

BUSINESS **FIRST**



greetings

alumni and friends



JOE WORTHEM

It is my pleasure to share the 2023 issue of *BusinessFirst*. We hope you enjoy the magazine that showcases many of the great developments in the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration. We have had a busy year with Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss, new initiatives within the school and many successful events. We have had record fundraising and enrollment in the business school this year.

In this issue, you can read about our students visiting Dallas on a “career trek,” nontraditional students’ paths to graduation, the achievements of our MBA students and the rechartering of a business fraternity (that now includes women). We feature stories about job fairs, competitions, graduate student leadership and the proud accomplishments of so many of our students.

This has been a historic year for garnering support for the business school, placing the school on a strong trajectory for educating our students, and we are most grateful to our generous donors. In this publication, you will have the opportunity to read about a few of this year’s transformational gifts provided by deeply committed alumni and friends.

We are also extremely grateful for alumni leaders who have devoted their time and energies to our Now & Ever campaign, serving as champions for the business school. The individual campaign goal for our school is \$50 million, and we have secured \$39 million in investments thus far. For fiscal year 2023, gifts came to \$13.7 million, with over \$9 million of that total directed to faculty support. This includes resources for four newly endowed and named faculty chairs and one faculty scholar. We have two more years to exceed our campaign goal and increase support for faculty, programs, departments and centers, as well as to name the School of Business Administration.

Together, we can achieve our campaign goal and so much more. Our faculty, staff, alumni and friends keep us reaching new heights of excellence for our school and our university.

We are proud of our successes and our people, and I hope you enjoy these stories.

Sincerely,

Ken Cyree, Dean

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THOMAS GRANING



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Walkers make major gift to create endowed faculty positions

Christie and George Walker are helping shape the future through a transformational investment in the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration, ensuring resources are available to recruit and retain outstanding faculty members to prepare generations of students for careers and life after graduation.

The Jackson couple committed a \$5 million gift to create the Christie Kirkland Walker Chair of Real Estate and the George Rea Walker III

Chair of Finance in the business school. Income from the major gift will provide salary supplements, research support and creative resources for specially selected real estate or finance professors.

Chancellor Glenn F. Boyce applauded the Walkers' dedication and significant gift.

"Christie and George Walker have made a powerful statement about the far-reaching impact of faculty support and the importance of assuring that our students are taught and mentored by outstanding scholars.



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I feel we have been blessed in so many ways. Because of my faith, it's important to give back. Ole Miss was good to us, and I want it to help others grow. George and I love to help areas we care about and that will benefit others. Giving back is something we just do."

— CHRISTIE WALKER

"We deeply appreciate the Walkers' vision and trust in our stewardship of these resources. The legacy they've built will help our students pursue their career dreams and establish the next generation of business leaders."

Motivated to ensure future students have the same opportunities for growth they themselves enjoyed on the Oxford campus, the Walkers – owners of Heritage Properties, a real estate development and management company with properties in seven states – said they had considered making this gift for a long time.

"We love Ole Miss and appreciate the preparation we received there," George Walker said. "I majored in finance, and my wife majored in real estate, as did our four daughters. God has truly blessed our business; the Bible is clear: to whom much is given, much is expected. We want to give back to the School of Business Administration to see it flourish for future generations.

"As far as the long-term impact of the gift, we hope to recruit and retain top-notch professors in real estate and finance," Walker said. "We can't keep the best professors without competitive salaries. These resources are for Dean Ken Cyree to use to retain his best people and to attract other exceptional hires."

The Walkers' daughters Caroline Reed and Ann Elizabeth LoCicero earned Ole Miss degrees in real estate. Twin daughters Lillie and Sarah Grea Walker majored in real estate and minored in entrepreneurship and were active in the Real Estate Club. The Walkers also have six nephews – Craig Howard Kirkland, Clayton Kirkland, John Martin Walker, Bennie Kirkland,

Baker Kirkland and Will Patterson – who graduated from the UM School of Business Administration with real estate, finance, banking and business degrees. One also has earned an MBA, and two others are finishing their MBAs.

"Family is the root of our passion for Ole Miss," Christie Walker said. "George and I both feel very passionate about our gift to support faculty. It's important to us to keep the business school and the university growing.

"I feel we have been blessed in so many ways. Because of my faith, it's important to give back. Ole Miss was good to us, and I want it to help others grow. George and I love to help areas we care about and that will benefit others. Giving back is something we just do."

George Walker echoed his wife: "We've always tried to teach our children that you give back either your time, talent or money or some combination thereof."

Apparently heeding this advice, the Walkers' daughter Caroline and her husband, Daniel Reed, just committed \$25,000 to the Ole Miss First Scholarship program.

Ken Cyree, dean of the business school, said the Walkers' gift will enhance the lives of hundreds of students every semester.

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

Both Christie Walker, a native of Jackson, and George Walker, a native of Leland, chose Ole

George and Christie Walker (center), of Jackson, have made a \$5 million gift to the School of Business Administration for faculty support in finance and real estate. The Ole Miss alumni are joined in the photo by their family, from left, Daniel and Caroline Reed with Elizabeth, Sarah Grea Walker, Lillie Walker, and Ann Elizabeth and Andrew LoCicero with Grea.



As far as the long-term impact of the gift, we hope to recruit and retain top-notch professors in real estate and finance. We can't keep the best professors without competitive salaries. These resources are for Dean Ken Cyree to use to retain his best people and to attract other exceptional hires."

— GEORGE WALKER

Miss for their college home during their senior years in high school. George Walker's father played football for the University of Arkansas during successful seasons, so he was also a Razorbacks fan. Both visited the Ole Miss campus and fell in love with it.

The Walkers met as college sophomores on a blind date and had most of their classes together in the business school. They had several influential professors including Dennis Tosh, Bill Rayburn and the now late Don Moak and Charles Walker.

Both felt Tosh was a "fantastic professor." Christie Walker was president of the Real Estate Club, and Tosh enabled her to bring in guest speakers. He also kept up with the Walkers after graduation, providing a study guide and a source of practical knowledge to Christie when she was preparing for the real estate exam and answering questions and giving support to them during their careers.

"Professor Tosh made an important impact on my life; he was amazing and led us into our careers," Christie Walker said. "Ole Miss professors build more personalized relationships. That's what we want our gift to do: keep the passionate professors and bring in more of them."

In addition, George Walker would like to see more case studies offered in business classes.

"If you go through a case study, starting at zero, and work all the way through it, you learn so much more than just studying a textbook," he said. "I also like professors who teach by encouraging heavy class participation."

After graduation, Christie Walker went into commercial leasing with the Wideman-Lafoe Co., where she worked for six years. George

Walker got his start with Carol Kirkland, his mother-in-law, at The Kirkland Co., a company founded by his late father-in-law, Bennie Kirkland, and focused on multifamily subsidized housing.

Christie Walker's work enabled George to break out and build his own company, The Grea Co., and then purchase Heritage Properties. He started buying and renovating properties, eventually buying a construction company. He now owns 12,000 apartment units.

Both Walkers said they find real estate to be interesting, making deals and networking, and neither said they could have endured careers sitting behind desks. Daughter Caroline Reed and son-in-law Andrew LoCicero work for Heritage Properties.

The Walkers and their children are close, enjoying time at their hunting camp in Canton, riding horses, fishing, playing tennis, cooking, traveling, snow skiing, watching movies and being at Ole Miss. They are in a group that hosts a tent every football Saturday in the Grove, with many members being lifelong friends and now including the group's children and grandchildren.

"Ole Miss is about relationships and friendships," Christie Walker said.

The Walkers are parents of Caroline Reed, Ann Elizabeth LoCicero, and twins Lillie and Sarah Grea, who live in Dallas, where they are studying for their real estate licenses. The Walkers are grandparents to two: Elizabeth Reed and Grea LoCicero.

BY TINA HAHN

To make a gift to the Christie Kirkland Walker Chair or to the George Rea Walker III Chair, checks can be sent to the University of Mississippi Foundation, with the name of the endowment written in the memo line, to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655.

For information about how to support the Ole Miss School of Business Administration, contact Angela Barlow Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.

Luncheon Speakers Encourage Women to Aim for Leadership

Women's ability to take employees' feelings into account gives them an edge in corporate leadership that should not be discounted, a marketing executive for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital told participants at a luncheon hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration in November 2022.

"A good leader is empathetic," said Jessica Dyer, senior liaison for direct marketing strategy at the hospital and its American Lebanese Syrian Associated Charities. "An empathetic leader has genuine interest and consideration for their team members' feelings and the challenges they face.

"This is a trait that tends to come more naturally to women, which shows the importance of

modeling analyst at Sylvamo. "Instead, you can say, 'I can get that to you in two weeks when my workload has lightened up.'

"That way, you are setting a clear expectation of when the task can get done but not leaving yourself overwhelmed."

Other speakers at the luncheon were:

- Lexie Jones, director of information technology for the Cotton Board
- Ellie Moore, director of the UM Speaking Center
- Liz Randall, president and director of health care real estate for Randall Commercial Group
- Amber Williams, director of IT for FedEx Services

The panelists were invited to share experi-

ences and help motivate students to aspire to leadership, said Aditi Holkunde, president of Women in Leadership.

"Empowered women empower other women," said Holkunde, a graduate student in pharmaceutical sciences from Pune, Maharashtra, India. "As they shared their set of experiences and hardships, it taught us how they developed a set of habits and practices that helped them be who they are today."

Ashley McGee, director of the Ole Miss MBA program, founded Women in Leadership in fall 2021 as part of the university's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

"I wanted to do my small part so I created WIL as an affinity group particularly aimed for women graduate students to come together to support one another and to grow as leaders," McGee said. "The student participation from the diverse fields across campus allows us an incredible lens to learn so much from one another."



STELLA CONNELL

Members and attendees of the Women in Leadership luncheon in Conner Hall

having female executives."

Dyer was among the speakers at the event in Conner Hall organized by the Women in Leadership Graduate Student Organization. The program featured six panelists who offered insights on leadership, their own professional journeys and the sacrifices they have made to succeed.

The panelists also discussed juggling the work-life balance, the importance of family and learning to say "no" when necessary.

"You don't always have to give a hard no," said Maryam Husain, a building information

Major Gift Benefits Business School, Alumni and Athletics

Donor's \$1.5 million contribution is testament to his Ole Miss education and history of involvement

A \$1.5 million gift from the grandson of a University of Mississippi chancellor will help recruit faculty for the School of Business Administration, support the construction of the new Triplett Alumni Center and improve facilities for Ole Miss student-athletes.

"My father grew up in Oxford and lived on the campus because his father worked for the university at that time," said Lampkin Butts, whose grandfather Alfred Benjamin Butts served as UM chancellor from 1935 to 1946. "Growing up, all I was exposed to was Ole Miss, and I fell in love with it."

In 2022, after a 48-year career, Lampkin Butts retired as president, COO and director of Sanderson Farms Inc., a Laurel-based Fortune 1000 food-production company.

The 1973 graduate of the School of Business Administration credits his education for much of his success. Wanting to give back, he



BILL DABNEY

A recent major gift from Susie and Lampkin Butts will benefit the UM School of Business Administration, the Ole Miss Alumni Association and Ole Miss Athletics. Pictured (from left) are Jeremy and Stephanie Felder with their twin children Stella and Benton, Dr. Trey and Sadie Sutton, Christie Sutton, Susie and Lampkin Butts, and Lauren and Casey Butts with their children, Case and Brooks.

approached Ken Cyree, dean of the business school.

“I talked to him about where this money would have the biggest impact, and he suggested faculty support – helping to recruit and retain the best minds for the school,” said Butts, who with his wife, Susie, designated a third of their gift to establish an endowment.

The Susie and Lampkin Butts Scholar of Management Endowment will provide income for the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty within the school’s Department of Management.

“These faculty members will ensure that quality teaching, research and service will be available for future generations of University of Mississippi students,” Cyree said. “The Buttses’ gift helps us minimize the risk of losing exceptionally high-qualified faculty applicants to other business schools.”

Lampkin Butts’ parents attended Ole Miss, as did his children. Additionally, he has served the university as president of the Ole Miss Alumni Association and a longtime board member. For the UM graduates in their family and their affinity for the Alumni Association, the Buttses designated a second portion of their gift to help construct the new Triplett Alumni Center on the footprint of the current building.

“It’s important for the alumni to stay connected and to

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Susie and Lampkin Butts

support what the university is trying to accomplish,” said Butts, who also serves on the UM Foundation board. “The Triplett Alumni Center helps facilitate alumni goals by providing a central location for graduates to gather, but it needs to be expanded and renovated.”

While the Triplett Alumni Center already welcomes hundreds of alumni and friends to campus each year, its services will significantly expand in its new home and provide more opportunities to create and build relationships, said Kirk Purdom, CEO of the Alumni Association.

Initial plans for the multistory building feature expansive plate-glass windows through which guests can enjoy the Grove as they host receptions, weddings and reunions, as well as student recruitment events.

“Lampkin and Susie have been actively involved with the Alumni Association for as long as I can remember, and I’m so grateful not only for their loyal support and leadership but also for their friendship,” Purdom said. “Their gift will help make

“

Then as we had grandchildren, they also are right there in the Grove, throwing footballs and just enjoying Ole Miss and all that it offers. We hope all five of our grandchildren will attend Ole Miss.”

— SUSIE BUTTS

the Triplett Alumni Center a beautiful, welcoming place for our alumni of all ages.”

Retired teacher Susie Butts earned a degree in elementary education from the University of Southern Mississippi in her hometown. Nevertheless, she is a confirmed member of Rebel Nation because of her husband’s and children’s enthusiasm for their alma mater. The Grove on game day is her happy place.

“I loved the contact with our children at our tailgate when they were in college,” she said. “They were always so busy with fraternity and sorority activities, but they always came to our table because they loved to visit and they loved the food and being able to eat free.

“Then as we had grandchildren, they also are right there in the Grove, throwing footballs and just enjoying Ole Miss and all that it offers. We hope all five of our grandchildren will attend Ole Miss.”

Such good times are punctuated even more by a solid win on the gridiron. The Buttses hope the third portion of their gift will help the Rebels achieve many more of those.

Continued on page 11



Shipping Website Concept Wins Business Model Competition

Valeria Brenner (center), winner of the 2022 'Servin' the South' Business Model Competition at the University of Mississippi, is congratulated by Rich Gentry (left), co-director of the university's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Steve Grantham, president of J&R Restaurant Group and sponsor of the event.

A shipping website made for small businesses won first place in the 2022 "Servin' the South" Business Model Competition hosted by the University of Mississippi Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Thryft Ship allows small businesses with an Instagram presence to receive a shipping link for customers to use, saving time and avoiding errors on shipping labels. Through its partnership with ShipEngine, a shipping and logistics platform, Thryft Ship offers commercial-level pricing, making it faster and cheaper to ship items.

The concept was developed by Valeria Brenner, a University of Georgia marketing and international business major from Johns Creek, Georgia. She took home \$10,000 as the competition winner.

"I used to run a thrifting account back in my freshman year of college, and shipping was always a huge hassle for me," Brenner said. "I always thought that, although shipping was time-inefficient and confusing, it was just the way that it was.

"That was until I started talking to other thrifting accounts in the community and I realized that everyone dealt with this issue, not just me. I took it upon myself to find a solution to make shipping through Instagram a faster process and came up with Thryft Ship."

The business's goal is to help new business owners with Instagram accounts become more efficient by saving time so they can focus on developing their business.

"Valeria had a fantastic idea born of her own experience promoting products on Instagram," said Rich Gentry, CIE

co-director and professor of management. "That entrepreneurial venture and the formal support of UGA's entrepreneurship center at an idea workshop helped her build the venture which brought her so much success.

"This event is a unique opportunity for student entrepreneurs to demonstrate and discuss their business ideas with each other and a panel of experts who can give advice and suggestions that they might not be able to get in any other setting."

The fall competition was created for Ole Miss students before the CIE became a BMC Global partner in 2015. BMC Global discontinued its competitions due to the pandemic, and since 2021, the center has rebranded the competition to include college students from across the U.S.

"I am delighted to see the business model competition continues to attract not only Ole Miss student entrepreneurs, but also top teams from SEC schools as well as other regional schools," said Tong Meng, CIE director of programs.

"We're so glad the CIE is able to provide these wonderful networking and funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs, and we are grateful for the generous support from our judges and donors."

Twenty-two competitors participated in this year's event. The six finalists represented UM, the universities of Alabama and Georgia, and Auburn University.

"The BMC is an amazing opportunity to get feedback and network for your business," said Tanner McCraney, co-founder of the Rumie app and a BMC finalist from Ole Miss. "You get real feedback from judges that can take your idea, startup, or functional business to the next level."

Finalists were evaluated by a panel of five judges:

- Steve Grantham, president of J&R Restaurant Group, which operates in Mississippi and west Tennessee
- Matt Mossberg, managing partner at West Group, a consumer branding and manufacturing firm in north Mississippi
- Reed Barrett, co-founder of CampusOptics, based in Houston, Texas
- Jeff McManus, UM director of landscape services, Ole Miss Golf Course and airport operations
- Donna Barksdale, founder and owner of Mississippi River Trading Co. in Jackson

BY ALYSSA GARZA

Major Gift, continued from page 9

"The SEC is so competitive and, of course, that includes a lot of things with respect to facilities and coaches," Lampkin Butts said. "I just want to do what I can to support Ole Miss in maintaining our facilities and programs at competitive levels, so we have an opportunity to recruit the best student-athletes."

Keith Carter, vice chancellor for intercollegiate athletics, expressed his appreciation.

"Because charitable gifts like Lampkin's and Susie's are so important to our programs and to our student-athletes, we plan to express our gratitude by naming an entrance gate at Vaught-Hemingway Stadium in their honor, as well as the Quarterback Room in the new Manning Center," Carter said. "We greatly appreciate their support and their strong desire to see our players continue to compete at the national level."

This multipurpose donation is the latest of many gifts the family has made to the university. Most recently, the couple gave \$1 million to support health care at Children's of Mississippi, part of the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

"When we visited the children there, it absolutely left fingerprints on our heart," Susie Butts said. "Those nurses and doctors do so much for those children, and they work so hard."

"Sadly, there are some children who are permanent residents, and the nurses and doctors are like their family. They love on those children like I've never seen, putting 100% into taking care of them."

The Buttses' recent gift is part of Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss, a \$1.5 billion initiative to enhance the university with support focused on building leaders, empowering academic excellence, fueling research and innovation and creating economic opportunity. It includes Champions. Now., the Ole Miss Athletics Foundation's campaign for improving facilities for Rebel athletics.

"Susie and I were very encouraged by the Now and Ever Campaign goals, so we wanted to be part of that," Lampkin Butts said. "It's been our philosophy or strategy our whole married life to want to do our part in giving back."

BY BILL DABNEY

The Susie and Lampkin Butts Scholar of Management Endowment is open to gifts from individuals and organizations by sending a check, with the scholarship's name written in the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655, or give online at nowandever.olemiss.edu.

For more information on Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss, visit umfoundation.givingfuel.com/ nowandever or contact Charlotte Parks, vice chancellor for development, at cpparks@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3120.

For more information on Champions. Now., visit givetoathletics.com or contact OMAF CEO Denson Hollis at dhollis@olemiss.edu or 615-957-4372.



Jamie Cox and his wife, Holli, in Orlando, Florida, at Walt Disney World in July 2021

FROM HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT TO TAYLOR MEDALIST

One man's journey taken with the steadfast support of his wife

Growing up in Red Banks as one of 11 children, school was not a priority for Jamie Cox. He attended the Holly Springs public schools and worked odd jobs. His focus was never his assignments or schoolwork.

By the time the 10th grade rolled around, his interest had bottomed out and so had his grades.

"I realized I was going to fail and have to repeat the grade," he said. "I did not want to repeat the school year while my friends moved on. I was embarrassed and ashamed. My mother tried to put me in a homeschool program, but we couldn't afford to keep it up."

That is when he quit school for good – or so he thought. In a dramatic turnaround, the former dropout graduated from the University of Mississippi on May 12 with a bachelor's degree

and the university's highest academic honor, a Taylor Medal.

When he quit school, Cox got a job as a dishwasher at a local restaurant and moved out of his parents' house.

"Like many teenagers, I thought I knew what I was doing," he recalled.

In 2009, he met his wife, Holli, who had a 2-year-old son who was born while she was in high school. She persevered through the difficulties of being a teen mother, received her bachelor's degree from the University of Memphis in 2011 in biomedical engineering and was experiencing success and growth in her career.

A year later, Jamie and Holli married and went on to have two children together.

With his wife's encouragement, Cox eventually took the pre-test at Northwest Community



Jamie is one of the smartest and hardest-working students I've ever had. He takes his own work very seriously, and he's always helpful and supportive to his classmates."

— SUMALI CONLON

College to see if he was a candidate for a General Education Diploma.

"I passed the pre-test, and they sent me to take the GED, and I passed it the first time," he said.

While obtaining the diploma eventually became his stepping stone to college, it didn't do much to help him build on his career as a plumber.

"I was proud I had gotten my GED," Cox said. "It led me to have more confidence in myself, and I started to realize I could do more things, better things."

After moving up in the plumbing field, to the point of working on technical projects such as troubleshooting and repairs on commercial and tankless water heaters, he began to transition to specialized technical work with a company called CSC Service Works. They specialize in commercial laundry equipment, air machines and ATMs.

In 18 months at CSC, Cox was promoted three times. He started as a level 1 service technician and eventually became a lead service technician. His manager noticed his work and encouraged him to apply for a management position. He did, but days later was told the job required an associate degree.

The experience of having a door shut again, because he did not have a college education, had plagued him for years. He had applied for hundreds of jobs and never received a single reply, and he knew why.

In 2019, after a few promotions and a new job, Holli presented her husband with a proposal: She would support the family for four years if he would go back to school as a full-time student.

"How could I say 'no' to such an opportunity," he said.

He initially enrolled at Northwest Community College in Southaven.

"While attending Northwest, I found the Ole Miss regional office," he said. "I noticed they offered a 2+2 program, which was perfect for me."

His previous jobs in plumbing and other areas allowed him to develop a strong skill set in problem solving and finding solutions to practical needs.

"I knew when I started college, I wanted to be in the IT field in some way," he said. "When I was looking through the degree options for Ole Miss, I found they offered an MIS (management information systems) degree that sounded exactly like what I wanted."

"Jamie is one of the smartest and hardest-working students I've ever had," said Sumali Conlon, associate professor of MIS. "He takes his own work very seriously, and he's always helpful and supportive to his classmates.

"His work is always interesting and thoughtful, and he always turns it in early."

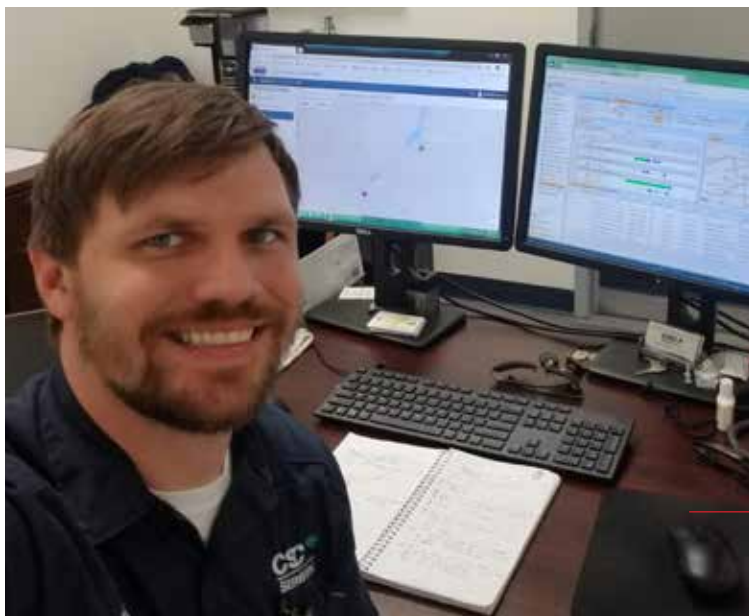
At the UM-DeSoto Center in Southaven, Cox has worked in and through all the different platforms of learning the School of Business Administration has to offer: in-person classes, online classes and distance-learning classes.

"Professors Posey, Conlon and Reithel have all been so encouraging with my adventure," he said. "I have spoken to all of them outside of



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August 19, 2019, Cox's first day of his journey toward receiving his college degree, at Northwest Community College.



Cox at work at Service Works in May 2019, where he was promoted three times but turned down for manager because he did not have a college degree. Here he was the acting manager while his manager was out of town.

class for various reasons about internships and other career opportunities.

“Dr. Reithel even wrote my nomination letter for the Taylor Medal.”

His hard work and dedication have been a constant throughout his time on the DeSoto campus.

“Jamie is one of the brightest students I have taught in my career,” said Jamison Posey, instructional assistant professor of management information systems. “He is always willing to help the class with his knowledge and input and is the perfect example of the high-quality students we have at our Ole Miss DeSoto campus.”

Cox had never heard of the Taylor Medal. In fact, he had to Google it to learn of its significance.

Students are nominated for outstanding scholarship in their particular field combined with superior work in all other subjects. The number awarded annually may not be more than 1% of the student body.

To be eligible, a student must have a GPA of 3.90 or higher and complete at least 105 hours of overall course credit. Transfer students must have earned 45 semester hours at the university before being nominated.

Cox graduated with a bachelor’s degree in MIS. Two days later, he started his new job as a configuration analyst with CoreLogic, an Irvine, California-based corporation providing financial, consumer information, analytics and

business intelligence on property. He works remotely from his home in Olive Branch.

His stepson, Ethan, will be 16; his daughter, Claire, will be 12, and his youngest, Lincoln, will be 8. In July, Jamie and Holli celebrated their 13th anniversary.

“The biggest hurdle is to start and then keep moving forward one step at a time,” he said. “A person does not have to be perfect to do great things. This is something that took me many years to see, and I still struggle with it sometimes.

“Fifteen years ago, I would have never imagined that I would be in college, let alone be nominated for something as wonderful as the Taylor Medal. The nomination alone is an achievement, but I won it. If I can do this, others can too.”

BY STELLA CONNELL



The Cox family in Washington, D.C., in July 2019 in front of the White House. This photo was taken just before Jamie started school at Northwest Community College.

ASHLEY MCGEE



This year's class officers for the Master of Business Administration program at the University of Mississippi are (from left) Sara Kate Rushing, Addie Gagnon, Alexis Lee, Kendall Runzi, Kylie Harrier and Leigh Ellis Grisham.

MBA program led by all-female team

For the first time since the University of Mississippi established the Master of Business Administration program, its students are being led by an all-female cohort of class officers.

This year's MBA class is led by:

- Kylie Harrier, of St. Charles, Illinois, president
- Kendall Runzi, Festus, Missouri, vice president of community service
- Alexis Lee, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, vice president of recruiting
- Leigh Ellis Grisham, Tupelo, vice president of finance
- Addie Gagnon, Silver Spring, Maryland, vice president of social events
- Sara Kate Rushing, Brookhaven, vice president of public relations

"I am so honored and excited to be on a team with such incredible women," said Harrier, who graduated from UM with a finance degree before pursuing her MBA. "Serving on this team

is something I never could have imagined I would do.

"Truly, it is so inspiring to see a team of all women leading our program."

Women have long held an influential role among MBA student leadership. In fact, seven of the last 10 MBA class presidents have been women. But this year's class takes that leadership to the next level, said Ashley McGee, director of the Ole Miss MBA program and sponsor for the Women in Leadership graduate student organization.

"I believe this is indicative that women will continue to seek out leadership opportunities and feel empowered to make their mark as strong leaders," she said.

Statistics show that women make up more than half the U.S. workforce, but hold only around one-third of senior leadership positions. Female leaders are influential in any organization or industry.

A 2022 study co-authored by Saim Kashmiri, UM associate professor of marketing, shows that women in executive

corporate leadership positions have a positive impact on customer orientation, which can lead to financial gains.

Besides providing leadership experience, the positions allow officers to acquire professional skills and knowledge they can use in their careers.

"One thing I have learned while serving in this role is the importance of being able to depend on those around me," Runzi said. "I am surrounded by a group of hardworking women that want to see the program thrive and succeed, so it was easy to lean on them for help and they were always eager to do so."

Up first for the new class officers was organizing the MBA golf tournament on April 14 at the Oxford Country Club. The annual fundraiser helps support future MBA students.

"A big part of leadership is community involvement and recognizing the importance of paying it forward," Gagnon said. "We want to make a lasting legacy."

BY STEPHANIE MORTIMER

UM BANKING SYMPOSIUM EDUCATES LEADERS
ON TOPICS INFLUENCING THE INDUSTRY

21st annual gathering draws one of the largest crowds in event history

Students, alumni, finance professionals and business leaders all gathered to learn more about current topics that affect the banking and finance industry at the 21st annual Banking and Finance Symposium.

The conference, held Oct. 14 at the Oxford Conference Center, was hosted by Ken Cyree, dean of the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration, and moderated by Stan Viner, chair of the Banking and Finance Advisory Board, and featured numerous keynote speakers throughout the day.

“The 21st annual Banking and Finance Symposium was an outstanding program with over 200 attendees,” Cyree said. “The speakers were insightful and offered informative analysis of the environment and future for bankers and the industry.”

The event kicked off with Michelle King, president and CEO of Bank Director, leading the Women in Finance breakfast, where she discussed the importance of leading for tomorrow. She pointed out the numerous opportunities in the banking industry and how to overcome obstacles.

Conner Platt (left), a double major in managerial finance and banking and finance from Biloxi, and Musa Thomas, a general business major from Olive Branch, attend the post-symposium reception at the Oxford Conference Center.

Ken Cyree, dean of the UM School of Business Administration, with Mitch Waycaster (right), CEO and president, Renasant Corp. and Renasant Bank, the 2022 recipient of the Distinguished Finance Executive Award, with Charles White (left), the 2019 recipient.

Claire Sahs, marketing major and business school intern from Dripping Springs, Texas, with Dean Ken Cyree.

PHOTOS BY STELLA CONNELL



“Talent and culture are a challenge for banks and most industries,” King said. “But when you are having that interview with the individual who is looking to be a part of your team, look at their skills, where they came from, and ask them questions about themselves to find out if they would be a good fit for your team.”

Brad Bolton, chairman of Independent Community Bankers of America, later joined King in discussing the importance of creating and promoting an environment for community banks to flourish. To implement the company’s mission statement, Bolton said to do it through advocacy, education and innovation.

Speaker Marty Mosby, director of bank and equity strategy at Stifel, and Caitlin Long, CEO and founder of Custodia Bank, wrapped up the morning discussion.

Mosby discussed his strategic analysis approach to help U.S. community banks and displayed graphics of advanced profitability, balance sheet positioning and risk management techniques. Long then presented the future of “money over the internet” protocol comparing it to “voice over the internet” phone technology.

The first panel, hosted by Viner and moderated by Scott Mills, president of William Mills Agency, focused on trends in fintech and payments. Panelists included Zack Bishop, executive vice president of technology, operations and security at Synovus Bank; Wade Peery, chief innovations officer of FirstBank Nashville; and Charles Potts, executive vice president and

chief innovation officer of Independent Community Bankers of America.

“We wholeheartedly believe we have to lean into technology to be relevant, or we won’t be,” said Bishop when asked what is important to him as an executive vice president when creating a community-style banking experience.

The second panel, moderated by Paul Davis, director of market intelligence at Strategic Resource Management, discussed general mergers and acquisitions trends.

The panel consisted of Lance Hall, president and CEO of Origin Bank; Jude Melville, president and CEO of Business First Bank; and Christopher Olsen, managing partner at Olsen Palmer.

When asked about his bird’s-eye view of where we are in mergers and acquisitions right now, Olsen answered, “Overall M&A remains intact, but as mentioned by Davis, activity is down quite a bit and we continue to see less transactions year after year.”

The title sponsor of this year’s event was Stifel/Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, and the executive sponsor was Cadence Bank.

Chairman sponsors included mTrade, Renaissance Bank, Regions Bank, Chartwell Partners, Sawyers and Jacobs, Strategic Resource Management, Community Bank, Olsen Palmer and Active Digital.

BY JACQUELYN DELAVALDENE
AND CLAIRE SAHS



Planning for UM's Future

Frys designate \$2.5M estate gift to support athletics, business school at Ole Miss

Since his graduation from the University of Mississippi in 1980, Bill Fry and his wife, Lee Anne, have frequently offered financial support to his alma mater. Now, having established two planned gifts, they will continue to give back to Ole Miss long after their lifetimes.

The New York City and Oxford residents recently offered to bequeath a portion of their estate to the university. Estimated at an additional \$2.5 million, the gift will strengthen the School of Business Administration — naming a faculty chair in honor of their two grown children — and support Rebel sports programs

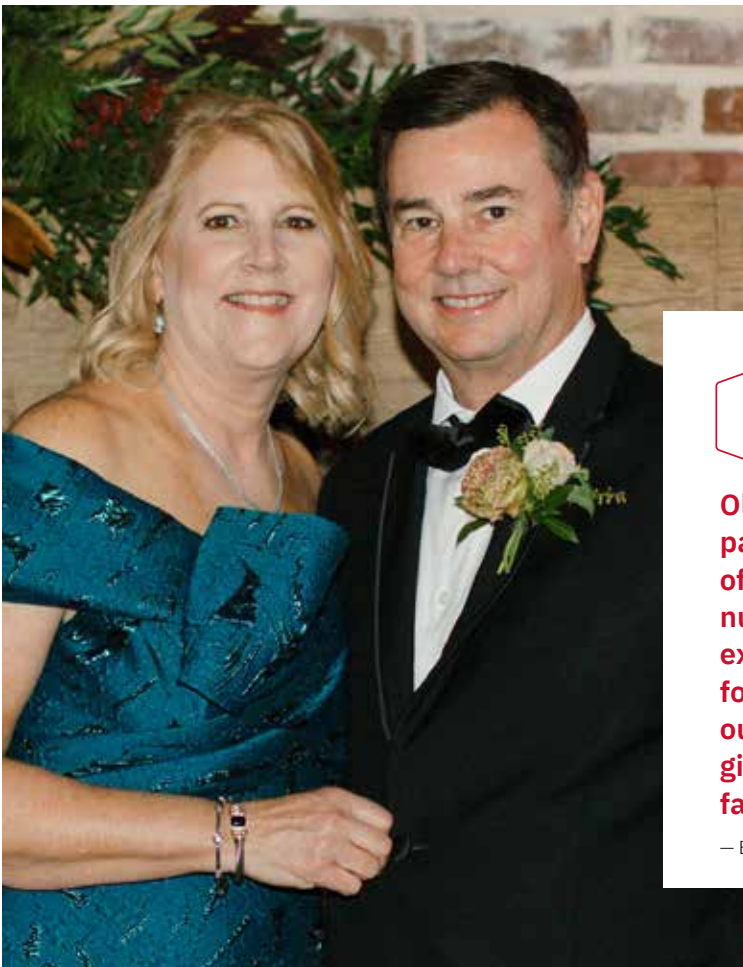
via Forever Ole Miss, the Ole Miss Athletics Foundation's planned giving vehicle.

The Frys' estate gift is also included in Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss — the most ambitious drive in UM's history and the largest ever in Mississippi higher education with a goal of \$1.5 billion.

Bill Fry said Now & Ever and Forever Ole Miss provide the perfect opportunity to add to their legacy to improve the lives of generations of UM students, professors and Rebel student-athletes.

"Lee Anne and I have been fortunate in our lives and want to be sure we give back

SUBMITTED



“

Ole Miss has been a major part of our families, a source of lifelong friendships and numerous memorable experiences. We are grateful for the opportunity to return our blessings and hope these gifts accelerate our Ole Miss family's impact on the world.”

— BILL FRY

Bill and Lee Anne Fry established two planned gifts to support the future of the university.



Bill and Lee Anne Fry, chairs of the business school's Now & Ever campaign, help kick off the initiative at a reception on Sept. 23, 2022, at Memory House.

in proportion to what we have received," Fry said. "Ole Miss has been a major part of our families, a source of lifelong friendships and numerous memorable experiences. We are grateful for the opportunity to return our blessings and hope these gifts accelerate our Ole Miss family's impact on the world."

A graduate of the UM public administration program, Bill Fry was inducted into the Ole Miss Alumni Association Hall of Fame in 2012. He earned a master's degree from Harvard Business School in 1990. Between undergraduate and graduate schools, he spent eight years as an officer in the U.S. Navy, last serving as a lieutenant in the Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Fry joined American Securities in 2010 as one of the company's partners. American Securities is a New York-based private equity fund with over \$30 billion under management. Previously, he was CEO

of the Oreck Corp. and has also helmed several entities owned by various private equity firms and public companies, holding positions as president of the Dixie Group, CEO of Bell Sports and Bell Riddell, and president of Easton Bell Sports.

As an undergraduate, Fry was a member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity and the Navy ROTC. Lee Anne Fry is a graduate of Auburn University and worked as an analyst for the CIA in Washington, D.C., where they met. They have two grown children, Will and Katie, for whom the additional faculty chair is named.

"What better way to honor your children and tie them to Ole Miss than to endow a chair," Lee Anne Fry said.

Together, the family enjoys being part of Rebel Nation.

"Athletics has been a rallying point and source of joy for our family for many years. We have enjoyed gathering with friends and bringing new

ones to Ole Miss," the alumnus said.

"Every new visitor leaves an Ole Miss fan," he continued. "As Chancellor (Emeritus) Robert Khayat often said, athletics are the front porch of the university, and we want our Ole Miss porch to be exciting for fans, rewarding for student-athletes and competing for championships."

Denson Hollis, CEO of the Ole Miss Athletics Foundation, expressed gratitude for the Frys' planned gift.

"We are immensely grateful to Bill and Lee Anne for all they do for Ole Miss and Ole Miss Athletics and their vision for supporting our athletics programs through Forever Ole Miss," Hollis said. "Their gift will ensure the future of Ole Miss Athletics is strengthened as it provides support for departmental leadership in the years ahead."

The Frys' estate gift to Athletics enables them to pass down priority points to their



Now, their planned gift will ensure that we continue to recruit faculty members with a passion for quality teaching, research and service for future generations of students.”

— KEN CYREE

children, each receiving red points (priority seating) and blue points (parking and post-season experience priority) and thus establishing their interaction with Ole Miss Athletics.

The Frys’ love of sports at Ole Miss led them in 2021 to fund a campus monument in honor of Rebel basketball legend Coolidge Ball who was inducted into the Ole Miss Alumni Association Hall of Fame the same year.

It was then the latest of many major gifts the couple has committed to the university, including a 2018 gift in support of the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement, a 2019 scholarship in memory of their niece and a 2020 planned gift that established a faculty chair in the School of Business Administration.

For almost two decades, Bill Fry has served on the business school’s advisory board. The Frys are co-chairing the business school’s Now & Ever campaign.

“The business school has been tremendously successful in the past decade,” Fry said. “We have a top-10 rated online MBA program, highly rated business school, and over 97% of our graduates are employed or in advanced education programs. Our professors are among the most published in the SEC. Our faculty and staff have exciting plans and are having a remarkable impact

on students. Our graduates are changing the lives of individuals by starting businesses and making opportunities for others.

“Our gifts to endow professorships have an accelerated benefit based on the number of lives impacted — thousands of students educated, mentored and encouraged.”

Dean Ken Cyree is grateful for the Frys’ engagement with the school.

“Bill and Lee Anne’s gifts of their time and resources to the School of Business Administration are immeasurable,” Cyree said. “In serving on our board, Bill has provided exceptional leadership and the invaluable perspective of his own experience as a successful businessman to help us navigate the challenges inherent to our burgeoning programs.

“Now, their planned gift will ensure that we continue to recruit faculty members with a passion for quality teaching, research and service for

future generations of students,” Cyree continued. “I greatly appreciate Bill and Lee Anne for their longtime friendship, loyalty and support.”

Marc Littlecott, advancement director for estate and planned giving, said testamentary gifts like the Frys’ are beneficial to the university and the donors alike.

“According to a recent study, few people with children or heirs have done something like Bill and Lee Anne have done by naming at least one charity in their estate plans,” Littlecott said. “Many are under the impression that charitable estate-giving automatically reduces what they can leave to heirs, when in fact that doesn’t necessarily have to be the case. Leaving meaningful legacy gifts is the kind of perspective our office provides free to friends and alumni like the Frys as they consider options to take to their attorneys.”

BY BILL DABNEY

To make an estate gift to Ole Miss Athletics, visit givetoathletics.com/foreverolemiss-2 or contact Denson Hollis at dhollis@olemiss.edu or 615-957-4372.

For more information on providing ongoing support to Ole Miss after your lifetime, contact Marc Littlecott at marcplan@olemiss.edu or 662-915-6625.

To make a gift to the School of Business Administration, visit give.olemiss.edu or, for more information, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.

Pozen Gift Builds Diversity

Recipient of annual MBA scholarship hopes to build own business

Kenaz Worthem, of Oxford, is the 2022 recipient of the Pozen Scholarship at the University of Mississippi.

The award, established through the Robert C. Pozen Scholarship MBA Diversity Fund, provides full tuition for a student from Mississippi who is pursuing his or her Master of Business Administration.

“Last year, Mr. Pozen generously gave a gift to the School of Business to set up the Robert C. Pozen Scholarship Diversity Fund to build diversity in our MBA program and build leaders for



Kenaz is a hardworking, successful and professional leader who is actively involved in the community. He values his faith, his family and his purpose.”

— ASHLEY MCGEE

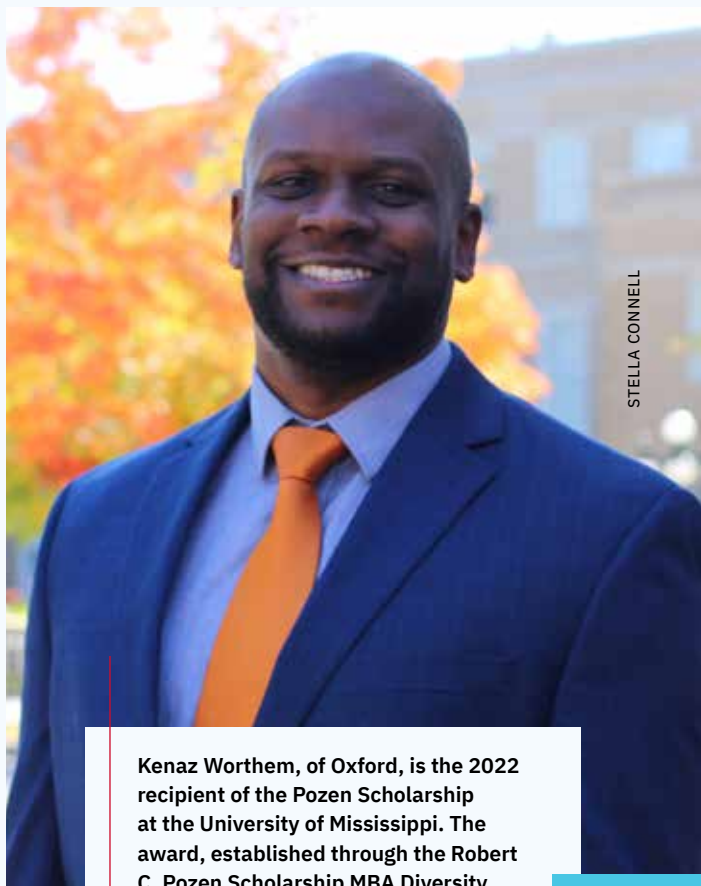
the betterment of our community,” said Ashley McGee, director of MBA programs. “Kenaz is a hardworking, successful and professional leader who is actively involved in the community. He values his faith, his family and his purpose.”

The Pozen Scholars fund was established in spring 2021 through a gift made by Bob Pozen, of Boston, who also made similar gifts to the universities of Alabama and Florida.

“Kenaz Worthem is an excellent Pozen Scholar representative,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. “He is a Lafayette County native, and after growing up in Mississippi, he earned his engineering degree here at Ole Miss.

“He is always ready with a smile, and he is very personable. Kenaz has very good academic credentials along with a solid resume of achievement in the technology industry, and I believe obtaining his MBA will allow him to achieve even greater heights in his career.”

In spring 2022, the Pozen Scholars expanded to three additional Southeastern Conference schools: Louisiana State University and the universities of Georgia and South Carolina.



STELLA CONNELL

Kenaz Worthem, of Oxford, is the 2022 recipient of the Pozen Scholarship at the University of Mississippi. The award, established through the Robert C. Pozen Scholarship MBA Diversity Fund, provides full tuition for a student from Mississippi who is pursuing a Master of Business Administration.

“I am proud that Ole Miss is developing such a high-quality cadre of local scholars,” Pozen said. “The initial success of the program has led me to expand it to other SEC schools.”

Worthem, who is enrolled in the online program, graduated from UM in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in computer science and works as an IT professional.

“The chance at a new opportunity towards entrepreneurship is what motivates me,” he said. “I have always desired to own my own businesses and to work for myself. I am more of a free spirit and full of new ideas.”

Besides tuition assistance, Pozen Scholars are matched with professional business leaders who provide mentoring support during and after the students’ MBA education.

Ole Miss student Rylee Ward, of Alpharetta, Georgia, a junior marketing major, takes a selfie at BASE Bootcamp with industry professionals (from left) Claude Russ of FedEx Dataworks and ShopRunner, Jennifer Anderson of C Spire, Will Ash of Cisco and Adam Bettis of Medtronic. The four spoke to Ole Miss students on a panel at the BASE Bootcamp hosted by the School of Business Administration.

MARY KNIGHT



BASE Bootcamp Provides Career Insights

Industry partnership program helps students network with professionals, practice pitching themselves

Analytics, sales and supply chain are among the fastest-growing fields in business, and the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration is partnering with the business community to provide experiential learning needed to prepare students for these opportunities.

The Core for Business Analytics, Sales and Supply Chain – referred to as BASE – combines faculty knowledge with industry interests to provide career preparation that is relevant to market needs. The business school’s vision is to promote professional development through experiential learning activities at the interface of these three areas, said Barry Babin, the Phil B. Hardin Chair and chair of the Department of Marketing.

“Clearly, the BASE initiative is heading forward with a lot of momentum, and it’s something very positive for the School of Business Administration and for the university,” Babin

said. “The fact is, particularly in our region, business success today is driven by performing well by using business analytics to drive sales performance and sustain supply chains.

“BASE provides a mutually beneficial bridge that connects faculty with practice and practitioners with scholarship.”

The Department of Marketing recently hosted a BASE Bootcamp on the Oxford campus, following the first BASE Summit earlier this year, with the purposes of preparing students for careers in evolving fields, connecting employers with up-and-coming talent and solving industry challenges by working with business faculty and students.

Companies participating in the BASE Bootcamp were Cisco, C Spire, FedEx Corp., Insight Global, Medtronic, Mylo, RJ Young, Strategic Resource Management and Trane. Adam Bettis, vice president of cranial and spinal education for Medtronic, served as a panelist during the event.

“It was really good to hear the other business leaders on the panel and to hear from students,” Bettis said. “Students wanted to know what employers are looking for in people entering the workplace and what skill sets are valued. I answered questions for 45 minutes during the reception from students.”

Bettis, who works with medical devices, said the event offered “exposure” to both students and to his company.

“The medical device industry is unknown to many students,” he said. “As students discover health care and the medical device industry, they might decide to investigate and interview. I want more and more students to know Medtronic.”

Claire Sahs, a junior marketing major with an emphasis in sales, said the event provided some valuable insights.

“The BASE Bootcamp was unlike any event I have attended during my time in the School of Business Administration,” said the Dripping Springs, Texas, native. “The panelists were intriguing and clearly both knowledgeable and successful in their fields.

“The speed networking event was what really stood out to me. We were given the opportunity to speak more in-depth with each of the panelists and companies in attendance. We also got the chance to practice pitching ourselves in a setting outside the classroom. My peers and I found the experience extremely valuable, and I look forward to the next BASE event.”

The BASE acronym plays off baseball and the three main growing areas of industry: First base

represents sales, while second base is supply chain and third base is marketing analytics.

This reflects a typical business cycle: A product or service is sold and delivered to the client. Then, the process is assessed to identify opportunities for improvement and growth for the next cycle.

“Experiential learning is essential to producing career-ready graduates,” Babin said. “By integrating BASE partners into our curricula and extracurricular activities, students get a taste of what professional work environments are like while gaining real-world experience.

“I think the representatives from companies participating in BASE events are very excited at the talent they are finding among the Department of Marketing students. So many of our students make great impressions when they interact one-on-one or in a small group setting with industry professionals.”

BASE will also involve faculty consulting, corporate learning, competitions and fellowships – all of which will nurture collaboration among faculty, students and industry leaders.

“BASE is an exciting initiative as it provides new ways for industry partners to engage with the university while helping elevate new programs in the business school in sales, analytics and supply chain,” said Hughes Miller, UM director of industry giving and engagement.

BY TINA H. HAHN AND LEIGH ANN HUBBARD

MARY KNIGHT



Barry Babin, Phil B. Hardin Chair and Department of Marketing chair, interacts with a panel of business leaders at the fall 2022 BASE Bootcamp. From back to front: Adam Bettis, vice president of cranial and spinal education with Medtronic; Will Ash, senior director of U.S. Public Security Sector, Cisco; Claude Russ, senior vice president of FedEx DataWorks and chief operating officer of ShopRunner; Jennifer Anderson, chief marketing officer of C Spire.

The University of Mississippi strives to be a resource and partner for industry through mutually beneficial relationships. To learn more about the university’s industry engagement initiative, visit industry.olemiss.edu.

To learn more about BASE and how to get involved or support the program, contact Hughes Miller at hughes@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2885.

WOMEN'S COUNCIL'S LEGACY AWARD HONORS
AMBASSADOR JOHN PALMER

UM alumnus recognized as telecom pioneer, philanthropist

Ambassador John N. Palmer, legendary philanthropist, entrepreneur and national leader, was honored with the 2023 Legacy Award, presented yearly at the University of Mississippi by the Ole Miss Women's Council for Philanthropy.

The Legacy Award reception, dinner and presentation took place April 15 at The Inn at Ole Miss. Bruce Levingston, renowned concert pianist and Chancellor's Honors College Artist in Residence, was the featured performer.

In 2010, the Women's Council initiated the Legacy Award to

acknowledge and thank people whose lives have reflected the values and tenets of the OMWC: philanthropy, leadership, scholarship and mentorship. The chosen honorees have made many valuable and important contributions in each of these areas and a positive difference in Ole Miss, Mississippi and the nation.

"Throughout his extraordinarily accomplished life, Ambassador Palmer has exemplified the tenets of the Women's Council and served as a quintessential model for using his success to serve our greater society and advance communities, especially Ole Miss," said Suzan Thames, Women's Council chair. "John's remarkably

generous track record extends through support of the arts, education, technology, athletics and health care."

Palmer's impact in the field of health care is evidenced by his role in the establishment of the MIND Center (Memory Impairment and Neurodegenerative Dementia), which does evaluation, research and clinical care in Alzheimer's and related dementias, at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

"His involvement has been the driving force behind the MIND Center's explosive growth and advancement in this field," Thames said. "Additionally, when John committed to keeping his global

Suzan Thames, chair of the Ole Miss Women's Council for Philanthropy, presents John Palmer with the Legacy Award at The Inn at Ole Miss on the Ole Miss campus in April.



BILL DABNEY

telecommunications business, SkyTel, in Mississippi, he made significant contributions to the state's economic development."

A resident of Jackson, Palmer grew up in Corinth. He attended Ole Miss on a basketball scholarship and earned a bachelor's degree in accounting. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned to campus to earn his Master of Business Administration.

Palmer began his professional career as a certified public accountant. However, it wasn't long before he began using his skills to become a telecommunications pioneer. By 1973, he had merged nine paging companies in the South with a New York firm and created Mobile Communications Corp. of America.

As its president and CEO, he transformed the business into one of the nation's largest paging companies. In 1988, he founded SkyTel, a two-way paging company that became an international success.

Palmer's business expertise led him to many national leadership positions. He served on the boards of three New York Stock Exchange companies and was a trustee board member of the National Symphony Orchestra. He also served as the chair of the U.S. President's Export Council.

In 2001, President George W. Bush appointed Palmer as U.S. ambassador to Portugal, where he served until 2004.

The Mississippi Technology Alliance honored him with the inaugural Legend Award and induction into the first class of the Innovators Hall of Fame. He also served as president of the UM

Foundation board and was inducted into the Ole Miss Alumni Hall of Fame.

Palmer has been a generous Ole Miss supporter for decades.

A lifelong tennis enthusiast, he committed to helping transform the Ole Miss tennis program into a national competitor. He was the major donor and driving force behind the creation of the Palmer-Salloum Tennis Center. The facilities help attract top-level scholarship tennis athletes from around the world.

In 1986, he gave a \$1 million gift to establish the John N. Palmer Fellowship in Business Endowment to provide financial assistance to students pursuing their MBAs at the School of Business Administration. At that time, it was the largest gift in the university's history.

“

Throughout his extraordinarily accomplished life, Ambassador Palmer has exemplified the tenets of the Women's Council and served as a quintessential model for using his success to serve our greater society and advance communities, especially Ole Miss.”

— SUZAN THAMES



Palmer in downtown Jackson with a Hewlett-Packard handheld pad from the early '90s used to interface with pagers

“We are incredibly grateful for the transformational gift that Mr. Palmer made to the MBA program,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the business school. “His impact on our students and his legacy within our MBA program are an inspiration and an amazing accomplishment.”

The Palmer Endowment has benefited hundreds of Ole Miss MBA students. In the past 22 years, nearly 400 MBA students have received financial assistance from his endowment.

“We are proud to have his name associated with our MBA program, and we celebrate the success that his visionary gift has had on our school and students,” Cyree said. “Mr. Palmer is a key alumnus and donor to our MBA program, and his outstanding career and accomplishments, along with his strong passion for making Ole Miss better at preparing

students for the marketplace, have greatly contributed to the trajectory of our program.”

Palmer said he appreciates the honor from the Women’s Council, which has become a model for other colleges and universities to recognize women’s philanthropy.

“Women have been too long overlooked as major donors and fundraisers, despite the fact they make 64% of all charitable contributions,” he said. “To be recognized by this powerful, innovative group of women who have raised nearly \$20 million to support our university is a great honor.”

Past Legacy Award honorees include Dolly Parton, Dr. Arthur C. Guyton and Ruth W. Guyton, Dr. Gerald M. “Doc” Hollingsworth, Jennifer Gillom and Peggie Gillom-Granderson, Chancellor Emeritus Robert C. Khayat, Charles Overby, Donna and Jim

Barksdale, Gov. William Winter and Elise Winter, Olivia Manning and Leigh Anne Tuohy.

“The Legacy Award was designed to honor outstanding individuals who have championed philanthropic endeavors and utilized their leadership capabilities to create generational, positive change in the lives of others,” Thames said.

“In the case of this honoree, Ambassador John N. Palmer, his impact is felt internationally, nationally and throughout our state. It is our hope that the Ole Miss students will be inspired to emulate John’s exceptional example.”

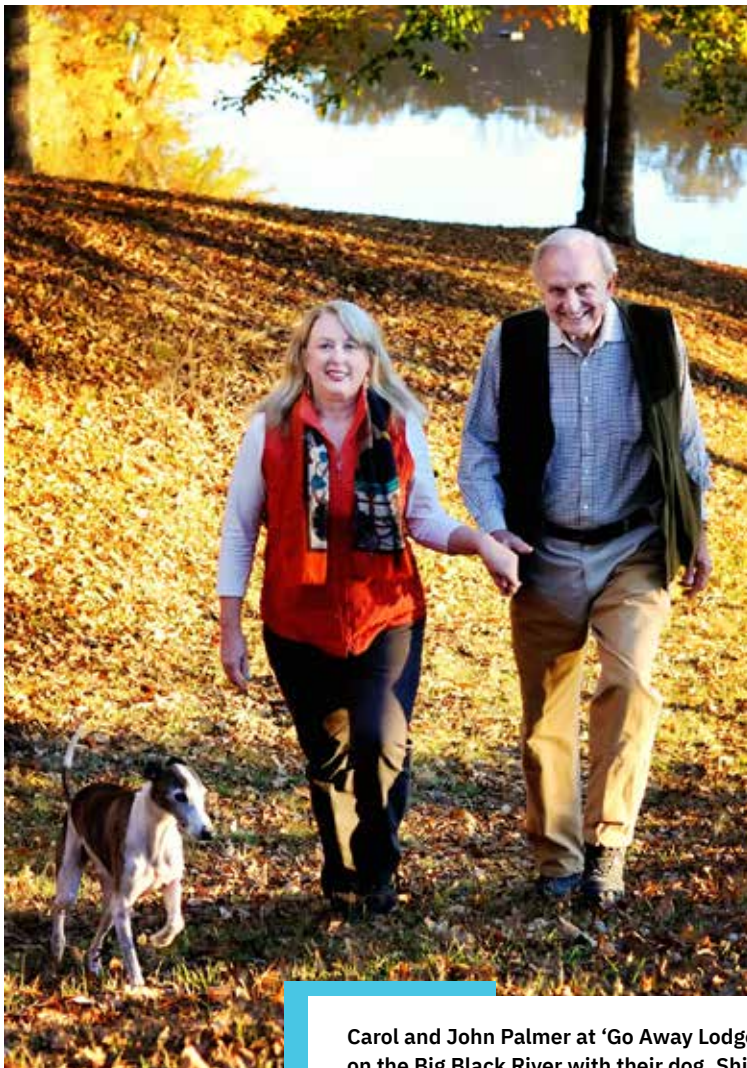
For the 11th year, the C Spire Foundation continued to serve as the presenting sponsor of the Legacy Award with platinum sponsor Nicholas Air and gold sponsor mTrade.

Silver sponsors were Mary Susan and J.D. Clinton/Randall Commercial Group, Cooper Communities Inc., Jan and Lawrence Farrington, FedEx Corp., the MIND Center, Suzan and Tommy Thames, Kathy and Joe Sanderson Jr., University of Mississippi Medical Center, Gertrude C. Ford Foundation and Yates Construction.

Bronze sponsors were Donna and Jim Barksdale, Butler Snow, Ginger and Charles Clark/Gail and John Pittman, CoreLogic/FNC, Kimberly Fritts, Carol Palmer, Ole Miss Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, Mary Sharp and Jim Rayner/Mary Ann and Don Frugé, School of Business Administration, Vicki and Harry Sneed/Betsy Smith, Ole Miss Alumni Association and the UM Foundation.

BY JONATHAN SCOTT

For information about the Legacy Award and the Ole Miss Women’s Council, contact Suzanne Helveston, OMWC program director, at shelveston@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2956.



Carol and John Palmer at ‘Go Away Lodge’ in West Hinds County on the Big Black River with their dog, Shiloh, in 2015.

SUBMITTED

JOE WORTHEM



PSE Alpha Theta chapter members Reginald Fisher (left), VP of human resources; Nathan Dressing, VP of professional development; George Embry, president; Ryan Jones, VP of marketing; Parker Holden, VP of public relations and 2023 president-elect; Kate Rodenmeyer, VP of administration and 2023 VP of administration-elect (Not pictured: Noah Wyrosdick, VP of finance)

PI SIGMA EPSILON RECHARTERS AT OLE MISS

Alpha Theta chapter's initiation ceremony welcomes new members

Pi Sigma Epsilon, the only nationally recognized co-ed professional fraternity focused on marketing, management and sales, has rechartered the Alpha Theta chapter at the University of Mississippi.

The chapter originally chartered in 1963 with founding member and past national president Lewis F. Gordon but became inactive at some point since.

"This addition will enhance our marketing and sales program by allowing our students to develop professionally through experiential learning," said Laurie Babin, instructional associate professor of business administration and faculty adviser of the Ole Miss chapter of PSE.

PSE national members traveled from their headquarters in Greenfield, Wisconsin, to Oxford for an initiation ceremony on Nov. 30, during which the chapter welcomed 30 members. A notable change from 1963: this time, women are included.

Chapter president Parker Holden, a freshman general business major from Moseley, Virginia, said he looked forward to what will come next.

"After gaining our charter from PSE headquarters, we are ready to begin our business advantage for life as we advance this year and into the next as the Alpha Theta chapter of Pi Sigma Epsilon here at Ole Miss," he said.



Original chartering group for the Alpha Theta chapter of PSE at Ole Miss in 1963.

PSE gives its members chances to gain hands-on experience through experiential learning opportunities, participate in conferences both regionally and nationally, and network with professionals through PSE's corporate partner program. Nearly 60 active chapters operate at universities and colleges across the country.

"I am so excited to see what this chapter does in their first year of being active again with PSE," said Erin Suhajda, manager of member services at PSE national headquarters. "It is the oldest chapter we have had the opportunity to bring back in recent history, and I believe they will be a top chapter in the region very soon."

BY CLAIRE SAHS

SUBMITTED

Speaker's Edge Helps Develop Career-Relevant Skills

Seventy-five Ole Miss students show off public speaking skills in 19th annual competition

Costco as a mini-market, remote work technology, virtual passports and artificial intelligence in the food industry were among the topics addressed at the 19th annual Speaker's Edge competition at the University of Mississippi.

Students in business, accountancy and law tackled a multitude of issues in the annual public speaking competition, held Jan. 12-13 at the Jackson Avenue Center. They were joined by 85 judges and 12 consultants for this year's competition, which is co-hosted by the university's School of Business Administration, Patterson School of Accountancy, Trent Lott Leadership Institute, Department of Writing and Rhetoric and the Division of Outreach and Continuing Education.

Holloway Byrd, an MBA student from Jackson, Tennessee, was declared the overall winner and awarded a check for \$1,000 from Katherine Anderson.

"Speaker's Edge was one of the most rewarding experiences of my academic career," Byrd said. "The competition not only gave me the opportunity to hone my speaking skills, but it also showed me that taking risks can pay off tremendously.

"Despite being extremely nervous going into the finals, I decided to take the chance and give it my best effort because I knew that if I didn't at least give it a shot, then I would regret it. I could not be more appreciative for this opportunity and everyone that put in so much work to make it all happen."

Byrd placed first both in the ethical dilemmas and marketplace pitch categories.

"This year's Speaker's Edge competition was outstanding and an exciting opportunity to be back in person fully," said Ken Cyree, dean of the business school. "However, we also continue to recognize the importance of video communication and allowed for interaction and presentations to take these formats to continue to hone the communication skills of our graduates.

"The keynote speech of David Magee was spot-on in that it reminded the students they can improve and it is about connecting with the audience to get your message across.

Overall, it was an excellent competition, and I know our students from business, accountancy and law benefited tremendously from it."

Ole Miss alumni launched Speaker's Edge in 2004 as a way to bring together industry professionals, working alumni and students and challenge students to adapt their message to different audiences. Participants spend 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.

ASHLEY MCGEE



University of Mississippi MBA student Holloway Byrd (left) accepts a check from Katherine Anderson as the overall winner of the 2023 Speaker's Edge competition. Byrd placed first both in the ethical dilemmas and marketplace pitch categories.

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

“The program offers a wonderful opportunity to have collaboration among graduate students in the Patterson School of Accountancy, School of Business Administration and School of Law,” Wilder said, “It was an outstanding learning experience once again for students, and we are proud of all who participated.

“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 and speaking skills of our students.”

Students competing in the ethical dilemmas category presented solutions for workplace challenges such as when senior leadership encourages abuses in free trials from software companies. This year’s winners are:

- Holloway Byrd, in first place
- Mary Caroline Newman, a law and MBA student from Memphis, second
- Elizabeth Scott, an MBA student from Ridgeland, third

The marketplace pitch category challenged competitors to address the advancement of the Sunshine Protection Act, virtual passports on handheld devices and corporations’ support of remote employment. This year’s winners are:

- Byrd, first place
- Faith Adams, a law student from Atlanta, second
- Tanner McCraney, an MBA student from Jackson, third



Speaker’s Edge was one of the most rewarding experiences of my academic career. The competition not only gave me the opportunity to hone my speaking skills, but it also showed me that taking risks can pay off tremendously.”

— HOLLOWAY BYRD

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

The winning pitch was for Papa John’s Pizza, advocating for vending machines to sell individual pizzas in areas where their competitors cannot. The dispenser would operate like an ATM that can hold up to 100 pizzas and be restocked daily.

Members of the winning team are Lizzie Ball, an accountancy major from Memphis; Adam Lalejini, an accountancy and data analytics major from Diamondhead; Tori Whittington, an accountancy student from McComb; and Baylor Franklin, an MBA student from Lebanon, Tennessee.

BY STELLA CONNELL

ASHLEY MCGEE



The marketplace pitch winners from the University of Mississippi’s 19th annual Speaker’s Edge competition are (from left) Kendall Runzi, MBA student, sixth place; Andrew Boyd, MBA, fifth place; Forrest Smith, accountancy, fourth place; Tanner McCraney, MBA, third place; Faith Adams, law, second place; Holloway Byrd, MBA, first place.

ADVICE TO GRADUATE STUDENTS

Former Dean, Three Professors Share Their Perspectives

A former dean and three former professors of the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration returned to campus to share advice with graduate students planning academic careers.

“Students have said, ‘You made a profound difference in my life,’” recalled Randy Boxx of Siloam Spring, Arkansas, dean emeritus of the Ole Miss business school and the Harry F. Byrd Jr. School of Business at Shenandoah University. “When you hear statements like that, then it’s all worth it.

“You can talk about the teaching you do in the classroom, the research you conduct and the service you do as young assistant professors to build your careers and seek tenure. But in the final analysis, what impact do you have on young people? To me that’s what it’s all about,” said Boxx, who also was dean of the Else School of Management at Millsaps College in Jackson.

Ron Bush of Fairhope, Alabama, a former distinguished university professor at the University of West Florida and former faculty member at Louisiana State University, advised the

graduate students to measure work satisfaction against the opportunity of teaching.

“We have one of the best professions in the world,” said Bush, who served as an assistant professor of marketing at Ole Miss in 1973-1978. “You get to influence young students who are eager to learn, and you get to do research on topics that interest you. Name another profession where you can go in and say, ‘I believe I’ll work on this.’ It’s been wonderful to be a college professor.”

The professors recommended the graduate students thoroughly investigate where they consider working.

“Ask questions about the environment,” said Joe Hair Jr., of Mobile, Alabama, the Cleverdon Chair of Business and director of the Ph.D. in business administration program at the University of South Alabama’s Mitchell College of Business and formerly an Ole Miss assistant professor of marketing in 1971. “Who are you going to be working with in terms of colleagues and who will be supervising you? Find out what resources are available to you.”

Paul Busch, of College Station, Texas, retired Texas A&M University System Regents



UM graduate students listen to a panel discussion by a former dean and three former professors who gave advice about career decisions.



A dean emeritus and three former professors gather with some current University of Mississippi School of Business Administration leaders after speaking to graduate students. The group included, front row from left, Victoria Bush, professor of marketing; Joe Hair, former UM assistant professor of marketing and now a faculty member at the University of South Alabama; Randy Boxx, dean emeritus of the UM School of Business Administration; and Barry Babin, chair of the UM Department of Marketing; second row from left, Paul Busch, former UM assistant professor of marketing and retired professor from Texas A&M University; Del Hawley, senior associate dean emeritus of the business school; Ken Cyree, dean of the business school; and Ron Rush, former UM assistant professor of marketing and retired professor from the University of West Florida.

Professor of Marketing, Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence, professor of marketing at A&M's Mays Business School and Ole Miss assistant professor of marketing from 1973 to 1977, echoed Hair's comments.

"People join organizations but leave supervisors," said Busch, who applied the philosophy and tools of positive psychology, with an emphasis on Gallup's Clifton's StrengthsFinder, in his teaching and research. "Some argue that your supervisor is more important to your long-term health than your doctor. It's hard to know going in, so ask a lot of questions on the environment."

Hair, who has written 16 textbooks of which six are market leaders, encouraged the students to develop passions and interests in academic study. "Keep learning and digging."

Bush also spoke on choosing research topics. "Pick something with meaning; try to choose a topic important to society. There's a debate

about the relevance of academic research to practitioners, so choose your topics carefully and consider timeliness."

"Research is important, but teaching is also important," said Boxx, who came to Ole Miss in 1971 and served 28 years and now provides Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business consulting services for initial accreditation and continuous improvement review, as well as strategic planning and risk management. "Think about what it takes to be an effective teacher. Keep your finger on the pulse of your students, and create a student-centered learning environment.

"Have your students read the material outside of class and come to class to do applications — real applications. Assign projects with real companies and encourage internships."

Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration, expressed gratitude to the educators.



**People join organizations but leave supervisors.
Some argue that your supervisor is more important
to your long-term health than your doctor."**

— PAUL BUSCH

Angela Brown, senior director of development for the UM business school, visits with Dean Emeritus Randy Boxx, who served as dean of the Ole Miss business school from 1993 to 1999.



Del Hawley listens in on the conversation with former deans and professors of the UM School of Business Administration. Hawley worked for the business school for 35 years (1986 to 2021), serving as senior associate dean in his final and most senior role.

“We greatly appreciated these professors sharing their wisdom with our students and inspiring our current faculty,” he said. “They provided crucial leadership to our business school and particularly to our Department of Marketing during their time of service here. Afterward, they continued to distinguish themselves in their contributions to higher education.”

Other advice offered by the four higher education leaders included:

- Try to connect yourself to business and industry. Many times, leading executives and entrepreneurs can position you for a research project or offer your students internships.
- Branch out of your business school. Some of the most exciting work is taking place at the intersection of business and other disciplines.
- Collaborate inside and outside of your university.
- Build relationships through service. Get your name out across campus through service on committees.
- Nurture connections with the university’s alumni.
- Be prepared to reinvent yourself and make mid-career transitions.
- Because of the time commitment required, postpone writing a textbook until you’re a full professor.
- Beware of the colleague who comes to your office door to complain about leadership.
- Plan your retirement.
- Pursue interests outside of the academic world.

Boxx said two long-term strategic directions he espoused for business schools are enhancing academic excellence and improving recognition and reputation — directions the aspiring professors could implement.

“To build a high-quality business school, it will always start and will always end with faculty,” Boxx said. “It is not the technology, it is not the curriculum, and it is not the physical facility. The very best faculty possible must be hired and retained.”

**BY TINA H. HAHN
PHOTOS BY MARY KNIGHT**

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

Internet Entrepreneur Inspires Students

Former CEO shares her success and experiences at fifth annual REDe Summit

Alexis Maybank, founder of Gilt Groupe, shared her struggles and successes with University of Mississippi students as the keynote speaker during the fifth annual REDe Entrepreneurship Summit, held Nov. 10 at The Gertrude C. Ford Ole Miss Student Union.

“A career is a very long marathon,” Maybank said. “Don’t measure yourself in your missteps, and instead have the long arc of your career in mind.”

Maybank’s address not only included her personal story but also outlined the steps necessary to create a strong business plan. She discussed the importance of trial and error and how a “no” isn’t always a bad thing.

Two Ole Miss business school alumni were highlighted at the summit, where they shared lessons learned from their initial failures launching businesses. Brea Givens and Tanner McCraney both went back to the



University of Mississippi students take in lessons from successful business owners at the fifth annual REDe Entrepreneurship Summit. Hosted by the university’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the event is designed to encourage, celebrate and enhance the entrepreneurial spirit among Ole Miss students.

KEVIN BAIN

drawing board after initial poor performances at the Gillespie Business Plan Competition.

“It’s always gonna be an uphill battle, but it’s definitely worth it,” said Givens, founder and CEO of Froomie. “As you embark on your entrepreneurial journey, be prepared to accept change with open arms.”

Givens and McCraney, co-founder of Rumie, both won at the competition after receiving assistance from the UM Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

These type of life lessons are the goal of the REDe Entrepreneurship Summit, which has been held since 2018. The focus is to encourage, celebrate and enhance the entrepreneurial spirit among Ole Miss students.

“We believe hearing the entrepreneurial journeys of these speakers encourages our students to pursue ideas they have in mind, learn from failures and get prepared for

challenges in their future career,” said Tong Meng, director of programs for the CIE.

The CIE was established in fall 2014 by the School of Business Administration. Since 2018, the center has awarded \$39,000 in scholarships and has given over \$188,000 in cash prizes to students. More than 60 student ventures have been established with support from the center.

“Attending the REDe Entrepreneurship Summit was very eye-opening and inspiring to me as I was able to see Ole Miss alumni take their ideas and bring them to life,” said Danielle Delavaldene, a junior from Dallas majoring in marketing.

“I also found Alexis Maybank’s speech to be inspirational as she discussed the importance of executing a strong business plan and how it helped her company be very successful.”

BY DYLAN MARTIN

KEVIN BAIN



Alexis Maybank, keynote speaker of the fifth annual REDe Entrepreneurship Summit, speaks to a packed house of students at the event.

Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch delivered the Commencement address to the University of Mississippi's MBA Class of 2023 on May 12 at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts.



Mississippi Attorney General Delivers 2023 MBA Commencement Message

Lynn Fitch, Mississippi's first female attorney general, delivered the address for the University of Mississippi's MBA Commencement ceremony on May 12 at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts.

Before she began her message, she acknowledged that

this year's class was led by an all-female assembly of officers.

"I think we are seeing here at the Ole Miss MBA program the changing face of leadership ... in Mississippi, across the nation and around the world," she said. "I am very excited to see the impact you will have on our future."

Her speech focused on two important components of leadership: trust and relationships.

"Look people in the eyes when you talk to them to build a bond of trust," she said. "Make solid choices. You've got the same 24 hours (as) everyone else."



Margaret Walden-Benson (center) with her two older children, Elizabeth, 29, and Benjamin, 31. Walden-Benson completed the MBA program in two years. She serves the university as associate director of institutional research.

Tanner McCraney (left), of Jackson, James Hutchenson, of Florence, Alabama, and Baker Kirkland, of Flora, outside the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts following Commencement ceremonies for the MBA Class of 2023



Frank Torres, of Fort Worth, Texas, completed the MBA online program in two years. Torres is an aeronautical engineer at Lockheed Martin.



“But it’s what you do with it that matters. So, choose your actions wisely.”

Fitch is a Holly Springs native and UM alumna, earning a bachelor’s degree in business administration with an emphasis in marketing in 1981 and a Juris Doctor in 1984. At 23, she began her legal career serving as a special assistant attorney general in the Mississippi Attorney General’s office.

Her legal career spans more than three decades, in which she held a variety of influential positions in both public and private practice. Before being elected attorney general, Fitch was elected Mississippi state treasurer in 2011, a position she held until 2020.

During her time as state treasurer, she gained national influence as vice president for the National Association of State Treasurers and as chair of the State Financial Officers Foundation.

Gov. Haley Barbour chose Fitch to serve as executive director at the Mississippi State Personnel Board in 2009, and she served as deputy executive director at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and as counsel for the Mississippi House of Representatives Ways and Means and Local and Private Legislation committees.

“Attorney General Fitch gave an inspirational speech to the class that highlights her success and leadership and encouraged our MBA students to pursue their goals and objectives and impact Mississippi, the region and the world,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the Ole Miss business school.

“She has faced adversity and challenges and has been able to overcome difficulties in her career and life, and her wisdom and experience is an inspiration to our MBA graduates and the ceremony attendees.”

In recognition of her work and leadership, Fitch has received numerous accolades. In 2012, she was selected as both Outstanding Woman Lawyer and a Woman Trailblazer by the Mississippi Bar Association.

In 2022, *Time* magazine named Fitch to its list of the 100 most influential people in the world, and *Worth Magazine* named her to its Worthy 100 for her work protecting women and children.

“What an honor it was to have Attorney General Fitch lead the charge to our MBAs,” said Ashley McGee, director of MBA programs. “She is as kind and genuine as she is an outstanding leader and role model for us all.”

BY GRIFFIN BATES
AND STELLA CONNELL
PHOTOS BY JOE WORTHEM



Digital Marketing Firm Receives First Prize at Gillespie Competition

Altar'd Socials takes top prize in 19th annual business plan contest

A social media marketing business that uses a five-task plan to effectively manage digital marketing took first place in the 2023 Gillespie Business Plan Competition at the University of Mississippi.

Altar'd Socials, founded by Claire Ficek, a sophomore integrated marketing communications major from Maple Plain, Minnesota, was declared the overall winner of the annual contest. Her company oversees website management, content creation and engagement on social media apps, as well as email marketing for its customers.

"I am blessed to be a part of such an amazing organization like the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and have the opportunities they provide for students," Ficek said. "The Gillespie Business Plan Competition was just one example of adults in our community coming together to support us as students."

Ficek won \$15,000 for her business, plus a year's worth of office space at Insight Park. She was named a Seibels Scholar, which brought her an additional \$5,000.

"Claire Ficek provided amazing pitches for her post-revenue Altar'd Socials venture, which led to her victory," said Clay Dibrell, co-director of the CIE. "Going forward, we look for great things from her, as well as the rest of our Ole Miss student entrepreneurs."

The second-place winner in the competition was iOS Launch, a service providing software development to small businesses and startups. The company was awarded \$5,000. This service was founded by senior Carson Zylicz, an accounting and finance major from Sugar Land, Texas.

This service allows small businesses and startups to customize mobile app templates to help them compete with larger organizations. One of Zylicz's apps provided software for the



LEFT: Claire Ficek, winner of the 19th annual Gillespie Business Plan Competition, receives congratulations from fellow competitors. Ficek, a University of Mississippi sophomore from Maple Plain, Minnesota, is the founder and CEO of Altar'd Socials, a social media platform developed to improve business's social media initiatives.

ABOVE: Tong Meng (middle), director of programs for the CIE, visits with some of the competitors at a reception following the Gillespie competition at The Inn at Ole Miss.

RIGHT: Lawrence and Jan Farrington watch the awards being announced at the 19th Gillespie competition. The Farringtons sponsored the reception.



2022 Gillespie Business Competition winner, Rumie App.

Among the other finalists were SellVNTG LLC, Up4Grabs, Navigator Medical and Abbikadabbi's Baking Co. Each of these businesses competed in the final round and received \$1,250.

The CIE supports students who create and build business plans and ideas, and hosts the business plan competition each year.

"The Gillespie Business Plan Competition is the culmination of our Ole Miss student entrepreneurs working on their ventures through our CIE student competitions, entrepreneurship major and minor classes, as well as working individually with our faculty, campus and virtual mentors, and other student entrepreneurship support groups, such as the Innovation Hub at Insight Park and the Rebel Venture Capital Fund," Dibrell said.

Several students also received Gillespie special awards:

Navigator Medical received the Thomas W. Colbert-Community Bank Innovation Award for \$5,000, provided by Community Bank, of Flowood.

Abbikadabbi's Baking Co. received the GenTeal Apparel Consumer-Facing Award for \$5,000, funded by GenTeal, of Oxford.

LeaseSavvy earned the Lynn and Ron Samuels Student Entrepreneur Award for \$5,000, provided by Lynn and Ron Samuels, of Nashville, Tennessee.

The Big Sis Organization LLC received the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneur Award for \$5,000, funded by Stephen Rowell, of Brandon.

Moose Medical received the Edward G. Francis Sr. Entrepreneur Award for \$2,500, provided by Edward Francis Sr., of Denver.

FAX took the Most Improved Business Award for \$2,500.

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Academy of Marketing Science honors Lyt Harris

The Academy of Marketing Science has named Lyttleton T. “Lyt” Harris, managing partner of the Harris Investment Partnership and a University of Mississippi School of Business Administration alumnus, as the AMS Distinguished Marketing Practitioner for 2023.

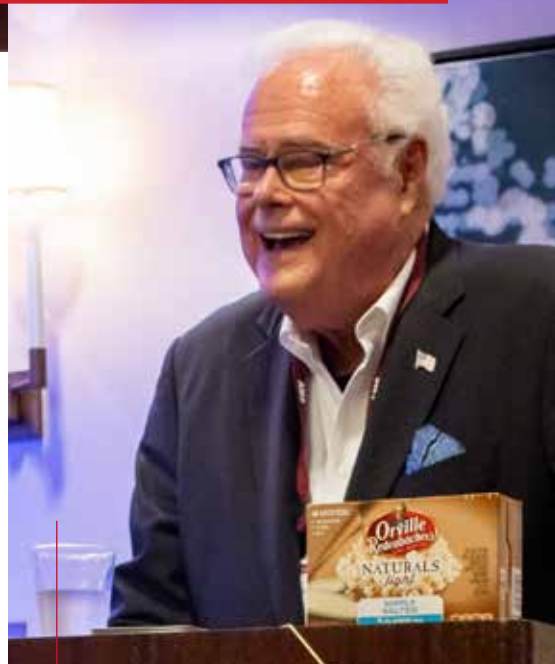
The award recognizes marketers who distinguish themselves in business or public policy through actions characterized by success, integrity and high ethical standards.

The international scholarly organization presented the award during the 2023 AMS 48th Annual Conference in New Orleans. During the conference, Harris delivered a plenary presentation titled “A 50-year Marketing Journey ... from Snow Cones to Condos.”

Harris thanked the academy for honoring his career work.

“When I took Marketing 101 during my freshman year in college, I knew without a doubt that this would be my major,” he recalled. “I suddenly realized that I had been practicing marketing in my many youthful business ventures since the tender age of 7.”

Ken Cyree, dean of the business school and the Frank R. Day/Mississippi Bankers Association Chair of Banking, congratulated Harris on the honor.



TOP: Ken Cyree (left), dean of the UM School of Business Administration, with Harris, recipient of the Academy of Marketing Science Distinguished Marketing Practitioner for 2023; Barry Babin, executive director of AMS and chair of the Department of Marketing at UM; and Jared Llorens, dean of the E.J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University.

Lyttleton T. ‘Lyt’ Harris accepts his award as Academy of Marketing Science Distinguished Marketing Practitioner for 2023 at the organization’s annual conference in New Orleans.

“His exceptionally successful career has served to shine a spotlight on our business school, and we are so proud of his far-reaching achievements,” Cyree said. “In addition, we are grateful for the investments he has made in our school and for the mentoring he has provided to our students. Lyt is very generous with his resources, his expertise and his time.”

Harris’ marketing accomplishments are many. Perhaps one of the most noteworthy took place when he served as marketing director for Hunt-Wesson Foods, where he played a key role in propelling Orville Redenbacher to one of the top popcorn brands in the world. At Scott Paper, Harris played a major role in introducing and marketing the first disposable diaper in the U.S.

Later, Harris worked in the banking and finance industry and became CEO of Southwest Management and Marketing Co. He serves as a managing partner of the Harris Investment Partnership.

“There is an old saying, ‘Good things come to those who wait,’ and this was certainly the case with me,” Harris said. “My accomplishments in marketing were recognized some 15 years into my retirement.”

The Houston resident’s professional accolades include listings in Who’s Who in America, Who’s Who in Finance and Industry, and Who’s Who in the South and Southwest.

Throughout his career, Harris has remained close to his alma mater, establishing the Lytleton T. Harris IV Scholarship to benefit the students in the business school. He also serves as a mentor for Ole Miss MBA students and was named an Otho Smith fellow in 2008.

“

I suddenly realized that I had been practicing marketing in my many youthful business ventures since the tender age of 7.”

— LYT HARRIS

Harris joins an accomplished list of recent award winners that includes Scott Smith, of Qualtrics; Jeffrey S. Zehnder, of Zehnder Communications; Ben Lee, of Pierry Software; and numerous Fortune 500 executives.

The Academy of Marketing Science Foundation is dedicated to promoting high standards and excellence in the creation and dissemination of marketing knowledge and the furtherance of marketing practice through a role of leadership within the discipline of marketing around the world.

BY TINA H. HAHN

PHOTOS COURTESY RED WINDOW COMMUNICATIONS



Charlotte Parks, vice chancellor for development, visits with Richard Gentry, co-director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, at the reception following the Gillespie competition.

Gillespie, continued from page 39

“This year’s Gillespie Business Plan Competition set records for the amount of money given to students that totaled \$50,000,” said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. “This is an amazing success story and indicates the dedication of our faculty and staff, and the commitment of our alumni in funding these budding entrepreneurs.”

The Landshark Tank Video Pitch first prize of \$1,000 was awarded to The Big Sis Organization LLC; second prize of \$500, to SOLIEX; and third prize of \$300, to Sassy Workwear.

“This year’s Gillespie reached a record high of 47 total entries and presented more developed businesses and polished pitches since COVID, which is really exciting and encouraging,” said Tong Meng, CIE program director. “We couldn’t have achieved this without the generous support from our mentors, especially Owens Alexander, Anne Mathis, Bill Andrews, Bill Mobley and Dr. Josie Burks.”

The final-round judges were Troy Drewry, a professor of practice in biomedical engineering; Jan Farrington, former executive director of Medical Support and Development Organization Inc.; Lawrence Farrington, member of the board of directors for mTrade Inc.; Liza Cirlot Looser, CEO of The Cirlot Agency; Rick Looser, COO and president of The Cirlot Agency; Lois Lovelady-Rayburn, co-founder, president and chief revenue officer of mTrade; Matt Mossberg, managing partner of West Group; and Steve Rowell, president and owner of Flagstar Construction.

BY LAUREN MUNNELL

PHOTOS BY JOE WORTHEM

Stamps Scholar Jaylin Jones will continue his studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio following his Ole Miss graduation.

A Community of Support

SUBMITTED

Mentors shaped Stamps Scholar Jaylin Jones for success

For Lucedale native and University of Mississippi senior Jaylin Jones, winning the Trepp Innovation Challenge and receiving a \$10,000 grant to further his research was the culmination of support he received from faculty, fellow students and his family during his academic career.

“Going to college and being away from family pushed me outside my comfort zone and into a growth zone,” said Jones, a Stamps Scholar and member of the Sally

McDonnell Barksdale Honors College who graduated in May with a bachelor’s degree in real estate. “My mom worked hard and supported our family by herself. That showed me that if she could do that, then I could do it for myself.

“Being here, I learned how to learn. I feel like I took advantage of all the experiences being a Stamps Scholar and a member of the Honors College had to offer, and those helped me become a better person overall.”

Jones focused his presentation for the Trepp Challenge

on implementing 3D printing into commercial real estate, or CRE, construction to save money by reducing build times, labor expenses and carbon dioxide emissions.

“I had a lot of help in improving the presentation from several faculty members, some of whom were my professors and others whom I reached out to for their expertise,” he said. “One of my business professors told our class about the competition and gave me feedback on my presentation.

“I got the idea for 3D printing in construction from an



We especially appreciate Jaylin’s intellectual sharpness, superb engagement and innovative ideas. He is a tremendous scholar who would have excelled anywhere in the country, and I am thankful that private support from the Stamps Foundation and Jim and Donna Barksdale helped us recruit and support this first-rate student.”

— ETHEL SCURLOCK, SALLY MCDONNELL BARKSDALE HONORS COLLEGE DEAN



SUBMITTED

Jaylin Jones traveled to New York City in April, where he participated in the Trepp Innovation Challenge.

Honors College class, and being a Stamps Scholar drilled into me how beneficial networking can be to finding people willing to help you.”

Trepp, a provider of data, insights and technology solutions to structured finance, CRE and banking markets, conducted an inaugural Innovation Challenge in April. Jones was one of three finalists selected to present at the company’s headquarters in New York City.

“Jaylin presented a well-thought-out argument about the uses and benefits of 3D printing and how they could advance CRE,” said Erin Timko, Trepp’s director of academic and industry relations. “Based on the feasibility of the study presented and

real-world examples provided, we are looking forward to Jaylin executing his business plan and seeing the positive impact he intends to make.”

Jones plans to attend the University of Texas at San Antonio for a master’s degree in real estate and finance in the fall and hopes to use the grant to continue his education and research on the use of 3D printing in CRE.

“The panelists’ questions for me focused on next steps and trying to get me started on the process for furthering my research into that area of CRE,” Jones said. “I think my research could benefit and be used in CRE, and I could become an expert in this field.”

Jones credits his success at Ole Miss to the mentorship he received throughout college.

“Whether it was the professors at the business school, the staff and faculty at the Honors College or my Stamps cohort members, I fully believe I wouldn’t have made it as far in this competition and with my overall success in college without the support from all of them,” he said.

The Stamps Scholars Program, founded by E. Roe Stamps and his late wife, Penny, awards prestigious scholarships based on academic excellence, leadership experience and exceptional character. The program awarded 247 scholarships this academic

Jones, continued on page 43

SUPPORTING ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Hughes Endows Scholarship Fund to Recreate Success for Future Generations of UM Students

A scholarship the late Daniel C. Hughes Jr. established in 1983 to honor his parents — both UM graduates — has bettered the lives of numerous students for almost four decades.

Now, newly endowed with a gift from Hughes' estate, the Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Clyde Hughes Scholarship Endowment will continue to help students in perpetuity.

"Dan was a longtime School of Business advisory board member and a wonderful supporter of Ole Miss," said Ken Cyree, dean of the School of Business Administration. "He was a gentleman, a professional and a wonderful representative of the Ole Miss business school and the university.

"We are pleased that he and his parents will be honored in perpetuity with this scholarship, since I know it would make him happy that he is able to offer others the opportunity he had to experience our educational environment here and to be connected to the business school," he continued. "He leaves for our students and alumni a wonderful legacy of a person to emulate."

Marc Littlecott, advancement director for estate and planned giving, said, "We appreciate that Mr. Hughes saw how an Ole Miss degree benefited his career, and now his generosity will help future generations reap the same rewards.

"IRA funds directly transfer to our organization to help continue our important work and help further our mission, granting the Hughes' philanthropy to last in perpetuity," he said.

Daniel Clyde Hughes III, of Oxford, said his father wanted to help recreate success for others:

"He hoped the scholarship would go to individuals who would use their degrees to become more successful and take advantage of the opportunities the university gave them."

Before graduating in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in business administration, Hughes received the Haskins and Sells Foundation Award for Excellence in Accounting and finished at the top of his class. He was a member of Phi Kappa



SUBMITTED

The late Daniel C. Hughes Jr.

Phi honorary scholastic fraternity, Beta Alpha Psi accountancy honor society, Beta Gamma Sigma business honor society, as well as Delta Sigma Phi and Sigma Chi.

Upon graduating, Hughes began his career in Jackson, with the accounting firm Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co., eventually taking financial positions with a number of other companies. Hughes established and was CEO of his own companies in asset management, securities and property development.

Hughes served on the Ole Miss Alumni Association board of directors and was a past president of the UM Business School Alumni Association. He also participated in the university's Sesquicentennial Campaign.

"Dad never really lost sight of what Ole Miss provided him, and it laid the groundwork for every single thing he did," Daniel Hughes III said. "He continued to return to campus and

remained active with the university, and that helped him form connections that benefited his business career.

“He was very proud of having his degree from the University of Mississippi on his resume, and he wanted his children and grandchildren to also have that on theirs,” he continued.

Daniel Clyde Hughes Jr. is survived by four children, three of whom are UM graduates: Daniel C. Hughes III of Oxford; Christy Hughes McHenry of Jackson; Catherine Hughes Crockett of Nashville, Tennessee; and Carrie Hughes of Brandon, along with three grandsons who are enrolled at Ole Miss: Hughes, William and Harry McHenry, and grandson Christopher McHenry, who is a junior in high school.

Recipients of the Hughes scholarship will be Mississippi residents who have demonstrated

financial need, academic achievement and leadership ability. The \$1,000 award will be granted for eight continuous semesters. Recipients must maintain a minimum 2.5 grade-point average during the first two semesters of enrollment and a minimum 2.8 for every semester thereafter.

The Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Clyde Hughes Scholarship is open to support from organizations and individuals. Gifts can be made by sending a check, with the fund’s name noted on the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford MS 38655 or by giving online at give.olemiss.edu.

BY ALYSSA GARZA

For information on methods for including the university in estate planning, contact Marc Littlecott at marcplan@olemiss.edu or 662-915-6625.

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year to students at 31 institutions across the U.S. and the United Kingdom. Ole Miss has the second-largest collective of Stamps Scholars in the program.

“Receiving the Stamps scholarship was very validating for me because I earned it on my own merit,” Jones said. “It showed me that I could come from anywhere, be able to compete and win, and be anything I want to be.”

Jones has been an exceptional member of the college’s student body and an asset to the community, Honors College Dean Ethel Scurlock said.

“We especially appreciate Jaylin’s intellectual sharpness, superb engagement and innovative ideas,” she said. “He is a tremendous scholar who would have excelled anywhere in the country, and I am thankful that private support from the Stamps Foundation and Jim and Donna Barksdale helped us recruit and support this first-rate student.



Jaylin Jones won a \$10,000 Trepp grant to further his research in 3D printing for commercial real estate construction.

“We are all made better because of Jaylin’s consistent pursuit of excellence.”

His college experience is also influencing how his younger siblings are thinking about their futures.

“My sister, especially, who is a junior in high school, is already getting her applications in,” Jones said. “She’s seen

what’s possible and knows more about the process now that I’ve been through it, so she’s better prepared.

“The money, time and advice that went into helping me is also helping them because they see the opportunities I’ve had.”

BY MARY KNIGHT



SUBMITTED

Business students trek to Texas to explore careers

A group of University of Mississippi business students and staff traveled to the Dallas-Fort Worth area in February for an opportunity to explore and network with companies and potential employers in the area.

Members of the School of Business Administration's Career Preparation, Business Connect and development teams accompanied 28 students on the trip. The students were selected for the "career trek" opportunity based on their submitted resumes and applications, which included academic achievements and campus involvement.

The goal of the trip was to provide students with a behind-the-scenes glimpse of industry trends, work culture and employer recruitment needs.

"The students were such great ambassadors of Ole Miss, and we are so impressed with what they were able to accomplish on this trek," said Wesley Dickens, assistant director of experiential education for the business school. "Although



JOSH HARBAUGH

UM Chancellor Glenn Boyce speaks with the business school's students at a reception in Dallas.

Wesley Dickens (left), assistant director of experiential education, and Tyler Meisenheimer, director of the Business Connect program, visit AT&T's headquarters in Dallas in late February with a group of Ole Miss business students as part of a career trek to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

the primary purpose of the trip was career exploration, several students ended up with interviews for career and internship opportunities.”

The trek began with an opening dinner at Joe T. Garcia's in Fort Worth, hosted by Jennifer Baker, Ole Miss alumna and regional vice president of sales and marketing with Aimbridge Hospitality. Baker, who received her bachelor's degree in international business in 1999, encouraged students to be adaptable, build relationships and remain open in their career steps.

“I loved being able to play a role in the new career trek program through the School of Business,” she said. “The insight the students get to see while visiting corporations and talking to senior leaders is invaluable.

“I enjoyed meeting the students with so many diverse backgrounds and sharing my Ole Miss story with them and opening their eyes to the abundance of opportunities within the hospitality industry.”

Tour stops with companies in the area included BNSF Railway, AT&T, CBRE, CoreLogic and Hillwood Development. The companies presented opportunities for all majors including finance, marketing, real estate, supply chain/logistics and management.

In addition, a networking reception featured UM Chancellor Glenn Boyce, business school Dean Ken Cyree, Ole Miss business school alumni and employers from around Dallas-Fort Worth.

“Being a part of the Ole Miss School of Business career trek to DFW was an amazing experience,” said Abby Long, a junior from Tallahassee, Florida, majoring in marketing and communications strategy. “The visits to the businesses taught me about opportunities that never crossed my mind.”

Students learned about a variety of career and internship opportunities to help them confirm a career path.

“Our students received a generous welcome and high-quality professional insight from each employer,” said Tyler Meisenheimer, director of the Business Connect program.

“Companies provided facility tours, panel discussions that portrayed ‘a day in the life’ of the various positions they hire for, case studies, and overall unique and enriched presentations from entry-level to executive-level associates of each respective company.”

BY STELLA CONNELL



SUBMITTED

Ole Miss business students travel to Dallas to visit with potential employers.



BILL DABNEY

UM alumna Donna Ruth Else Roberts, of Oxford, has made a \$50,000 gift in support of the Career Preparation Services Center within the School of Business Administration.

BENEFITING BUSINESS MAJORS

Alumna's Campaign Gift Supports Career Prep Services Center

Generations of students in the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration will benefit from a gift to Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss.

UM alumna Donna Ruth Else Roberts, of Oxford, made a \$50,000 gift to the campaign in support of the Career Preparation Services Center within the school.

Located inside Holman Hall, the center offers support services that business students can access while also using the space for resume building, career matching and interview practice using artificial intelligence technology.

"I believe that one of the most important priorities of the business school is to equip our students to find the best career possible after graduation. Funding is necessary for us to accomplish that goal," said Roberts, who graduated from Ole Miss in 1965.

She majored in English but quickly realized how useful a business-related education could have been as she worked in several business environments until her now late husband asked her to help him in his real estate development company in the 1970s.

In fact, her belief in the importance of a business degree is so strong that she made a

\$100,000 gift in 2001, establishing a scholarship endowment aimed at assisting deserving students who are pursuing a major within the School of Business Administration. Additionally, in 2008, she established the Donna Ruth Roberts Business Women's Excellence Endowment with a gift of \$250,000 to further assist UM business students.

"I just feel led to get women more involved in business," she said at the time. "No matter what career you're in, even in just reading the newspaper, you pick up so much with a business degree or exposure to business principles."

Roberts' gift to the Career Preparation Services Center will provide resources, including additional AI technology and yearly subscriptions, needed to keep the lab and software current. It will also support student workshops,



I believe that one of the most important priorities of the business school is to equip our students to find the best career possible after graduation. Funding is necessary for us to accomplish that goal."

— DONNA RUTH ELSE ROBERTS

STELLA CONNELL



Meg Barnes, director of undergraduate career preparation and instructor of management, with Roberts outside Holman Hall on the UM campus.

networking events for students and corporations, staff to serve the 4,000-plus business students and new programming.

"This generous gift by Mrs. Roberts is the kind of private support that makes all the difference in public education," said Ken Cyree, dean of the Ole Miss business school. "It not only provides golden opportunities for individual students but also strengthens the business school as a whole and, consequently, the entire state.

"We are so grateful to Donna Ruth Roberts for not only donating her financial resources to the business school but also giving of her time," the dean continued. "Her involvement with our students, the Business Advisory Board and the faculty has been amazing and inspiring, and this generous gift reflects her dedication and commitment to our school. She has been a strong supporter on every dimension, and this allows us to continue and expand the success we have enjoyed for our students and programs."

Roberts has served on the business school's advisory board, mentored students and judged student entrepreneurial competitions. She believes it's important for students to have a solid understanding of fundamental business principles.

"Knowing the basics about economics and finances helps you understand more of what's going on in the world today," she said. "Women as well as men need to know about accounting, banking and insurance. It's so important."

The Yazoo City native spent much of her life in Memphis, Tennessee, prior to retiring to Oxford, her alma mater's home.

"I truly love Ole Miss," Roberts said. "It's great to get involved with the university. It's something that keeps you going. I feel blessed to be a part of this campaign."

Roberts' gift is part of Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss, a historic \$1.5 billion initiative to enhance the university with support focused on building leaders, empowering academic excellence, fueling research and innovation and creating economic opportunity.

BY BILL DABNEY

To make a gift to the School of Business Administration, visit nowandever.olemiss.edu or contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.

Women in Leadership Organizes First Summit

PoliSHed kicks off Women's History Month at UM

The University of Mississippi chapter of Women in Leadership sparked a discussion about career advancement for women during the first-ever PoliSHed Summit.

Featuring 15 panelists, the discussion topics ranged from “Leadership 101” to “Superwoman” to “Into New Territory.” Among the guest speakers were notables such as Meg An-nison, director of communications at the Mississippi Lottery Corp.; Maura Langhart, senior director of annual giving at the UM Foundation; and Claire Hick, corporate vice president of operations at Oceans Healthcare.

“As a program, we see many female students and we see many females who are successful professionals,” said Ashley McGee, UM Women in Leadership adviser and director of the Ole Miss MBA program, which launched the chapter two years ago.

“As interest has grown, we decided now was the time to launch a larger-scale event, PoliSHed, our women’s leadership summit. In order to create good women leaders, put strong women leaders in front of them. It is a simple, yet powerful concept.”

The main theme was about having confidence in yourself and your abilities. Debra Sage, senior product manager at mTrade, recommended trying to have the same confidence that a man would

have. She also emphasized the importance of boundaries and knowing when to say “no.”

“Never doubt yourself,” Sage said. “We are women, but we do have limits.”

Another recurring theme centered on career growth. Working at the roller rink and Jamba Juice, or as a babysitter or pharmacy cashier were among the first jobs mentioned during one panel discussion. Others focused on the role of women in leadership and provided advice to students for their future careers.

The panelists met with audience members to network, chat and ask follow-up questions.

“I loved being able to connect with my students and give them the advice I wish I had at their age,” said Hick, also an adjunct instructor of integrated marketing communications in the School of Journalism and New Media. “It is important to have a support system of people who lift you up.”

Working in a male-dominated industry can make it hard to break through, but Ty-wanna Smith, an athlete business coach, sports consultant, wealth specialist, bestselling author and speaker, has carved her own successful path.

“In my industry, women don’t really know how to break into the sports world,” Smith said. “Oftentimes, your network determines that. You can be very talented but still never have the opportunity to break into that space.”



The event’s organizers were pleased with the March 1 summit and plan to make it an annual event.

“PoliSHed, for me, was all about how important it is to know yourself and how you light someone else’s candle does not dim your light,” said Aditi Holkunde, a graduate student in pharmaceutical sciences from Pune, India, and president of the Women in Leadership organization.

“This event also made us realize how important it is to be present in your life in the moment and enjoy life while building it.”

SAMANTHA HENDRIX



Ashley McGee (far right), director of MBA programs, moderates a panel 'Leadership 101' with panelists (left to right) Kritika Gupta, TEDx speaker and senior program analyst at Ripple Effect; Julianna Kirkland, manager of talent acquisition at MorganFranklin Consulting; Maura Langhart, senior director of annual giving at the UM Foundation; Cameron Olivi, senior manager of talent acquisition at CrossCountry Consulting; and Debra Sage, senior product manager at mTrade.



Ole Miss students listen as panelists discuss women in leadership at the first annual 'PoliSHed' summit sponsored by the Women in Leadership organization.

SUPPORTING THE BASE PROGRAM

Cavanaugh Scholarship promotes innovative programming in the School of Business Administration

A University of Mississippi program could help develop technology that would revolutionize the typical business cycle – news that inspired Harlene and Patrick Cavanaugh to make a major gift to the Ole Miss School of Business Administration.

Patrick Cavanaugh, of Denver, who earned a UM degree in business administration in 1970, established the Harlene and Patrick Cavanaugh BASE Scholarship Endowment. The support reflects the Cavaughns' passion for bettering the lives and education of students.

"It is the future that holds the promise for these young

kids and, to us, there's just a warm feeling that we're actually going to be doing things younger folks can appreciate," Cavanaugh said.

The School of Business Administration launched BASE to connect faculty expertise, student learning and industry interests around the growing wave of analytics. The BASE acronym reflects baseball while encompassing three ways in which industry grows: First base represents "sales," second base is "supply chain," and third base is "marketing analytics."

"Support for the BASE initiative provides business students access to real-world learning and professional development, while also

helping the school grow its relationships with the business community," said Hughes Miller, director of industry engagement.

BASE augments capabilities and offerings through traditional coursework, certificate programs, executive education and other training for university students and industry partners, Miller said. School officials plan to use private support to develop a learning facility that includes a sales laboratory and interview cubicles for role plays and mock interviews and becomes a place for students, faculty, alumni and industry to connect and collaborate within the school.

"When we heard about the BASE program and the principles of the program, what really excited us was the link bringing together people within the industry to students before they graduate," Cavanaugh said.

The BASE "home run" occurs when innovative technology revolutionizes the typical business cycle of product sales and delivery.

"When you combine the business analytics and supply chain, it's going to require extensive expertise and understanding new product development," Cavanaugh said. "These products are going to require people who understand what they are, what they do and why they do it.

SUBMITTED



Harlene and Patrick Cavanaugh have established a UM endowment that reflects their passion for improving the lives and education of students.



MARY KNIGHT

Will Ash Sr. (right), director of U.S. Public Security Sector with Cisco, interacts with Ole Miss business students at the BASE Bootcamp networking reception in fall 2022.

“When you put them all together, that BASE program just nailed my idea of what the future is going to look like. The exponential growth of technologies is going to need people who understand how technology improves business efficiencies.”

Barry Babin, executive director of the BASE program, executive director of the Academy of Marketing Science, chair of the UM Department of Marketing and Phil B. Hardin Chair, said he is grateful for the couple’s support of the initiative.

“The fact that the Cavanaugh’s recognize the potential of the BASE initiative to engage students with industry leaders in sales, business analytics and supply chain management affirms the intentions of the BASE: to make sure Ole Miss remains on the cutting edge in providing a relevant

foundation to our students, allowing them to hit the ground running in building productive and rewarding careers,” he said.

“The Cavanaugh’s’ support will open doors for students who might otherwise not be able to take advantage of the career development opportunities associated with BASE initiatives.”

Recipients of the Cavanaugh Scholarship will be full-time students in the School of Business Administration who actively participate in BASE-related programming. Recipients must maintain a 3.0 or better grade-point average to retain

the scholarship. Priority will be given to students from Mississippi who add to the diversity of the program, with first preference given to children of Ole Miss alumni.

The Harlene and Patrick Cavanaugh Scholarship Endowment is open to support from businesses and individuals. Gifts can be made by sending a check, with the fund’s name noted on the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655, or by giving online at give.olemiss.edu.

BY ALYSSA GARZA

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.

To learn more about BASE and how to get involved or support the program, contact Hughes Miller at hughes@olemiss.edu or 901-490-0622.



The Allain family: sister Camille (left), mom Jeanne, Jacques and dad Moe

Turning Tragedy into Hope

Endowment Honors Life of Young Alumnus

Last summer, the unthinkable happened to Jeanne and Moe Allain. Their son, Jacques, brother to Camille Allain, died unexpectedly at home in Houston, Texas, on July 24, 2022, at the age of 25.

Now the Allains are memorializing the 2020 University of Mississippi graduate with a new endowment in the School of Business Administration.

The Jacques Allain Memorial Scholarship Endowment will be awarded to freshmen from Texas or Louisiana enrolled in the business school and majoring in business administration or finance, the fields that Jacques Allain pursued during his time at the university.

The idea for the endowment came up as the Allain family recalled the experiences they had with Jacques when they visited Oxford.

“Whether we were attending an Ole Miss football or baseball game or gathering for a meal on the Square, it was always a good time,” Moe Allain said. “Jacques wanted to be great in his field, and I thought establishing a scholarship would be one of the best ways to remember him and honor his legacy forever.”

Jacques Allain had his eyes on Ole Miss from the first day he and his family visited for a tour. As a Louisiana native and Louisiana State University alumnus, Moe Allain wanted to steer his son in the direction of his alma mater, but his efforts were to no avail. As they drove back home to Houston, Jacques said he was sold on Ole Miss.

“He fell in love with the campus and the people, and we didn’t visit any other schools after that,” his father recalled.

While Jacques was a student at Ole Miss, his younger sister, Camille, attended the University

of Arkansas. They spent several weekends taking turns visiting each other's campuses, sharing SEC traditions they had learned and indulging in each other's favorite local food spots.

Jacques was heavily involved with the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, an organization that was entwined with his experience at Ole Miss. His dad said that the college student "would do anything for his friends."

"It didn't matter if his friend called him up at 2 o'clock in the morning," Moe Allain said. "We heard a lot of those stories when we were doing his Celebration of Life. There were some things we didn't know about. We didn't know how good of a friend he was until his friends told us. That was important for us to hear."

The fraternity also served as a gateway for Allain to volunteer in the local community, mentoring students at Lafayette and Oxford high schools through the nonprofit group Moneythink. He was a member of the Financiers Club through the business school, majoring in managerial finance and earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

Postgraduation, Jacques Allain continued to be entrenched in the world of finance, with his last position as a financial analyst for Sysco, a wholesale restaurant food distributor. He was excited by the role, regularly participating in calls with the chief financial officer of the multinational company, his parents said.

Jacques Allain knew how to have fun but equally took his studies seriously, his father said. For the scholarship, his parents hope to see it awarded to students who share similar qualities and have an interest in the financial field.

"We're hoping that the award winners embrace the field, pay it forward and also do some mentoring," Moe Allain said. "We really want them to make a mark in that field in the future."

An Ignite campaign, a crowdfunding platform through Ole Miss, began in May for the endowment, said Madison Drake, associate director of development for the UM School of Business Administration.

"They're such gracious people for having gone through this process," Drake said. "Jacques was involved on campus in many ways, and the campaign and endowment serve as a way to honor his life and contributions."

"By establishing the Jacques Allain Memorial Scholarship Endowment, the Allain family turned their tragedy into a way to help many deserving banking and finance students for years



SUBMITTED

Jacques Allain



We're hoping that the award winners embrace the field, pay it forward and also do some mentoring. We really want them to make a mark in that field in the future."

— MOE ALLAIN

to come," Drake added. "We are so grateful to the Allain family for their investment in the future of Ole Miss business students. Jacques' legacy will continue to live on through the creation of this endowment."

In addition to his academic success and accomplishments in business, the young man is remembered by his family for being a die-hard sports fan.

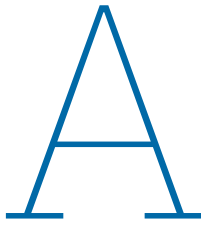
"We've incidentally adopted the Rebels as our college team now," Moe Allain said. "But our house has become quiet during the SEC football season and during the Astros season. We just miss him."

BY ANDY BELT

To make a gift to the Jacques Allain Memorial Scholarship Endowment, send a check with the fund's name noted in the memo line to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford MS 38655. For information, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development for the School of Business Administration, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.



School of
**Business
Administration**



At the heart of the University of Mississippi's School of Business Administration is the mission to produce exceptional business leaders today who will make a positive impact on the world tomorrow. We are proud of our top national rankings and more than 104 years of experience, and we continue to reach for higher and higher levels of excellence. Our deep commitment to preparing students for rewarding careers demands innovation, expertise and resources, and you can play a pivotal role by extending support during Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss.

The School of Business Administration has proven worthy of your investments. Over the last five years, our school has excelled more than ever with the impact of the career preparation initiative. According to our 2022 graduating survey, Ole Miss undergraduate business students reported average starting salaries of more than \$55,000. An impressive 95% of undergraduate students earn their diplomas and are employed or pursuing additional degrees, and 100% of Ph.D. program graduates are recruited to private industry, higher education and governmental positions.

The School of Business Administration is participating in Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss – with a goal of \$1.5 billion – the largest comprehensive campaign ever launched in Mississippi. This is the perfect moment in history for us to achieve something this university has never experienced. This transformational campaign will define our business school, our university and far beyond now and ever.

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

Be a part of fueling the momentum in the School of Business Administration for generations of Ole Miss business students to come. Today, you can make a gift online at **nowandever.olemiss.edu/schools-and-units/school-of-business-administration**. Gifts of all sizes combine to have a powerful impact!

We sincerely thank you for all your support.

Dean Ken Cyree

NOW & EVER

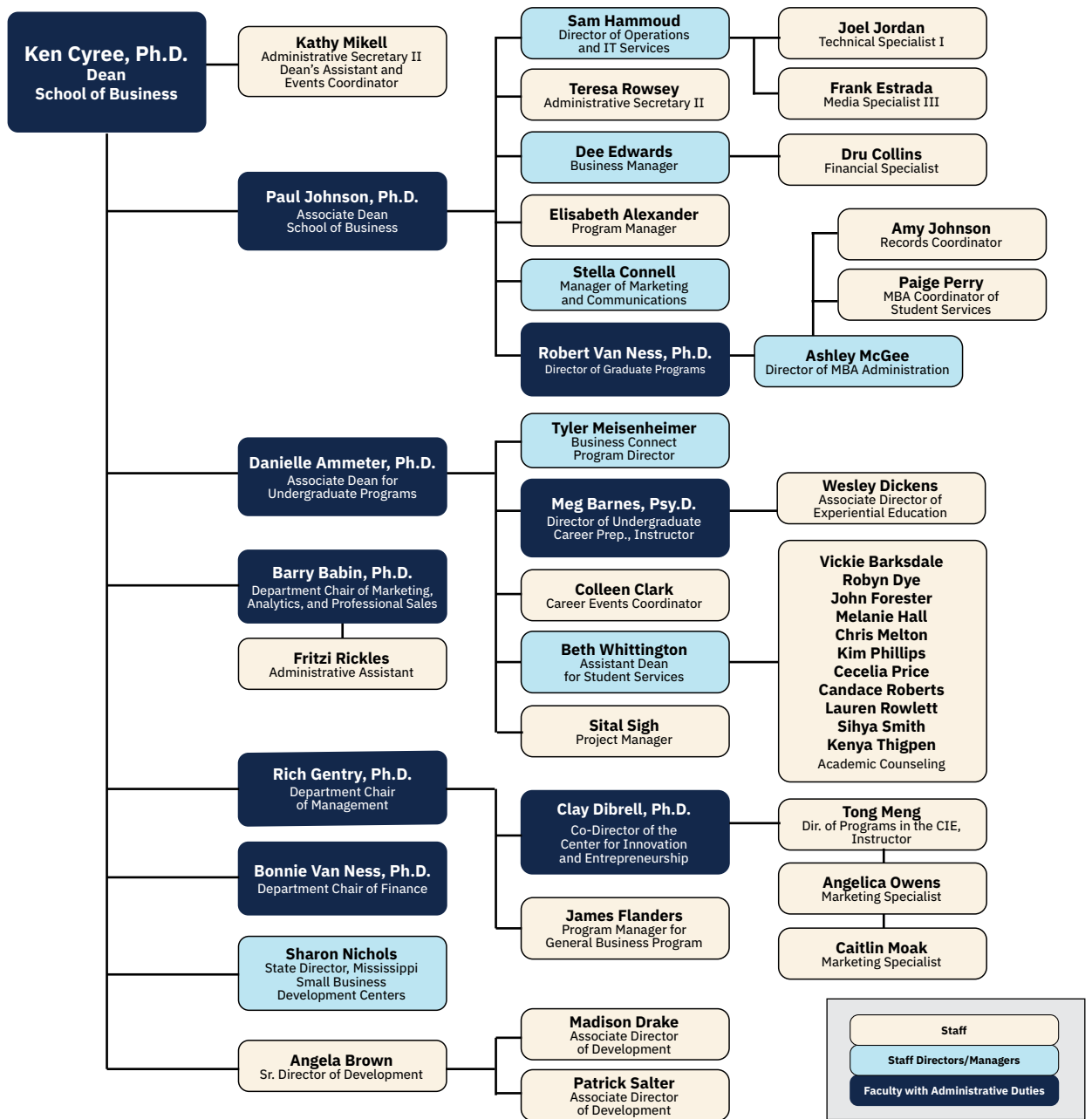
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For a full listing of faculty and staff, visit business.olemiss.edu



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