

Arts & Sciences will host Super Bulldog Weekend activities

Mississippi State will host its annual Super Bulldog Weekend April 9-11, 1999, and the College of Arts & Sciences' alumni and friends are invited to join in the festivities.

There are several athletic events scheduled for the weekend, including a three-game baseball series at Dudy Noble Field at Polk-DeMent Stadium against Southeastern Conference rival Alabama. Look for the Arts & Sciences tent near Polk-DeMent Stadium. The college will be serving free food Friday night, April 9, from 5 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., before the baseball game.

Watch the university's web site at www.msstate.edu, as well as the link to the College of Arts & Sciences' page



Super Bulldog Weekend once again promises to offer fun and excitement for A&S alumni and friends.

under the "Academics" button; the *Mississippi State Alumnus* magazine; and other news sources for final details.

For more information, contact Jan Peacock in the Arts & Sciences Dean's Office at 601-325-7095.

College of Arts & Sciences

1999 Alumnus of the Year



Cherri Musser (left) receives her 1999 Arts & Sciences Alumnus of the Year award from Dean Skip Saal.

By Lindsey McQueen

A 1973 mathematics graduate of Mississippi State is the College of Arts & Sciences' Alumnus of the Year for 1999.

Cherri M. Musser of Grosse Pointe Shores, Mich., received the honor at the annual Mississippi State Alumni Association's Awards Banquet in January.

Musser, who also holds a master's in business administration from Southern Methodist University, is process information officer for business systems for information systems and services at General Motors and is acting chief information officer for General Motors Europe.

In this position, she is responsible for providing world-class information technology applications for support staff activities at the corporate, business sector, and unit levels worldwide.

Musser joined General Motors in 1996 after 20 years with Texas Instruments, where she was vice president of worldwide research and development in the Software Division.

A note from the dean

We're almost two weeks into the new year as I compose my message to you for this issue of our newsletter, and I'm beginning to remember not to write 1998 when I date correspondence and personal checks. By the time you receive this issue, I hope I will have grasped the concept of 1999. In any event, let me take this opportunity to wish for you and all your loved ones a year filled with happiness and fulfillment. May it also be a year during which you re-establish or strengthen your connection with your major department and the College of Arts & Sciences at Mississippi State University.

I told you a little bit about the college's Advisory and Development Council in my message to you last fall. Consisting of Mr. "Brant" Brantley of Jackson; Dr. Will Coltharp of Nashville, Tenn.; Dr. Fred Corley of San Antonio, Texas; Dr. John Elliott of Tupelo; Mr. Newt Hamlin of Austin, Texas; Mr. Hugh Latimer of Jackson; and Mr. Jim Young of Dallas, Texas; this group convened on campus for two days last semester. Following some brief introductory remarks from President Malcolm Portera and some (considerably less brief) comments from yours truly, the group got down to work.

Based on a series of intense and thoughtful discussions, they recommended that we begin to take some meaningful steps toward establishing coherent plans to address such issues as technology, globalization, and communication in the context of the College of Arts & Sciences' teaching, research, and service missions at this great land-grant institution.

With the indispensable assistance of our two associate deans, Dr. George Buehler and Dr. Don Mabry, and the remainder of the staff in the Dean's Office, we have begun to assemble working groups that will be asked to present at least preliminary plans of action in their respective areas to the Advisory and Development Council members when they return in April.

I am very excited about the potential roles these groups can play as the college moves into the next millennium. If you have any suggestions or ideas for these folks, please share them with me, and I will pass the information along to the appropriate group(s). I will keep you informed



Members of the College of Arts & Sciences Advisory and Development Council who met on campus last fall include (front row, left to right) Newt Hamlin, Dr. Will Coltharp, and Brant Brantley; (back row, left to right) Jim Young, Dr. Fred Corley, Dr. John Elliot, and Hugh Latimer.

about future activities and innovations that result from their work.

As those of you who have been able to visit campus recently can attest, we are currently "enjoying" a significant amount of construction and renovation of buildings at MSU. Among those in the College of Arts & Sciences who are being influenced most directly are our colleagues in the departments of Chemistry, Geosciences, and Physics and Astronomy. The top two floors of Hand Laboratory are well on their way toward renovation, which will improve the conditions of many of our research laboratories. We are all hopeful that, before too long, similar renovations can begin on the two lower floors. Although our chemists are struggling with some inconveniences during this process, they have been able to continue most of their teaching and research activities in Hand Lab.

Our faculty and staff in Geosciences and Physics and Astronomy are being affected more dramatically by the renovation of Hilbun Hall. Forced to evacuate the building completely, most of the faculty and graduate student offices have been relocated temporarily to the fifth floor of Allen Hall (following the prior relocation of some of our colleagues in Business Affairs). They, of course, complain (quite reasonably) about having to work in such close proximity to the dean of Arts & Sciences (down on the second floor), and everyone is quite cramped. Laboratories have been temporarily relocated to Etheredge and Patterson halls. Despite these inconveniences, our faculty members have displayed a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to tolerate disruptions to their professional lives without missing a beat in

their efforts to provide our students with the best educational experiences available.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to all of our alumni and friends who have contributed financially to one or more of the academic units within the College of Arts & Sciences. In many cases, your assistance has made the difference between "just getting along" and being able to provide the kinds of special opportunities for our students that will enable them to remember their years at Mississippi State University with special pride and pleasure. In other instances, your generosity has directly enriched the life of a student by simply enabling him or her to attend MSU. I commend you for making such a difference in our students' lives, and I encourage you, whenever possible, to continue to make a difference by assisting us in whatever ways your interests and circumstances permit. Our students are our future, and I can think of no better place to invest our time, our talents, and our treasure.

As always, when your schedule permits, I hope you will include a trip to campus in your travel plans. When you do, please stop in to visit us in 238 Allen Hall. We'll be delighted to welcome you back to your alma mater and do whatever we can to make your visit more enjoyable.

All the best,

Skip Saal
Dean

Accomplished author serving as visiting English professor

By Lindsey McQueen

The English Department at Mississippi State currently is hosting two-year visiting Professor James Wilcox. A Louisiana native, Wilcox has published seven novels including *Modern Baptists* and *Plain and Normal*.

After completing undergraduate studies in English at Yale University in 1971, Wilcox joined Random House in New York as an editorial assistant. Under the direction of Albert Erskine, he was able to work with distinguished authors, including James Michener. Wilcox later moved to Doubleday, also in New York, as an associate editor.

After leaving Doubleday, Wilcox published his first short story, *The New Yorker*, and in 1983 completed his first novel, *Modern Baptists*. This novel was reprinted in paperback by Little, Brown, and Company earlier this year. Since that time, Wilcox has published six other novels.

In addition to writing, Wilcox continues to use his editing skills. Since 1989, he has been a guest speaker at the Radcliffe Publishing Seminar in Cambridge, Mass.

At Mississippi State, Wilcox instructs students in creative writing. He incorporates editing skills into his course, educating students to work creatively yet to maintain strong technical skills. He finds his position rewarding and is pleased it has a two-year duration.

"I am having a wonderful time," noted Wilcox. "The students have been quite responsive, and I feel big improvements have been made throughout the course of a semester within the classroom. It is a true pleasure to teach at this university."

Dr. Matthew Little, English Department head, is excited to have the opportunity to work with Wilcox.

"As both a colleague and a teacher, James Wilcox has brought new energies and valuable perspectives to the English Department," he said. "We are fortunate to have him here."

This spring, Wilcox is highlighting the relationship between literature and publishing in the class he is teaching. With a full year left to continue teaching at Mississippi State, he looks forward to working with students to improve their English skills.

Wilcox is participating in a program sponsored primarily by alumnus and best-selling novelist John Grisham. The two-year appointment is receiving supplementary funding from the College of Arts & Sciences and the Office of the Provost.



Visiting professor James Wilcox has authored seven novels.

Physics and Astronomy to host regional meeting

By Bryna Martin

The Department of Physics and Astronomy will host the annual meeting of the Southeastern Section of the American Physical Society (SESAPS) on Nov. 4, 2000.

"This is the first time for this meeting to be held at Mississippi State University and the first time in Mississippi in 58 years," said Dr. Rodney Piercey, head of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Piercey also is chairman of the local organizing committee for SESAPS.

According to Piercey, physical scientists and students from across the Southeast and speakers from around the world will attend. The meeting will include scientific sessions to present research papers and special sessions for physics demonstrations. It will conclude with an awards banquet for those who participate.

SESAPS sessions will be held at several campus locations.

"We are looking forward to hosting visitors in the newly remodeled Hilbun Hall, which is scheduled for completion by the year 2000," added Piercey.

This year, Mississippi State has received additional recognition from the SESAPS organization.

A former head of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Dr. Irl Howell, was honored with the special George B. Pegram Award. This award is presented to those who have made outstanding contributions to the teaching of physics in the Southeast.

Howell, a longtime member of SESAPS, came to Mississippi State in 1948. He is known for actively promoting physics education and research.

"Dr. Howell is the father of our Physics Department," noted Piercey. "He has been a mentor for many of us, and we are all proud of him."

For more information regarding the SESAPS Conference 2000, contact Piercey at 601-325-2806.

Promise Keepers

is subject of professor's research

By Bryna Martin



Dr. John Bartkowski's research on the Promise Keepers provides valuable insight into the organization.

In-depth research on the Promise Keepers (PK) organization provided valuable insight to Dr. John Bartkowski, assistant professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work.

Bartkowski began his research three years ago while working on his dissertation on evangelical Protestant families at the University of Texas in Austin. Within that time and during the summer of 1998, he had the opportunity to interview several members in the Promise Keepers organization.

“One of the most striking features of the Promise Keepers is the group’s emphasis on male family leadership,” said Bartkowski. “However, to most of the Promise Keepers with whom I interacted, leadership entails a husband’s family involvement and responsibility for others in the household rather than uncontested decision-making power.

“Interestingly, some of the men talk about ‘mutual submission’ within their marriages even though they understand themselves to be the family leader.”

Bartkowski explained that Promise Keepers encourages men to be “godly leaders” within their families. For many involved, such language seems to facilitate personal transformation and helps them to become more committed family members.

The seven promises of the organization build this foundation. These promises are commitments made by members on issues including race and denomination, honoring Jesus Christ, obedience to the Great Commandment and Great Commission, marriage

and family leadership, missions, and accountability.

“My research reveals that these promises are able to be interpreted and applied differently by various types of men in Promise Keepers,” offered Bartkowski. “Consequently, the ways in which these men seek to put the promises into practice within their own homes vary among families.

“Ideological diversity is one key to this organization’s rapid membership growth. A degree of diversity, of course, is necessary for many organizations that hope to flourish in a multicultural society.”

Bartkowski mentioned one advantage of the Promise Keepers is that it is an international group.

“Although I personally have reservations about the language of male family leadership invoked by some Promise Keepers authors or speakers, I think many of these members’ goals are admirable,” said Bartkowski. “For many of these men, denominational and racial barriers are being broken down, or at least challenged. The Promise Keepers strive to balance both diversity and unity.”

According to Bartkowski, many men who affiliate with Promise Keepers contend that they have experienced great spiritual and personal growth after becoming a member.

“Yet, these same individuals are quick to report that they still have to work hard at becoming ‘godly’ men,” explained Bartkowski. Accountability groups are one key method used to help men in their efforts to become “godly leaders.”

“What has surprised me the most about this study is the honesty and transparency these men display in talking with me about their personal struggles,” said Bartkowski. “Some of the men report that it is initially difficult for them to recognize that they need the help of their PK ‘brothers’ to deal with the challenges they face in their lives. In fact, I was not prepared for the level of emotional openness and honesty I found in their meetings.

“I have a great respect for the men I interviewed, many of whom are working together to build more meaningful relationships with each other, as well as with their friends and family members.”

Bartkowski said that he hopes his research will lead to more fruitful, political dialogue about groups like Promise Keepers.

Despite rumors that Promise Keepers has disbanded, this organization remains in operation and continues to thrive. Bartkowski explains that although the group experienced some financial shortfalls when deciding not to charge an admission fee for their 1998 stadium conferences, donors have since offered contributions that have kept the Promise Keepers solvent and growing.

For more information concerning Bartkowski’s Promise Keepers research, contact him at 601-325-2495.

Ahmad looks to the future as new math and statistics head

By Stacey Lentz

Though he has just begun to settle into the position of department head, Dr. Shair Ahmad already has goals in mind and a positive attitude about the future of Math and Statistics.

"The department is already well-established with many well-known mathematicians," Ahmad said. "I simply want to build on what is already here, recruiting more students and top faculty members."

Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, Ahmad brings much experience to the Math and Statistics Department. He has received 20 research grants since 1977, and his research has appeared in more than 50 scholarly journals. Most recently, he held positions at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where he was director of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics from 1989 to 1995 and professor of mathematics from 1995 to 1998.

While at Oklahoma State University during the '70s, Ahmad helped establish master's and doctoral programs at universities in Venezuela, where he

received a medal for his contributions to higher education. He has directed more than 10 doctoral dissertations and holds positions on the editorial boards of several mathematical and statistical journals.

After spending almost every summer since 1980 visiting universities in South America and Europe, Ahmad remarked that if the faculty were interested, he would like the department to begin interacting with universities in other countries.

"I hope to encourage interaction between faculty here and those in Europe," Ahmad said. "We can then pass this on to students."

Ahmad will consider an exchange of students and faculty between Mississippi State and universities in other countries, which will help the department become more familiar with alternate ways of teaching and of conducting research. It also would give visibility to the department and attract more faculty and students.

"I am interested in our students'



Dr. Shair Ahmad is the new head of the Department of Math and Statistics.

involvement with others in order to gain different perspectives," said Ahmad.

"It's helpful for students to be aware of how things are done in other countries."

Ahmad, who received his bachelor's and master's degrees in math from the University of Utah and his Ph.D. in math from Case Western Reserve University, said that he has had a smooth transition to Mississippi State and the Starkville community.

"People have been so cooperative and everything is moving along beautifully," he said. "I find Mississippi to be quite impressive. My wife and I have never been any place where people are so polite and courteous."

Faculty Kudos to . . .



Ann Wiltrout

Foreign Languages professor receives honor

Dr. Ann E. Wiltrout, professor of foreign languages, was named the 1998 Mississippi State University Humanities Teacher of the Year in October by the Mississippi Humanities Council.

The council presents the award annually to an educator from the departments of Archaeology, Art, Communication, English, Foreign Languages, History, Philosophy and Religion, or Political Science.

MSU faculty members associated with the Institute for the Humanities select the winner.

continued next page

Faculty Kudos to . . .

Grisham Master Teacher awards presented

Best-selling author and Mississippi State alumnus John Grisham was on campus last fall to present five Grisham Master Teacher awards, including three to members of the Arts & Sciences faculty.

Those Arts & Sciences faculty members receiving awards were Dr. Richard B. Wolf, English; Dr. Marion B. Couvillion, Communication; and Dr. Karen S. Coats, Biological Sciences.

Each Master Teacher receives \$7,500 and is responsible for conducting workshops and other instructional improvement activities for other faculty members.



Author and MSU alumnus John Grisham (third from right) presented the five Grisham Master Teacher awards for 1998. Grisham Master Teachers are (left to right) Dr. Richard B. Wolf, English; Dr. Linda W. Morse, Educational Psychology; Dr. Steven H. Bullard, Forestry; Dr. Marion B. Couvillion, Communication; and Dr. Karen S. Coats, Biological Sciences.



Paul Grootker

Professor named best in state by national group

Dr. Paul Grootker, professor of art, was selected as part of the U.S. Professors of the Year Program sponsored annually by the Carnegie Foundation of the Advancement for Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Faculty members in 47 states were selected for this year's awards from among more than 500 nominees. They were evaluated in four areas: impact on and involvement with undergraduate students; scholarly approach to teaching; service to undergraduate students, institution, community, and profession; and support from colleagues and students.

Begun in 1981, the tribute by the Washington, D.C.-based organizations is the only nationwide effort to honor college-level instructors.

A 20-year member of the faculty, Grootker previously received a national Burlington Northern Foundation Achievement Award for Teaching Excellence. He also has been honored with the MSU Alumni Association's Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award, the University Honors Program Outstanding Faculty Member Award, and the College of Arts & Sciences' Paideia Award for Teaching Excellence.

Pen pal program expands students' experiences

By Lauren King

French IV students this semester at Mississippi State had the opportunity to participate in a video pen-pal exchange with students from Quebec, Canada.

Normand Boisvert, English professor from Trois Rivieres in the Province of Quebec, suggested the project to Robert Raymond, a Mississippi State French lecturer.

According to Raymond, the students sent videos to each other on which they

spoke in their native languages. The students also wrote letters. The letters were translated and a response returned. Boisvert's classes wrote in their native French, while Raymond's students wrote in English.

In addition to introducing themselves on the videos, the students included information about the areas where they live.

Raymond said his students were excited to receive their letters and took turns reading and translating them in class.

Several of Raymond's students will be participating in the Study Abroad Program in Quebec this summer and hope to be able to meet their Canadian friends in person.

Society of Scholars inducts new members

By Lauren King

The Society of Scholars in the College of Arts & Sciences was inspired by Dr. Ed McGlone, a former dean of the college. McGlone recognized the need within the college and university for a society which highlighted excellent undergraduate students. Since then, membership has been extended to students in majors throughout the entire university.

Requirements for membership are more stringent than those outlined for Phi Beta Kappa members. Membership in the Society of Scholars is only extended to students who have completed 12 hours of a single foreign language, 12 hours in mathematics and sciences, nine hours in oral and written communication, six hours in social sciences, and six hours in humanities. The most important criterion for selection is the grade-point average in courses taken by the student at Missis-

sippi State. The number of honorees in a given year must not exceed 8 percent of the graduating senior class of the College of Arts & Sciences.

The society began with only 21 charter members, but since then approximately 400 students have been honored with membership.

The spring 1998 inductees were:

Rhonda G. Binns, International Business and Foreign Languages; Jeremy Alan Blaylock, Political Science; Jack T. Brinkley III, Microbiology; Brandon Russell Butler, Computer Engineering; Patricia Ellyn Clay, Psychology; Ginger Wigington Cross, Psychology; Bridget Delane Dalton, Marketing; Shea Davis, Microbiology; Stephanie M. Easterling, English Education; Bethany Carol Gipson, Microbiology; Brad Holley, Art; Jeremy Don Jackson, Microbiology; David Matthew Kittrell, English; Yuk-Mei

Rebecca Lam, Biological Engineering; Jessica Laura Lightsey, Psychology; Benjamin James Makamson, Biological Sciences; Kathleen F. H. Naughton, Pre-Nursing; Junrui Hench Qian, Computer Science and Math; and Myra Dawn Vowell, Elementary Education.

The fall 1998 inductees were:

Allen Wayne Bryan Jr., Physics; William Covington Buchanan Jr., Microbiology; Mary Margaret Carley, Communication; Shawn Cooke, Foreign Languages; Elizabeth Marie Hartman, Microbiology; Laurie Jones, Secondary Education; Kelly Lucas, Microbiology; Mandy Mann, Communication; Katherine McGill, Music Education; Catherine C. Neill, Art; Crystal Pearson, Psychology; Elizabeth Sessions, Business Administration; Richard Simpson, Biological Sciences; and Christian Williamson, Anthropology.

University receives Truman honor

Mississippi State is among five universities and colleges being honored for producing Harry S. Truman National Scholars.

The university is the only one in the South recognized by the Washington, D.C.-based Truman Scholarship Foundation for "sustained success" in helping students both to win the \$30,000 competitive awards and to prepare for public service careers.

The Department of Political Science coordinates the university's Truman Scholarships effort.

Congress established the foundation in 1975 as the official federal memorial to America's 33rd president. Usually drawing some 800 nominees, the scholarships support graduate study for 75 individuals with demonstrated leadership potential and a desire to serve the public.

Since 1980, Mississippi State has produced 14 Truman Scholars.

Other Truman Honor Institutions include Columbia University, Dartmouth College, University of Chicago, and Claremont McKenna College.

The awards committee considered nearly 500 institutions that have produced scholars over the past two decades.

Student Kudos to . . .

Two foreign languages students honored

Alba L. “Abby” Velasquez of Jackson and Elizabeth Sessions of Woodville, both seniors in the College of Arts & Sciences, were honored by the Mississippi International Business Scholarship Founda-

tion. They each received \$2,500 scholarships for the 1998-99 school year from the Raymond-based international business foundation.

Velasquez is completing a double major in marketing and Spanish.

Sessions’ double major is accounting and German. Both are President’s Scholars and University Honors Program members who have studied overseas: Velasquez in Costa Rica and Sessions in Costa Rica and Germany.

Student wins international graphic design award

Emily R. Garrick, a senior from Grenada, holds the highest honor given to a U.S. student in a worldwide graphic design competition.

Garrick, a graphic design/art major, is the 1998 Gold Award winner in the

Agfa-Bayer International Young Designer Contest, which invited entries depicting graphic realizations of popular songs. Her design of Bob Dylan’s *The Times They Are A-Changin* was selected by an international jury of journalists

and designers from among some 500 participants worldwide.

Garrick was the only Gold Award winner for the United States. She received a \$1,000 scanner from Agfa.

Student wins major national sorority grant

A graduate student from Florence, Ala., is among nine recipients of a \$5,000 national grant from Zeta Tau Alpha social sorority.

Andrea Porter, who is seeking a master’s degree in English, was awarded a Della Lewis Hundley

Founders Grant for the second consecutive year.

Named for the sorority’s nine founding members, the grants are awarded annually to Zeta members based on academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and service to the sorority.

After graduating from Coffee High School in 1992, Porter went on to earn bachelor’s degrees in English and psychology from the University of North Alabama.

Noted author to give first Zacharias Lecture

American author Stephen Ambrose will visit the Mississippi State campus Thursday, April 15, to discuss “The Friendship of Lewis and Clark.”

The presentation in the McComas Hall Theatre is based on his *New York Times* bestseller, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*.

Ambrose was invited to campus by President Emeritus Donald Zacharias to serve as speaker for the inaugural Tommie and Donald Zacharias Lecture Series.

“I’ve admired Stephen Ambrose for many years and can think of no finer honor than to have him initiate this lectureship series in the College of Arts & Sciences,” said Zacharias, who is director of the John Grisham Library on campus.

In addition to writing several well-known historical books, Ambrose served as a historical consultant for Golden Globe Award winner Stephen Spielberg’s movie *Saving Private Ryan*. He also has been interviewed on *The Today Show*, National Public Radio, and Cable News Network.

The presentation will start at 7 p.m., and admission is free.

Donald Zacharias was Mississippi State’s 15th president, serving from 1985 until his retirement in 1997.

Mattox named college's Alumni Fellow for 1998

By Lauren King



Bill Mattox

William (Bill) C. Mattox of Arlington, Va., is the 1998 Alumni Fellow for the College of Arts & Sciences.

Mattox received his bachelor's and master's degrees in Political Science from Mississippi State in 1972 and 1973, respectively. He received a law degree from the Antioch School of Law in 1984. He also has completed work toward a master's degree in business administration at George Washington University.

A native of Tupelo, Mattox presently is serving as executive vice president of federal government affairs for the Mutual of Omaha Companies. Before joining Mutual of Omaha in 1990, he served as vice president and director of federal relations for the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. Also, he served as a chief legislative assistant and a press assistant to U.S. representatives.

Mattox currently serves on the board of advisors for Insurance Tax Review and as chairman of the Health Insurance Association of America's Federal Legislative Strategy Group. In addition, he is a guest lecturer for the School of Public Affairs at George Washington University.

Sponsored by the Mississippi State University Alumni Association, the Alumni Fellows Program began in 1990 and recognizes alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers. Alumni Fellows are selected by a committee of distinguished faculty and administrators from their respective colleges or schools. They are then invited to campus to meet with students and faculty in classrooms and in informal settings.

Mattox says his time at Mississippi State "taught me leadership skills and gave me the ability to be a better listener and speaker. I am proud of my time as vice president of the student body, and I have fond memories of my experiences in Phi Gamma Delta fraternity."

Mattox and his wife, Barbara, have two children: Ben, 8, and Claire, 6.

Retiree returns to MSU for master's degree

By Lindsey McQueen

Mississippi State's commitment to excellence depends heavily on a student's desire for an education. For many, learning is simply a task necessary to acquire a degree. Yet some earnestly seek knowledge.

Rowan Taylor, a recent graduate with a master's degree in history, enjoys gaining wisdom only an extensive education can provide. He began this quest in 1942 when he enrolled at Mississippi State as a freshman. After only two semesters, he left college to join the U.S. Navy, yet he continued to pursue academics during World War II. A graduate of Mississippi College, Taylor was admitted to that institution's school of law shortly after the war. Upon graduation, the attorney then began to pursue a master's in business administration.

After retiring as chairman and chief executive officer of Mississippi Valley Title Insurance Co., Taylor's lifelong love for learning led him back to Mississippi State. What began as a partial commute from Jackson led to a master's degree in



Last fall, Rowan Taylor (left) was on campus to present the first of four \$10,000 scholarships the Jackson resident has made available for students in the university's Department of History. With Taylor is scholarship recipient Jennifer B. Kimble of Hattiesburg and department head Charles Lowery.

history last fall. Along with the concentrated workload of a student pursuing a graduate degree, Taylor continued to hold positions on several distinguished boards throughout the state, including the State Board of Education, the Board of Trustees at Millsaps College, and the board of directors of Laurel-based Sanderson Farms.

Taylor's commitment to Mississippi State goes beyond his own education. He actively serves on the board of directors of the Mississippi State University

Foundation and has made financial contributions to several departments within the university.

Educators strive to instill the importance of an education to students every day. History Department head Charles Lowery agrees that it is rewarding to find their efforts successful in persons such as Rowan Taylor.

"Rowan is an exceptional student of history," noted Lowery. "Keenly intelligent, broadly read, inquisitive, and always seeking new intellectual challenges, he brings to his studies a lifetime of learning and a wealth of experiences rarely seen among our students."

Arts & Sciences Developments

The following alumni and friends of the College of Arts & Sciences made gifts of \$10,000 or more to the college between August 1, 1998, and December 31, 1998.

- **Stephen D. Lee Society**
\$500,000 and above

Anonymous (1).

- **Torchbearers**
\$50,000 to \$99,999

Anonymous (1) and Dr. Judy and Mr. Newt F. Hamlin Jr. of Buda, Texas.

- **President's Club**
\$10,000 to \$49,999

Anonymous (2); Dr. and Mrs. John Elliott Jr. of Tupelo; Mr. and Mrs. B. Keith Heard of Washington, D.C.; Mr. and Mrs. Mickey Holliman of Belden; Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Huffman of Houston, Texas; Dr. Samuel D. Newell Jr. of Belden; Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal of Tupelo; Phi Kappa Phi of Mississippi State University; and Ms. Vonna L. Zellner of Roswell, Ga.

Making a Difference

The Patrons of Excellence recognizes alumni and friends who contribute or pledge to contribute \$1,000 a year to Mississippi State. The College of Arts & Sciences appreciates its alumni and friends who have joined the Patrons of Excellence between August 1, 1998, and December 31, 1998. Those joining or renewing memberships include:

Anonymous (1); Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Barron of Covington, La.; Mr. and Mrs. Frankie Box of Madison; Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Boykin of Jackson; Mr. and Mrs. Luther Brantley III of Jackson; Dr. and Mrs. H. Dean Bunch of Starkville; Mr. and Mrs. Steve Carter of Caledonia; Dr. and Mrs. John C. Clay of Meridian; Dr. William Coltharp of Nashville, Tenn.; Dr. Krissten N. Cooper of St. Augustine, Fla.; Dr. and Mrs. David Cornell of Norwalk, Ohio; Drs. Linda and William Cornell of Milan, Ohio; Dr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Cosby of Starkville; Dr. and Mrs. Dominic Cunetto of Starkville; Dr. Vincent De Santis of Notre Dame, Ind.; Mr. and Mrs. David Donald of Jennings, La.; Mr. Stephen E. Duran of Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. Lonnie S. Dyess of Meridian; Dr. and Mrs. John P. Elliott Jr. of Tupelo; Mr. and Mrs. Warren Ferguson of Kosciusko; Dr. and Mrs. James Flanagan of Warren, N.J.; Mr. and Mrs. James R. Gibson of Wilmington, Del.; Grand Casinos Inc. of Minnetonka, Minn.; Ms. Gretchen Gulmon of Jackson; Mr. Fred Guyton of St. Louis, Mo.; Mr. and Mrs. Samuel P. Guyton of Lakewood, Colo.; Mr. and Mrs. Marion B. Harris of Midlothian, Va.; Mr. and Mrs. Emil W. Holiner of San Antonio, Texas; Dr. and Mrs. E. Irl Howell of Pensacola, Fla.; Dr. Marian Huttenstine of Mississippi State; Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Latimer of Jackson; Dr. and Mrs. Donald Mabry of Starkville; Mr. and Mrs. Will Manuel of Brandon; Dr. and Mrs. John F. Marszalek of Starkville; Mr. J. C. Patton of Starkville; Dr. Gwen Perkins of Starkville; Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Pratt of Nashville, Tenn.; Dr. and Mrs. William Priester of Memphis, Tenn.; Drs. George and Clyda Rent of Columbus; Mr. Jason Robinson of West Point; Mrs. Eloise C. Sheely of Jackson; Ms. Lisa Smith of Orlando, Fla.; Mr. O. M. Stuart of Clinton; Drs. Richard and Patricia Weddle of Brandon; Mr. and Mrs. Bud West of Laurel; and Mr. and Mrs. Hilburn Womble of De Kalb.

AlumNEWS

Eugene Sumter Towles ('36) of Starkville is a retired coach of Sewanee Military Academy, St. Andrew's School, and Columbia, all located in Tennessee.

Martin B. Harthcock ('40) of Raymond and his wife were volunteer hosts for Alaskan State Parks stationed at Homer, Alaska.

Joseph R. West ('72) of Bossier City, La., is a lab manager for the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant. His son, Joseph, is a chemistry major at Centenary College in Shreveport.

Patsy Johnson Bowen ('74) of Placida, Fla., works with Duffy's Realty Station in Port Charlotte, Fla., and is involved in the development of golf courses, Ranchette subdivisions, and bulk land sales.

Margaret Moore Acosta ('75) of Winnfield, La., received a master's degree in secondary school counseling from Louisiana Tech University and is employed at Dodson High School as a senior guidance counselor. She and her husband, Tony, have two daughters, Adrienne and Angeline.

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• AlumNEWS •

Chris Bailey ('75) of Loveland, Colo., has two children, John, 12, and George, 3. She received her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. She has been employed as a psychiatric nurse at San Francisco General Hospital and as an intensive medical nurse at L.A. County/USC Medical Center in Los Angeles.

George "Duke" Loden ('79) of Belden is director for Community Enterprises in Tupelo, where he sells real estate and manages industrial warehouses.

Robin Elyse Blackledge Blair ('81) of Laurel joined the law firm of Bryant Clark in Hattiesburg as an associate specializing in civil litigation. Previously, she practiced in Minneapolis, Minn.

Michael H. Gooszen ('86) of Shreveport, La., graduated from the University of Mississippi Medical School in 1990 and completed his residency in internal medicine at the Ochsner Medical Foundation in 1993. He currently is a fellow in cardiology at the Louisiana State University Medical Center in Shreveport.

Thea Newton Morris ('86) of New Bern, N.C., is the owner of Thea's Ideas and joined her father in the promotional products and advertising specialties industries. Together, they have more than 45 years in the business.

Thomas Jay Dees ('87) of Olive Branch has been a feature reporter at WHBQ Fox 13 since November 1995. Tom and wife Cathy are the proud parents of a daughter, Allyssa Kay, born on Sept. 22, 1997.

Joy Heard Rhoads ('88) of Jackson and her husband, Chuck, are the proud parents of a son, Christopher Charles, born Sept. 28, 1998.

John A. Conway III ('89) of Jackson married Laurie Poe Conway (agriculture and life sciences, '87) and they have a son, Benjamin, 5, and a daughter, Julia Rivers, who was born Aug. 10, 1998.

Melissa Ann Jones ('90) of Emporia, Kan., became the director of admissions at Emporia State University in July 1998. She formerly was a recruitment specialist at Mississippi State University.

Kristi Vandeveld Brown ('92) of Starkville recently was named assistant director of enrollment services at Mississippi State.

Indy Savage Chesis ('92) of Rocky Mount, N.C., is a staff psychologist for the Developmental Evaluation Center. She administers psychological tests on infants and children to determine their functioning level and assists in educational placements. She gave birth to her first child, Brett, on Oct. 29, 1998.

Julie Ormon Henderson ('92) of Olive Branch is a communications supervisor for Medshares Inc. in Memphis, Tenn. She gave birth to a son, James Ransom, on Sept. 28, 1998.

Christopher D. Tunson ('92) of Smyrna, Ga., has been accepted into law school. His expected date of graduation is December 2000.

Staci Shumpert Beville ('93) of Tupelo is an attorney for Tubbs Law Firm. She has a daughter, Tanner Elizabeth.

Denise McDonald Cospers ('93) of Starkville is publications editor for the Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State. She formerly was institutional advancement writer for the Office of University Relations at MSU.

Patricia Vieira Wilson ('93) of Memphis, Tenn., is a freelance graphic designer. She and her husband, John, have a daughter, Ana Carol.

Christopher David Bryan ('95) of Jackson recently was promoted to supervisor of individual accounts with Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Mississippi. He married Leta K. Bozone (agriculture and life sciences, '94) on Aug. 22, 1998.

Rozlyn Anne Zuber ('95) of Jackson is the community planning coordinator for the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Thomas Duane Gordon ('96) of Canton recently was promoted to news editor for the *Madison County Journal* in Ridgeland. He has received nine Mississippi Press Association awards in his two years at the weekly newspaper.

Kim Richardson Moore ('96) of Brandon is the project assistant for Buckle for Life in the Emergency Medical Technology Department at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Brian Scott Shirley ('96) of Corinth is the proud father of a daughter, Madeline Grace, born March 17, 1998.

Roseann Hamby Walker ('96) of Madison graduated from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in occupational therapy in May 1998. She recently married John Lawrence Walker Jr. (engineering, '95) in June 1998.

William Tolbert Dalton III ('97) of Boone, N.C., is finishing a master's degree in clinical psychology at Appalachian State University.

We want your news!

Webster's Dictionary defines renaissance as "to be born anew." In a way, this newsletter for College of Arts & Sciences alumni and friends is a "rebirth" of newsletters produced in the past. Over the next few issues of *Renaissance*, you will see us grow and change. As we grow, we want you to grow with us! We have begun including in *Renaissance* information on the accomplishments of our alumni and friends. We would like to include you in the next issue. Please use the form below to send us information about career changes, recognitions received, and other news you would like to share with your former classmates, friends, and professors. Just complete this form and return it to the address provided and we will include it in a future issue of *Renaissance*.

Clip and mail to: **Dr. Frank E. "Skip" Saal, P.O. Box AS, Mississippi State, MS 39762-5543, or e-mail information to: skipsaal@deanas.msstate.edu**

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Renaissance is published twice a year for the alumni and friends of the College of Arts & Sciences at Mississippi State University. If you would like more information about the programs in the College of Arts & Sciences, have any questions or suggestions, or if you have a submission for the newsletter, please contact:

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