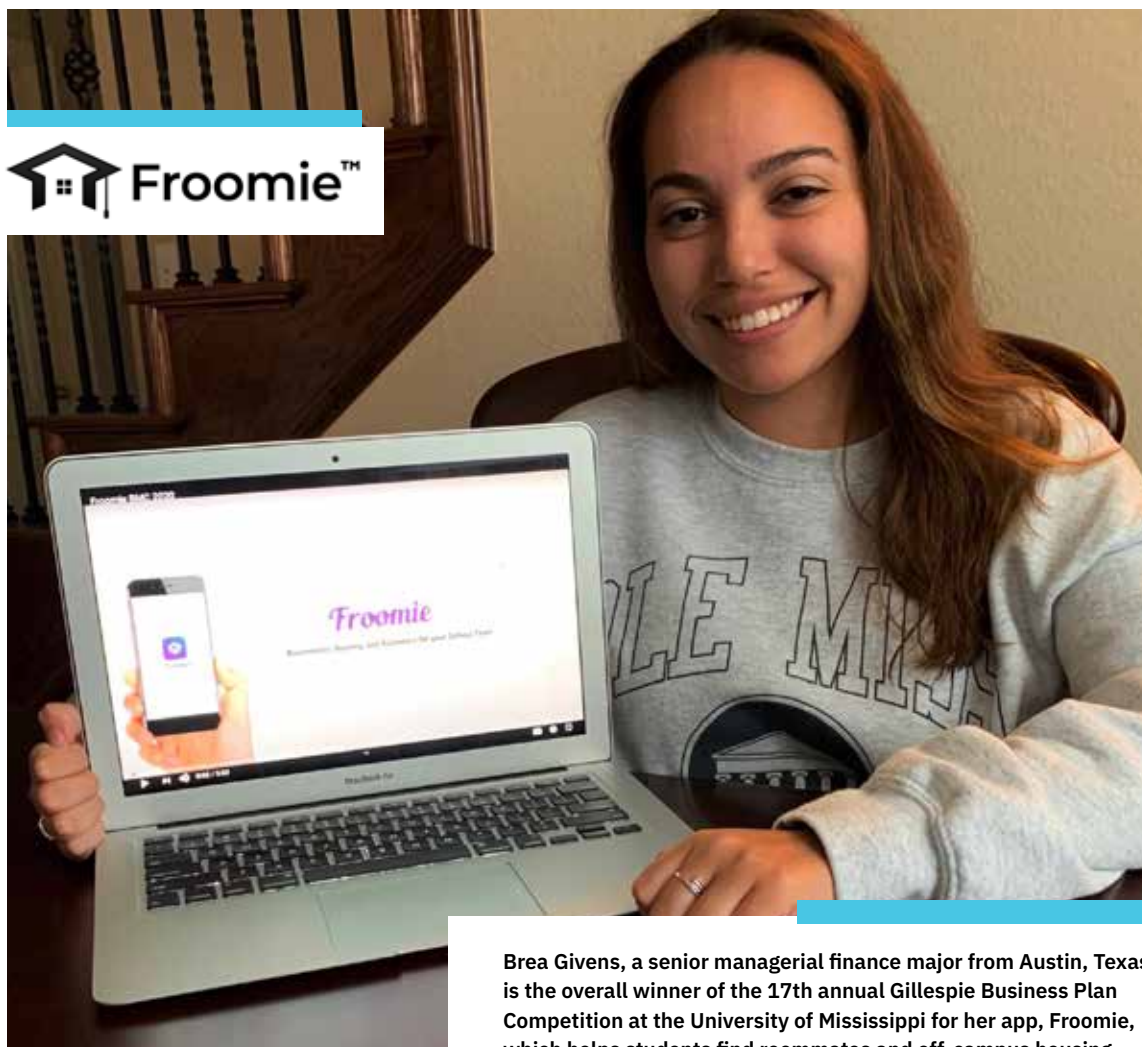
Participation increased by 30% over last year's Gillespie competition, said Tong Meng, director of programs for the CIE, which sponsors both competitions.

"We had teams from diverse backgrounds, freshmen to graduate students, teams with just an idea to those who were post-revenue, IMC majors to biomedical engineering majors," Meng said. "We are thrilled that students recognize and trust the CIE and its programming as key resources, where they can receive support with their entrepreneurial pursuit."

From 27 pitches, six business ideas were chosen to present to a panel of seven judges in the final round.

The final round of judges included Abb Payne, The Payne Companies' founder and CEO; Stephen Richards, founder of Richard's Bespoke; William Yates, CEO of Yates





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Brea Givens, a senior managerial finance major from Austin, Texas, is the overall winner of the 17th annual Gillespie Business Plan Competition at the University of Mississippi for her app, Froomie, which helps students find roommates and off-campus housing.

Construction; Emmet Seibels, co-founder and former president of Verus Healthcare; Liza Cirlot Looser, CEO of The Cirlot Agency; Jan Farrington, former executive director of Medical Support and Development Organization Inc.; and Lawrence Farrington, a member of the board of directors for mTrade Inc. and the UM Foundation.

Placing second in the competition was SageApp, a platform designed to improve online learning for both students and teachers, founded by Austin Wallace, of Southaven, and Michael Valencia, of Nashville, Tennessee, both juniors majoring in chemistry. They received \$5,000 toward their LLC.

Three additional awards, each worth \$5,000, were given from donations to support the CIE, with Givens winning the

Lynn and Ron Samuels Student Entrepreneur Award.

Senior biomedical engineering majors Tristan Daily, of Saltillo; Noah McKone, of Bogue Chitto; Jake Smith, of Hernando; and Owen Barry, of Madison, received the Thomas W. Colbert-Community Bank Innovation Award for Rolling Thunder, a concept to improve rehabilitation and comfort for people using wheelchairs. This award recognizes an outstanding venture driven by innovation in a product/process/service or technological change development.

HoopAtlanta received the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneur Award for exemplifying the entrepreneurial spirit through a venture driven by innovation. Jordan Wyton, a senior multidisciplinary

studies major from Grayson, Georgia, started this company to host organized pickup basketball games for fun, fast-paced sessions with no long-term commitment; he has already expanded to Charlotte, North Carolina, and Nashville.

“We are grateful for our sponsors and their support that allows us to offer monetary prizes to assist the launch of these student-led businesses,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the UM School of Business Administration. “It is encouraging to note the adaptability and resiliency of our students to adjust in these interesting times, and I believe the future of these Ole Miss entrepreneurs is bright.”

BY ALI MAE WALSH

Ole Miss Rugby Club Helps Develop Business Skills

Since 1974, the Ole Miss Rugby Club has provided University of Mississippi students with a competitive sport they can play with absolutely no experience. Most members do not know how to play initially, but through hard work and determination, they become assets to their team.

Hudson Smith, a junior marketing major from Memphis, enjoyed working out. Although he was heading to the gym often, he thought it might be more fun to work out for a competitive reason. He heard about the Rugby Club through one of his Kappa Sigma fraternity brothers, Jack Cornell, a sophomore studying general business from Collierville, Tennessee.

Smith then decided to join the club – initially for discovery purposes.

“I was still learning the rules during our first game,” Smith said. “I remember the first time I scored, I got a red card, and I didn’t understand why.”

Although many of the club’s players have no previous experience, others have been recruited from high school to play. Cornell is one of these students.

Cornell attended Christian Brothers High School in Memphis, where he enjoyed rough sports such as football and wrestling. So when he was introduced to the idea of rugby, he was

intrigued, and after trying it, he fell in love with the sport.

“I had a similar experience to Hudson when I played my first game in high school, which was after two or three weeks of practice,” Cornell said. “I think that’s how it is for a lot of people who get into rugby; you have to learn as you go.”

Although Smith and Cornell come from two different backgrounds for rugby, each has a similar school path, enrolling in majors within the School of Business Administration, which has merged with their rugby experience.

Each club sport has an executive committee. The Rugby Club’s officers include a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, forwards and backs captain, and head of recruitment. Smith holds the recruitment position, and Cornell is secretary for the committee.

“My business communications class has helped me communicate more effectively over email,” Cornell said. “This is important because as the secretary, I am the contact for our matches.”

ALI MAE WALSH



HUDSON SMITH, a marketing major from Memphis, knew the experience he wanted when he came to Ole Miss and has not been disappointed with the outcome.

Now in his senior year, he is a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity, where he met Jack Cornell, who convinced him to join the Ole Miss Rugby Club. Another decision he has not regretted.

“I wanted a great school, close to home, that offers everything I want in my college experience,” Smith said. “Ole Miss has been just that, and the business school has allowed me to grow as a person and professional.

“The faculty in the business school will provide you with everything you need to succeed in the real world no matter what field you choose.”

@hudson_smith_ @olemissrugbyclub @umksig

ALI MAE WALSH



JACK CORNELL, a junior from Collierville, Tennessee, is exploring his many interests by majoring in general business. Cornell said he decided to go to Ole Miss because of its unparalleled atmosphere compared to every other college campus, and this still rings true to him today.

During his time here, Cornell has joined Kappa Sigma fraternity and become a member of the Ole Miss Rugby Club.

“Business is a prominent major on campus that unites students in a shared knowledge and experience,” Cornell said. “The business school wants to help and serve you while you earn your degree here at Ole Miss.”

@jackcornell @olemissrugbyclub @umksig #OMbusiness

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Will Cochran (No. 23), a senior from Memphis, hoists a teammate for a throw in.

This year, in particular, that skill has come in handy for Cornell. Unfortunately for Smith, his job is not as simple.

“It’s hard to recruit when you don’t have a big budget,” Smith said.

Budget cuts related to COVID-19 are not the only problem for recruitment. The pandemic also has reduced the number of people willing to play the sport. Last year’s roster only had 25 players, compared to 40-60 members in recent years.

Rugby’s classification as a club sport is another factor in its low budget funding. The NCAA does not sponsor rugby, so the governing body for the club is the Southeastern Collegiate Rugby Conference. The Ole Miss Rugby Club is a Division 2 team.

“We have 25 people on the roster, and we’re trying to double that number,” Cornell said. “If our games received more attention from students, and we got more people to play, that would help get the sport on people’s radar, which in turn would help the sport get recognized.

“Maybe in the future, it can be more than a club sport.”

BY ALI MAE WALSH

For more information or to join the club, email olemissrugbyfootballclub@gmail.com.

Roommate-Finding App Wins Mid-South Business Model Competition

FROOMIE IS A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR COLLEGE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

A housing app developed by a University of Mississippi senior majoring in managerial finance won first place in the 2020 Mid-South Business Model Competition.

Froomie allows future and current students to find a place to live and match up with a roommate or roommates who meet their requirements. It was developed by Brea Givens, of Austin, Texas, who won \$3,000 as the regional winner in the Mid-South BMC and \$1,000 for winning the Ole Miss competition, for a total of \$4,000.

“I had the idea for Froomie back in February (2020), and ended up entering the Gillespie Business Plan Competition with an early adaptation of what I thought it could be,” Givens said.

The Mid-South BMC is a regional qualifier for the BMC Global, previously known as the International BMC.

“(Givens) put in a tremendous effort and took advantage of the opportunities the university provides by speaking to the entrepreneur-in-residence,” said Rich Gentry, co-director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and associate professor of management at the UM School of Business Administration. “The outcome of her work was an extremely impressive presentation that any employer would be excited to watch.”

The fall competition was created for Ole Miss students before the center became a BMC Global partner in 2015. The CIE invites schools in the region to participate, and the winner goes on to the international competition the following spring.

Although the campus competition has combined with the regional event, the entrepreneurship center maintains a separate award for the best Ole Miss competitor.

“This is the sixth Business Model Competition the CIE has hosted,” said Tong Meng, the center’s director of programs and a UM instructor of management. “I am extremely proud of all teams who exhibited the spirit of entrepreneurship and resilience through their innovative business models.”

Twelve competitors participated in the event, and each received \$500 in prize money. The six finalists represented three schools: UM, John Brown University and the University of Pennsylvania.

By Preston Moore and Avery Willis

Community-Engaged Work Recognized



Jeremy Meuser

This year's Excellence in Community Engagement Awards recognized three organizations, one of them within the business school, led by University of Mississippi faculty, staff and students who are making a significant impact on the well-being of many in the Lafayette-Oxford-University community and across Mississippi.

"The award is to recognize excellence in community-engaged work, particularly projects that have been impactful in the discovery, development and dissemination of knowledge that changes conditions within communities," said Cade Smith, assistant vice chancellor for community engagement. "It's about

leveraging the best of what the university offers through mutually beneficial partnerships with the communities we serve."

This year's winner is Growing Healthy Minds, Bodies and Communities, an integrated preschool curriculum focused on teaching social and emotional skills alongside the required classroom curriculum.

The finalist with distinction for excellence in community engagement is LeadershipServ's, a servant leadership program aimed at training business leaders to improve the well-being of their employees.

The finalist for community-engaged service is the School of Law's Pro Bono Initiative, which pairs law

students with Mississippi attorneys to offer free legal assistance to people who wouldn't otherwise have access.

The awards carry monetary prizes of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$1,000, respectively.

LEADERSHIPSERV'S: EXCELLENCE IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The seed of LeadershipServ's: Excellence in Servant Leadership Program was planted when Jeremy Meuser, assistant professor of management, had completely different experiences working on nearly identical projects.

"In one, the business owners said it was a failure, and in



Jeremy Meuser conducts a feedback session with students in his Mgmt 495 class at the Jackson Avenue Center.

SYDNEY GIBSON

Management Ph.D. students Andrea Blakely (top), David Keating and Pol Solanelles organize breakout and feedback sessions for the LeadershipServ's program.



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the other, the business owner said it was a success,” Meuser said. The difference, Meuser realized, was not in the job, but in the leader.

“Owner A was perceived by his employees to be someone who developed initiatives for the sake of keeping everyone busy. Owner B was seen by his employees as someone who tries to fix their problems and make their jobs easier.”

That’s when he began to examine the concept of leadership and how to train more effective leaders.

“I had this moment of clarity where I said, ‘OK, leadership matters for the well-being of organizations, which means the well-being of the economy, which means the well-being of society, which means for the well-being of individuals, their

ability to live happily and their mental health,” Meuser said.

“And we know the sins of the parents are revisited in their children, and emotional energy is transferred from a bad relationship with a supervisor into the home. So, leadership matters for all of our futures.”

Anyone interested in participating in the LeadershipServ’s: Excellence in Servant Leadership Program can contact Meuser at jmeuser@bus.olemiss.edu.

LeadershipServ’s: Excellence in Servant Leadership Program was developed in partnership with Jarvis Smallfield, University of Illinois, and Donald Klumper and Daniel Cervone, University of Illinois at Chicago.

BY JB CLARK

Ole Miss Hockey Helps Business Students Gain Experience

The University of Mississippi's club hockey team made history in 2020 by winning its first South Eastern Collegiate Hockey Conference championship. And although the 2020-21 season was postponed by COVID-19, the team continued to provide opportunities beyond the ice for its members.

Like other club sports, the Ole Miss Hockey Club is student-led and student-run. This also means that the students are responsible for funding and managing the operation.

Students in the UM School of Business Administration, including Colin Knight, one of the team's co-founders, used it as an opportunity to gain more knowledge and experience in the business world.

"Getting the experience of balancing an \$80,000-to-\$120,000 budget was definitely something that helped me and set me apart when I first started applying for jobs," Knight said.

Knight earned four degrees from UM: a bachelor's degree in accountancy in 2009, a master's degree in accountancy in 2010, an MBA in 2011 and a Master of Curriculum and Instruction, with an emphasis in mathematics, in 2013. He is an acquisitions manager for the Naval Reactors in Washington, D.C.

Business students who are part of the team have opportunities to take on leadership roles, including president, vice president, treasurer and marketing manager. In these roles, students are responsible for balancing and projecting budgets, paying bills, obtaining quotes



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Cole Chatham scoring a goal against Purdue University. Chatham collected 41 goals in 50 games for Ole Miss.

for transportation and making sure everything is done in a timely manner.

"This was instrumental for me and my education because now I can apply the resources I've learned to make the things I love doing better for everyone," said Cole Chatham, a senior marketing major from Belleville, Illinois.

Scott Harlin, an MBA student from Pensacola, Florida, and former vice president of team affairs, said he believes the experience has helped him academically.

STELLA CONNELL



SCOTT HARLIN, who graduated from the MBA program in August 2021, played on the Ole Miss hockey team. Born in Biloxi, he bounced around from Florida to Massachusetts to Texas – due to his father being in the military. For college, he wanted to go to a place that felt like home, and he got that feeling after touring Ole Miss.

Harlin arrived as an undergraduate at Ole Miss in 2016. During his four years, he majored in managerial finance with a minor in entrepreneurship. He also served as the hockey team's vice president of team affairs.

As vice president, he was able to leverage the team's finances to lower the cost of travel for the team.

"The knowledge I gained from the business school really helped me in that position to find the best deal," Harlin said.

"As a student-led organization, it is essential that we keep our budget in check and save money in any way we can."

STELLA CONNELL



NATE SULLIVAN, who graduated from UM in May 2021 with a B.B.A. in banking and finance, served as vice president of travel affairs for the hockey team during his four years at the university.

In the beginning, Sullivan was unsure where he wanted to go to college, but he knew he wanted to go as far away from home as possible. He decided to follow in the footsteps of a few of his hockey friends from his hometown of Spring Lake, Michigan, and check out Ole Miss.

Sullivan instantly fell in love with the campus environment and decided it was a good fit for him. Balancing hockey and academics has taught him a great lesson.

“The two most important things that I have learned while balancing school and playing hockey are time management and efficiency,” Sullivan said. “You must be productive with the time that you have and take good notes in class so you’re not stressed outside of class.”

@nate_sully5 @ole_miss_hockey #OMbusiness

STELLA CONNELL



COLE CHATHAM, who graduated from UM in May 2021 with a B.B.A. in marketing, was a member of the Ole Miss hockey team.

After playing for the North American Hockey League during high school, the Belleville, Illinois, native knew he wanted to attend a school that could offer him the fun of hockey and the opportunity to grow from a business student to a business professional.

He heard about Ole Miss through some of his friends from the NAHL. He decided to take a chance without even visiting, and it is a decision he has never regretted.

“Before Ole Miss, I would just show up to play hockey,” Chatham said. “Now, I understand how much work needs to be put in by each individual of the organization just to get the puck drop.”

@colechatham_ @ole_miss_hockey #OMbusiness

“Working with a team environment like that (student-led) definitely helped me in my business classes, and I was able to really apply that knowledge firsthand,” he said. After graduation, Harlin plans to work in commercial banking in Dallas.

Team members raise money by selling jerseys, T-shirts and other apparel. They also receive donations from businesses in the Oxford area, including the Library Sports Bar and Grill, where owner John Desler has been a longtime supporter of the club.

Some students have enjoyed playing hockey as a club sport because it allows them to play a sport they love, but leaves plenty of time for them to focus on their coursework and other interests.

Hockey is the first thing I ever loved,” said Nate Sullivan, a senior banking and finance major from Spring Lake, Michigan. “You get to do that while doing your own thing academically, so it’s a good experience all around.”

Others on the team believe that the Ole Miss Hockey Club is something special, and they credit it with giving them opportunities to apply skills learned in the classroom to the real world.

“I cannot think of a better way for business students to apply their education to a real environment,” said Conor Silk, an MBA student from Andover, Massachusetts. “As a board member,

you not only learn the functions of each department of the organization, but you also get to watch our ideas being played out in front of us.

“Most importantly, the entrepreneurial spirit is instilled in each of us. We have our good days and bad days, just like any business or organization, but we also have learned to turn situations into positive growth opportunities.”

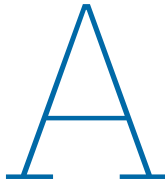
The Ole Miss Hockey Club began in January 2009, with Knight and Cody Johnson as co-founders. The team started with just 15 members.

Knight described the founding of the team as something that came together “unnaturally,” because they were just a group of students who had a common interest.

The 2020 roster included 30 student-athletes, working on majors ranging from finance and marketing to biology and chemistry. Fresh off winning their first conference championship, the team members dream of someday becoming an NCAA-level team.

“The team has gone above and beyond anything that we did,” Knight said. “After I left, the progression of the people that took over did, and are continuing to do, a great job of building the team and taking it in new routes.”

Training Racially Diverse Business Leaders



A \$60,000 gift to the University of Mississippi for the Robert C. Pozen Scholarship MBA Diversity Fund will assist two students pursuing master's degrees in business administration.

The award covers \$30,000 in tuition for two full-time students from Mississippi who are entering the on-campus MBA program this summer or fall.

Bob Pozen, of Boston, made similar gifts at the University of Alabama and University of Florida.

"I made the gift to three MBA programs to promote the admission of a more racially diverse MBA class, and hopefully the programs will help train racially diverse leaders who will stay within the state after receiving their graduate degrees," Pozen said.

"I chose the three SEC universities because I believe that the MBA program at these three schools will most likely achieve my goal. All three have well-respected MBA programs, which draw heavily from in-state residents."

Eligible students must meet these criteria:

- Demonstrated commitment to a diverse MBA student body
- Understanding of discrimination in the United States
- Commitment to better communications across racial, ethnic and/or cultural lines
- Ability to overcome educational, social or family disadvantages
- Academic merit and leadership potential on equity and inclusion issues

Besides tuition assistance, the Pozen scholars will be matched with professional business leaders who will provide mentoring support during and after the students' MBA education.

"I believe that such mentoring is critical to their success in their business careers," Pozen said.

Ken Cyree, dean of the UM School of Business Administration, said he hopes Pozen's gift will set an important precedent.

"Bob has set the bar very high for other donors," Cyree said. "To make such an admirable gift that essentially covers these students'



ROBERT POZEN

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entire tuition is extremely generous, and we hope his gift will serve as an example that others will choose to follow."

Besides the SEC MBA program scholarships, Pozen endowed the Pozen Commonwealth program in 2020 at the Yale School of Management to finance an executive MBA for three minority fellows with medical backgrounds.

A native of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Pozen is a senior lecturer at MIT Sloan School of Management and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. In 2012, he won acclaim for a popular book, *Extreme Productivity: Boost Your Results, Reduce Your Hours* (Harper Collins).

In April, Harper Collins is expected to publish his latest book, *Remote, Inc.: How to Thrive at Work ... Wherever You Are*.

In 2004, Pozen became executive chairman of MFS Investment Management, which manages more than \$400 billion for mutual funds and pension plans. Between 2004 and 2011, the company's assets under management more than doubled from a base of \$130 billion.

During his career, Pozen has been active in business, government and academia. Before joining MFS, he was vice chairman of Fidelity Investments and president of Fidelity

Management & Research Co. During his five years as president, Fidelity's assets grew from \$500 billion to \$900 billion.

Pozen served on President George W. Bush's Commission to Strengthen Social Security in 2001-02 and is credited for developing a progressive plan to make the system solvent. In 2003, he provided leadership as secretary of economic affairs for Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and, in 2007, as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission's Committee to Improve Financial Reporting.

He is an independent director of Nielsen and AMC, a subsidiary of the World Bank. He previously was an independent director of Medtronic PLC and BCE, the parent of Bell Canada. He also serves as chairman of the Leadership Council of the Tax Policy Center and of the advisory board of Agility, an outsourced CIO; trustee of the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation; and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

He frequently writes articles for the *Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Harvard Business Review*. Additionally, he has published a book on the recent financial crisis, *Too Big to Save? How to Fix the U.S. Financial System* (Wiley, 2009), and a guide for investors titled *The Fund Industry: How Your Money Is Managed* (Wiley, 2011).

Pozen graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College and holds a law degree from Yale Law School, where he also obtained a doctorate for a book on state enterprises in Africa. He lives in Boston with his wife of more than 40 years.

For information about supporting the UM School of Business Administration, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181. To make a gift, visit <https://give.olemiss.edu>.

BY BILL DABNEY

NOW SEEKING

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Have you considered an MBA but have been concerned about paying for it?

Have you shown the ability to overcome educational, social or family disadvantages and are committed to providing diversity to the MBA student body?

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May 1 for Fall 2022

The Robert C. Pozen Scholars MBA Diversity Scholarship will provide **\$30,000** to cover the cost of tuition* for your master's degree.

The first step is to APPLY NOW to the Ole Miss MBA campus program. The award will be given to an admitted student who is a Mississippi resident and meets the award criteria.

* This estimate is based on tuition rates published by the Bursar's Office. Tuition rates for some individuals will vary depending on course load and dates of enrollment.

Ole Miss

School of Business Administration
Master of Business Administration

For more information, contact Ashley McGee, amcgee@bus.olemiss.edu.

Scott Vitell Bids UM Farewell Following Distinguished Career

Nearing 40 years of employment at the University of Mississippi, Scott Vitell – the longest-serving faculty member in the School of Business Administration – is retiring.

Vitell, who came to the university in 1984, has held the Phil B. Hardin Chair of Business Ethics for most of his tenure. The position is one of the earliest endowed chairs.

He also was chair of the Department of Marketing for many years and has a joint appointment with the Department of Pharmacy Administration.

“I accepted a position here because I specialized in marketing and business ethics, and there was an opportunity to work with someone here that had the same interest,” said Vitell, who retired Aug. 16. “Ole Miss has always had a very collegial and friendly environment.

“I was able to find many possible co-authors over the years from not just the marketing department, but from pharmacy and management, among others.”

REFLECTIONS FROM COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS

Barry J. Babin, chair of the Department of Marketing and Morris Lewis Professor of Marketing, has known Vitell more than 30 years. Both men’s dissertation advisers – Shelby Hunt at Texas Tech for Vitell and Bill Darden at LSU for Babin – were good acquaintances, causing the two

to also connect from the beginning of Babin’s career.

“We would see each other at conferences periodically, and I always enjoyed a chance to chat with him,” Babin said. “Scott is so amicable. Everyone else at the meetings felt Vitell has contributed significantly to the field of marketing ethics, as well as to the broader field of business ethics.

“In 1986, he and Shelby co-authored ‘A General Theory of Marketing Ethics’ in the *Journal of Macromarketing*,” he said. “That article has been cited nearly 3,500 times, which, based on a search of Google Scholar, makes it the most-cited article ever published in that journal.

“In fact, it has more than four times as many cites as the next-most-cited *Journal of Macromarketing* article and helped make him known as an authority in the ethics field.

“(Vitell) left a legacy of treating authors with courtesy and respect. Clearly, his prominence in the field has put the Ole Miss business school in a very positive light.”

Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration, said Vitell is an inspiration to him and all faculty members who aspire to conduct quality research throughout their careers.

“He is intellectually curious and has been engaged in the profession to impact countless



SCOTT VITELL

ROBERT JORDAN/OLE MISS DIGITAL IMAGING SERVICES

colleagues,” Cyree said. “We used to talk football and baseball as well. Scott is a lifelong Cubs fan, so I would commiserate with him, although I am only a casual Cubs fan.

“Scott also did dancing classes, although I was never sure if he was a participant or the instructor, and given my lack of dancing ability, I never attended, but I heard he was quite the dancer.”

Marketing professor Victoria Bush said she has known Vitell as a colleague, mentor, fellow coffee breaker and friend.

“He and I share similar research interests in ethics, and he has been a great sounding board for ideas and collaboration,” she said. “We have worked together on articles and dissertations over the years. As my boss for a good



(Vitell) left a legacy of treating authors with courtesy and respect. Clearly, his prominence in the field has put the Ole Miss business school in a very positive light.”

— BARRY BABIN

portion of my tenure at Ole Miss, he has always been approachable and offered advice with a fair and steady hand.

“As a fellow coffee breaker, we have politely argued, cried and been elated about the Cubs over the years.”

A CATALOG OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Vitell received his doctorate in marketing from Texas Tech University. He is the consumer ethics and social responsibility section editor for the *Journal of Business Ethics* and serves on the editorial review boards of the *Journal of Business Research* and the *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*.

He has published more than 100 articles, including publications that have appeared in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal*

of Retailing, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Business Ethics: A European Review*, *International Business Review* and the *Journal of Consumer Marketing*.

Vitell also has published and presented at many national and international conferences. As a recognized expert in marketing and business ethics, he has been invited to present at several academic institutions, including St. Thomas University in Minneapolis, Duke University, Notre Dame University, the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Essen, Germany, Hong Kong Baptist University, All Hallows College in Dublin and ESADE University in Barcelona, Spain.

Besides the 15 doctoral dissertations that he has chaired at Ole Miss, Vitell has served

on or assisted with doctoral dissertations at the University of Ghent, Belgium; the University of Seville, Spain; and the University of Vienna.

He was most recently honored by the *Journal of Business Ethics* for having three of the top 30, and six of the top 100 most-cited articles – from a total of 5,000 articles – in the journal’s 30-year existence.

“I was most pleased when I received the Best Researcher Award for the business school several times and also the university Burlington Northern Award as Best Teacher, a combination of teaching and research award,” Vitell said. “Because I love to travel, I always was most pleased when asked to attend a conference in places like Hong Kong, France, Belgium and so forth.”

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Vitell said he plans to keep on dancing after he retires.

“My primary plans are that I will continue to spend time in ballroom dancing, both in performances and also in competitions,” he said. “My wife, Caren, and I have been doing this for about six years now. My dance coach and partner from the Dance Studio in Tupelo is Tammy D. Wilson.”

BY EDWIN SMITH

SUBMITTED



Scott Vitell spends time with his wife, Caren.

Gift Will Expand Support for RMI Faculty

A new, major commitment from Brown & Riding Insurance Co. will further expand support for faculty in the School of Business Administration's nationally recognized Risk Management and Insurance program, helping to ensure professors have the resources needed to effectively teach and prepare students.

B&R is increasing an initial gift to the RMI program, establishing the Brown & Riding Faculty Support Endowment in the business school to a \$500,000 total commitment.

B&R's president and CEO Jeff Rodriguez said the 10-year partnership between the company and the RMI program has resulted in growth for both organizations.

"The Ole Miss RMI program has gained more recognition in recent years as graduates of the program have performed well and ascended in the industry on a national level," said Rodriguez of Dallas. "I have enjoyed seeing the program's success build and believe it is a direct result of the strong efforts and strategic initiatives of professors Andre Liebenberg and Stephen Fier.

"Not only is it good to see hard work pay off for their efforts but, as the largest employer in the program, Brown & Riding has directly benefited by adding a large number of graduates to our company over the past decade."

The RMI program is ranked among the largest RMI programs in the U.S. and is one of only 34 Global Centers of Insurance Excellence recognized across 11 countries. The program is also one of the oldest programs

nationally among higher education institutions.

"On behalf of the university, let me express my deepest thanks to Brown & Riding for this generous increase of support and for its continued partnership with us," said UM Chancellor Glenn Boyce. "The RMI program is part of what makes our School of Business Administration a powerhouse. Its designation as a Global Center of Excellence indicates its role in advancing insurance education, enhancing industry research and intellectual development, and building connections between the insurance industry and top-tier academic programs and faculty.

"As the state's flagship university, the relationship between Brown & Riding and RMI is an example of how partnerships between industries and academic programs can create educational opportunities for our talented and driven students that give them a tremendous professional starting point."

With over 50 current employees from Ole Miss, B&R is the largest employer of RMI graduates and a leading employer across disciplines at the university, said Liebenberg, associate professor of finance and the Gwenette P. and Jack W. Robertson Chair of Insurance.

"We are grateful for the strong relationship we have

with Brown & Riding," Liebenberg said. "Jeff Rodriguez has taught a class, spoken to our students and mentored many of them. To have a top 10 wholesale broker spend time on campus and recruit our students is outstanding."

That dedication to students and their career opportunities is one of the reasons B&R established the Brown & Riding Endowment, which provides income for the recruitment and retention of faculty to the RMI program.

"The intent of our ongoing investment in the RMI program is to see long-term stability, an expanded facility dedicated to the program, and more students enrolling and graduating from all walks of life," Rodriguez said. "I believe the insurance industry offers tremendous merit-based opportunities for those of us fortunate enough to have discovered insurance as a career.

"I am very impressed with the mindset of Chancellor Glenn Boyce and Dr. Liebenberg, who have both agreed to focus energy to help create insurance educational opportunities for a broad spectrum of people that I believe will result in excellent diversity outcomes by attracting people from different socio-economic, geographic and ethnic backgrounds."

Liebenberg said B&R and the university are exploring



Brown & Riding president and CEO Jeff Rodriguez (left), photographed pre-COVID during a visit with an Ole Miss student, credits the 10-year partnership between the RMI program and the company as being beneficial to both organizations.

KATHY SHOALMIRE

ways to increase the reach of the RMI program.

“We are interested in creating a center that will coordinate outreach to both high school and university students to increase the diversity of our program and the industry,” Liebenberg said. “Jeff, Steve and I know how transformational the insurance industry can be and how impactful expanding the RMI program’s opportunities can be for the state of Mississippi and beyond.”

Risk management and insurance touches every aspect of business, and a recent internal survey found that the average salary for recent graduates of the RMI program exceeds \$50,000.

Fier, holder of the Liberato-King Professorship in Insurance and associate professor of finance, credits industry partnerships with firms like B&R for giving students experience in the field.

“We award up to 6 hours of course credit for internships, and our capstone class requires our students to conduct an in-depth risk analysis of

a firm, write a report which communicates their primary findings and recommendations and concludes with each student presenting the results of their analysis to a panel of industry experts,” Fier said.

“This course allows students to apply what they have learned in their RMI courses and to replicate some of the work they might be required to produce once in the industry.

“Our program is successful because of the industry partnerships with CEOs like Jeff Rodriguez who enable those internships and visit campus to judge the capstone projects as well as have monthly luncheons with our students. It gives them firsthand experiences and keeps our professors in step with what is being done in the industry.”

Rodriguez is vocal about the quality of RMI graduates and believes investment in the program will benefit countless others.

“The Ole Miss program is exceptional in that its graduates tend not only to be academically strong but

also ready to bring practical knowledge and a strong work ethic to positions,” the insurance executive said. “As a result, we are able to invest in them confidently, and they are able to progress rapidly in their careers, resulting in an incredible long-term retention rate that eclipses industry standards.”

The Brown & Riding Faculty Support Endowment is open to accept gifts from individuals and organizations. To contribute, send a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the fund noted in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655 or online at <https://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 more information on the university’s industry engagement efforts, contact Hughes Miller at hughes@olemiss.edu or 901-490-0622.

BY MARY STANTON KNIGHT



School of Business Administration

Founded in 1917, the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration now serves over 3,500 students. The Ole Miss MBA program, which includes 172 students, is ranked No. 31 among American public universities, and the online MBA program is ranked 10th in the nation (seventh among American public universities) by U.S. News & World Report.

The Ole Miss business school’s extraordinary growth and success over the past 100 years can be traced back to the dedication, involvement and generosity of alumni and friends. Our gratitude is extended to all supporters for both service and financial investments.

All gifts will combine to recruit and retain faculty, provide scholarships, increase class offerings, sponsor guest speakers, improve programmatic involvement for student organizations, fund students’ travel to national/global competitions, support the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, supplement the overall business school endowment and more. Attention to these areas will continue to propel the school forward as a leader among SEC and national programs.

We sincerely thank you for all your support,

Ken Cyree

Dean Ken Cyree

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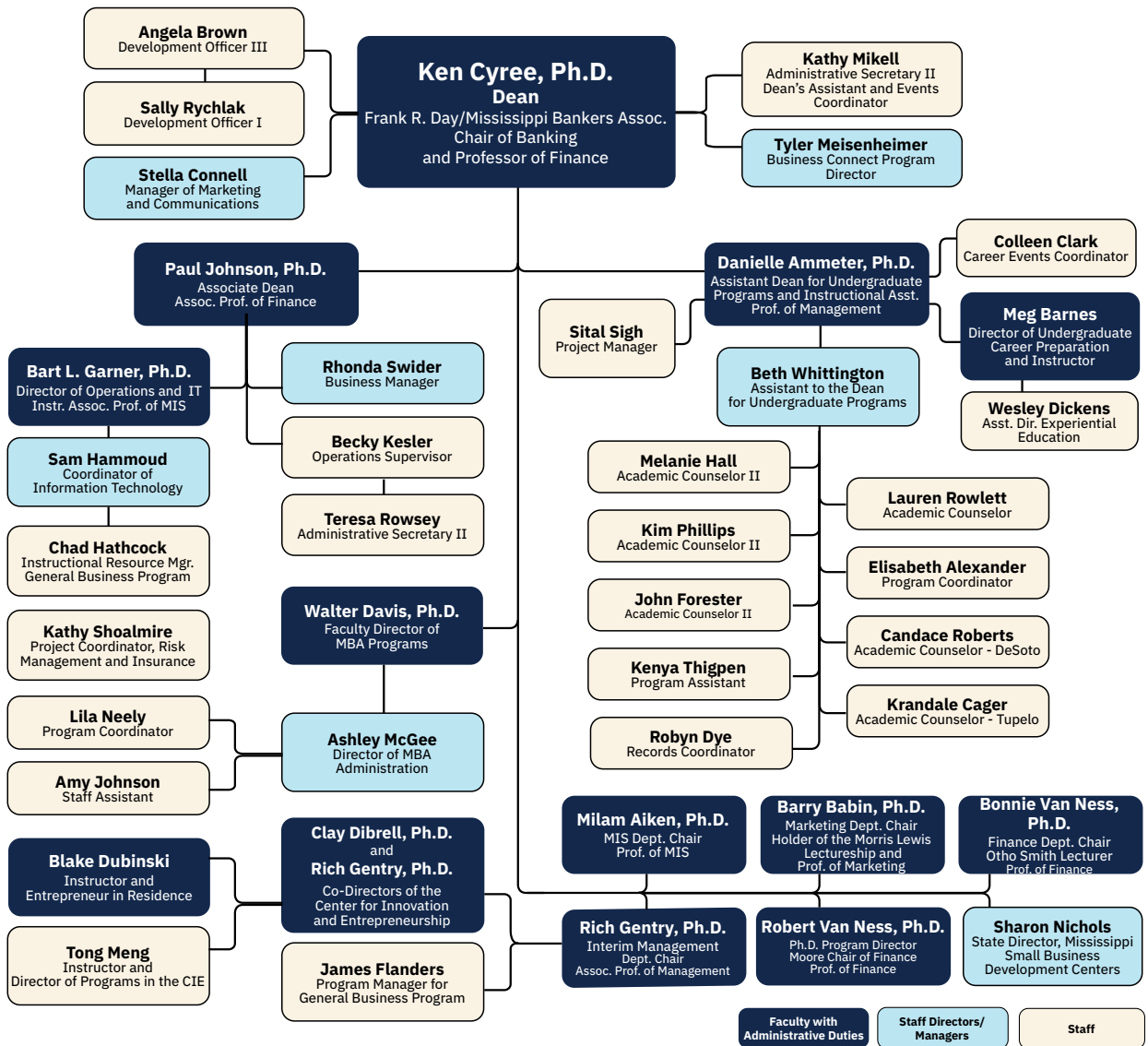
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