

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
HONORS REPORT

FALL 2017





Douglass Sullivan-González

From the **DEAN**

When we think back to 1997 and marvel at the changes in our university's academic culture, all eyes turn to the transformation of the Honors Program into what would become the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. Twenty years ago, a class of 121 young scholars became the pioneers of a program that would yield nearly 1,400 applications for the entering class of 430 students in fall 2017. These honors students have transformed the campus and changed all of us who have taught and worked with them along the way. Graciousness.

That one word captures the moment when we all look back on the joy of working with all our honors students who took the risk and walked the extra mile to engage in ideas and challenges in the SMBHC. From the renowned Freshman Ventures to the Junior Quest to the SMBHC fall and spring convocations, from the research experiences in laboratories to the famous Barksdale awards, we have witnessed an evolution of the University Scholars and Honors Program into one of the nation's elite honors colleges. Our professors have made this moment happen. Our staff has worked hard each day for the prize, and our alumni have stepped forward to ensure the future.

We are at the cusp of even greater heights of academic adventure and prowess. Our celebration of the 20th anniversary of the SMBHC reminds us that we must dream of what we will be 20 years from now and calls on us to make that moment possible for the young first-year students who enter our great university in August 2037.

Sustain the SMBHC with your gifts, with your good words and deeds, and let's thank all who have made this moment possible through their contributions.

Thank you for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have served as your dean during this breathtaking growth and transformation. I look forward to our journey together toward our silver anniversary in 2022.

Douglass Sullivan-González



'Horse'
Nakiyah Jordan

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SMBHC Fall Convocation

Tues., Sept. 12, Ford Center, 7 p.m.
Keynote speaker:
Fred Smith, FedEx

SMBHC Spring Convocation

Tues., Feb. 20, Ford Center, 7 p.m.
Keynote speaker:
Katie Ford, Freedom for All

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A Year to Remember

BRUCE LEVINGSTON

It has been another exciting and inspirational year at the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. Our students have continued to engage in lively discussions on major issues of the day and had the opportunity to meet a number of this era's most important cultural figures. In my own class, *Art and the Republic*, we regularly discuss how art influences, and is influenced by, important events occurring in our world. I often invite unique individuals from varying fields of creativity to discuss their work or art with my students. These occasions allow students the opportunity to interact directly with living artists and figures who regularly grapple with the complex issues we study and discuss.

During this past year, one of our special guests included Philip Jackson, the brilliant painter whose beautiful work is featured on the cover of this issue of the *Honors Report*. Philip, a renowned professor at the University of Mississippi and a leading American artist of his generation, shared with our students a broad survey of artwork from several centuries and demonstrated how each work reflects issues that impacted its creator's own distinct era, including many of the same types of social, economic, cultural and political issues we confront today.

Another highlight of the year was David Rockefeller Jr.'s visit to our campus. A longtime friend, David has served as chairman of both the Rockefeller Foundation and Rockefeller Brothers Fund, as well as on the board of Sailors for the Sea, which supports the protection of our waters and oceans.

David is also passionate about music and is a superb singer and narrator. He and I performed Richard Strauss' melodrama of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Enoch Arden." He narrated the richly complex and deeply touching poem, while I accompanied him on piano.

After the performance, David toured the campus and was able to visit Faulkner's beautiful home Rowan Oak as well as our own history-laden Lyceum. He also took the time to meet members of my class and other



Bruce Levingston (Photo by Tony Notarberardino)

gifted students from the Honors College. David candidly answered a broad field of questions about the world and discussed the advantages of our students encountering a diversity of backgrounds and ethnicities in their learning environment. He emphasized that encountering diversity is a vital way to prepare to understand, function and succeed in today's global environment.

David also engaged in a frank discussion about conservation throughout the world with particular emphasis on saving our oceans. This was of special interest to our students since the Honors College has been involved in developing the Mississippi Water Security Institute to study ways to protect and enhance our country's water resources.

Our Spring Convocation was equally exciting and featured the Oscar-nominated filmmaker Sam Green and acclaimed animator Brent Green showing their mind-blowing short films accompanied by live performances with their amazing band. Our students loved this blend of cutting-edge cinema and live music. The band was even kind enough to let me sit in on a set!

We are also looking forward to this academic year and celebrating the Honors College's 20th

anniversary. Fred Smith, the legendary and inspiring founder of Federal Express, will be our guest speaker for the 2017 Fall Convocation.

The guest speaker for our 2018 Spring Convocation will be my dear friend Katie Ford, the former CEO of Ford Models and founder and chair of Freedom for All, a nonprofit organization that confronts and fights human trafficking and slavery throughout the world. Katie will share her vast knowledge and experiences dealing with the ongoing issues of human trafficking and her unique perspective serving as head of one of the world's largest and most successful modeling agencies.

On a personal note, I will be releasing my seventh solo album titled "Windows" in January 2018, and will also appear in a solo concert at Carnegie Hall on April 9, 2018, where I will premiere newly commissioned works that

celebrate the bicentennial of Mississippi and the opening of our state's newly constructed Civil Rights Museum and Museum of Mississippi History. I hope you will be able to hear and enjoy these beautiful works that commemorate some of the most important moments in our state's history.

It is a special honor and privilege to be part of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. It is a unique and wonderful place where we all come together to learn and grow and share ideas that guide us for the rest of our lives.



Chancellor's Honors College Artist in Residence
Holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair



David Rockefeller Jr. speaks with Bruce Levingston's Art and the Republic class and guests in the SMBHC. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



Bruce Levingston performs with Brent Green and his band during 'Live Cinema.' (Photo by Kevin Bain)



David Rockefeller Jr. and Honors College Artist in Residence Bruce Levingston perform 'Enoch Arden' at Nutt Auditorium. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



Founder and chair of Freedom for All and former CEO of Ford Models **Katie Ford** will be the SMBHC 2018 Spring Convocation speaker.



Bruce Levingston's new solo piano album 'Windows' will be released Jan. 26, 2018.

WATCH ONLINE:

Fall Honors Convocation with Ken Burns at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts: [youtube.com/watch?v=YD3VJKB_d9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YD3VJKB_d9w)

Bruce Levingston performing Nocturne in B-flat minor, Op. 9, No. 1 by Chopin: [youtube.com/watch?v=RSEhW5Lot0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSEhW5Lot0A)

ABOUT THE COVERS:

'Transitory Spaces:
Flower & Fragments'
and 'Transitory Spaces:
Pear, Apples and Cherries'
by **Philip Jackson**

Associate Professor of Art
UM Department of Art

See more on page 59.

Meet our SMBHC FEATURED ARTISTS



Bethany Fitts is an honors junior from Tupelo. She serves as the creative content editor for *Populi Magazine*. Passionately curious about the world, Fitts is studying history and English and immensely enjoys discussing literature, poetry and film or theorizing about the plot of "The 100." If she's not reading, she is likely exploring.

Soso native **Nakiyah Jordan** (SMBHC 21) is a 2017 West Jones High School graduate and the daughter of Rodney and Elizabeth Jordan. She joined the SMBHC this fall and is majoring in psychology. Jordan has received several awards at the local and state levels for her artwork. At an early age, she enjoyed drawing silly doodles with her aunt and father. Since then, she has taken a serious interest in her artistry and sells some of her pieces via her art account on Instagram: @nakiart.



Phillip Waller is a 2015 graduate of the Honors College. While at Ole Miss, Waller refined his photography skills as a staff photographer for *The Daily Mississippian*, and, later, as editor-in-chief of *The Ole Miss* yearbook. Waller recently completed his master's in media and strategic communication at George Washington University and now serves in Washington, D.C., as deputy press secretary for U.S. Sen. Roger F. Wicker. In his spare time, he enjoys capturing the sights and scenes in the nation's capital. You can find more of his work at phillipwaller.com.





Bria Stephens and professor Ethel Young-Scurlock (Photo by Thomas Graning)

She Who Is a **POWERHOUSE**

BRIA STEPHENS (SMBHC 17)

The first thing I learned as a junior in Dr. Ethel Scurlock's African American studies course is that this was not going to be your typical "listen while I lecture" class. Learning was as much an academic experience as it was personal and spiritual. Dr. Scurlock is such a dynamic and passionate instructor, and only in her course could someone have the unique experience of learning about Toni Morrison while simultaneously receiving spiritual guidance provided through a sermon. She created such an intense and intimate atmosphere where no one felt excluded – no matter the subject or the race or gender of the students. After the first day, I knew Dr. Scurlock had to be my thesis adviser.

I couldn't have made a better decision. To say that I was confused about where to begin for my thesis would be an understatement.

My initial idea would have barely fit into a dissertation, let alone a thesis, and honestly, I didn't know what I wanted to write about. It took weeks of discussions with Dr. Scurlock before I began narrowing my thoughts to one topic that I could feasibly research and discuss in the allotted time: Nella Larsen, an American novelist of the Harlem Renaissance.

As a thesis adviser, Dr. Scurlock approached the process of guiding me with the same passion and individualistic attention with which she taught her classes. I learned much more than how to carefully and analytically read literature, much more than how to write with correct grammar and spelling, and much more than how to articulate my assessment of the literature through writing. I learned the value of genuine care, concern and effort. She cared about the project as much as I did, and her encouragement moved me toward completing my thesis.

One moment that embodies my experience with Dr. Scurlock is the day of my defense. The defense is easily the most nerve-wrenching and stress-inducing moment of any honors student. That morning, I awoke to a text message from Dr. Scurlock: “Good morning! I am really excited about this day, and I know you will be fabulous. Your work is amazing. ... You are one of the most brilliant and beautiful women on the PLANET!” It was only a text message, but it served its purpose in more ways than one. Again, her heartfelt, positive and encouraging motivation urged me to do something that initially seemed too monumental, too impossible. Oh, I was definitely sweating bullets during my presentation; however, the pressure was lighter knowing that I had someone who genuinely wanted to see me succeed – a friend in the crowd.

“

AS A THESIS ADVISER, DR. SCURLOCK APPROACHED THE PROCESS OF GUIDING ME WITH THE SAME PASSION AND INDIVIDUALISTIC ATTENTION WITH WHICH SHE TAUGHT HER CLASSES.”

– Bria Stephens

Working with Dr. Scurlock isn't an experience I can sum up as simply “good.” There were definitely hurdles to jump over, bridges to cross and obstacles that seemed fixed. Yet, no problem seemed too daunting to tackle with her continual encouragement, reservoir of knowledge and unyielding assistance. Dr. Ethel Young-Scurlock is a powerhouse and the embodiment of an intelligent, successful, godly woman. ■ HR

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



9/16

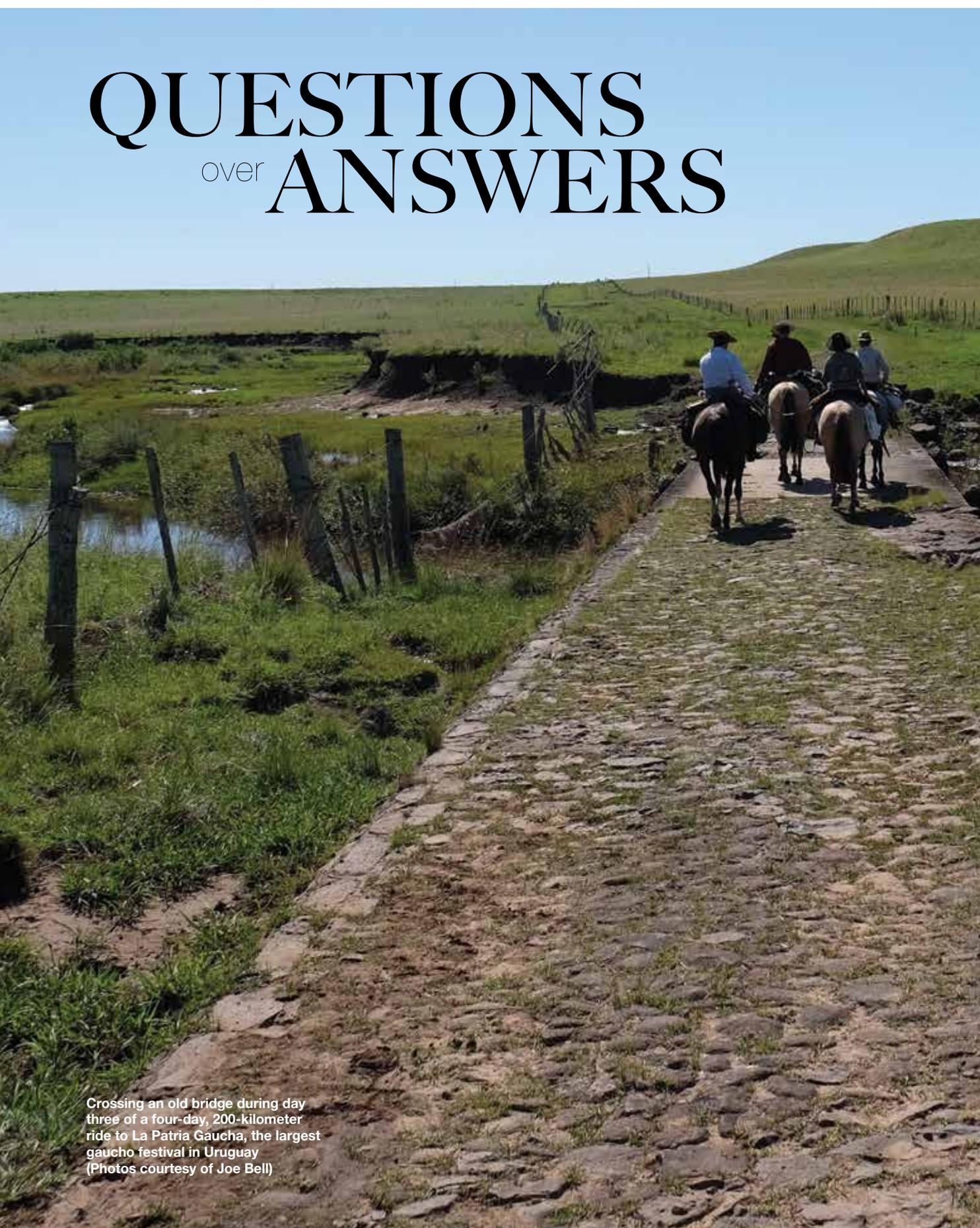
Patrick Woodyard (SMBHC 10) received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award on Sept. 30 at the 2016 Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony. Woodyard earned a bachelor's degree in international studies and Spanish. In 2011, he co-founded Nisolo, a high quality leather shoes and accessories company that ethically produces its products and supports the livelihoods of more than 325 people across the globe. (Photo courtesy of Patrick Woodyard)

UM Vice Chancellor for Diversity Katrina Caldwell speaks with DSG and honors students in the Great Room. In fall 2016, DSG began hosting “**At the Edge of Inside**” discussions, inspired by Honors Fall Convocation speaker David Brooks' column by the same name, open to all SMBHC students. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



10/16

QUESTIONS over ANSWERS

A group of four people riding horses across a stone bridge in a rural landscape. The bridge is made of large, flat stones and is surrounded by green grass and a wooden fence. In the background, there are rolling green hills under a clear blue sky. The riders are wearing hats and casual clothing, and their horses are in motion.

Crossing an old bridge during day three of a four-day, 200-kilometer ride to La Patria Gaucha, the largest gaucho festival in Uruguay (Photos courtesy of Joe Bell)



JOE BELL (SMBHC 17)

Questions. The types that help cut directly to the heart of a political discussion. The types that take one down a path of moral discovery and learning. The types that lead to further and more incisive questions. One of my first tasks in my Honors 102 seminar taught by professor John Winkle at the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College was being challenged to ask these types of questions and to discover the puzzling and the unknown. I have taken this lesson on “questions” to heart, and it has transformed my experience from one of finite and definite knowledge to seeking the challenge of the unknown.

As students, we are often asked to share or divulge specific facts and knowledge. This is a necessary and accepted reality of the college experience, but the power and beauty of the Honors College lies in its ability to form thinkers, doubters and citizen scholars who challenge what they think they know. As a student I have been blessed to have support from the Honors College in many forms, whether it be studying abroad in Montevideo, Uruguay, for a year and a half or participating in the 2017 Mississippi Water Security Institute.

Thanks to the Honors College, I was a recipient of the Barksdale Award following my sophomore year. With this grant I was able to ask about and discover the political, social

and economic realities that govern the gaucho in Uruguay and the North American cowboy in Nevada and California. I lived on cattle ranches in both countries and embedded myself in the daily activities in order to learn, develop relationships and, most importantly, compare the cultural and social realities in the two regions.

Following my Barksdale Award research, I realized I did not just come away with an amazing experience and a heightened socio-cultural understanding of cattle ranching, but I found that I was filled with more questions and a desire to explore water security issues and international investment in Latin America. The desire to explore this topic stemmed from my expanded understanding of the vital role that fresh water plays in the decision making and business strategy of ranches around the world.

To study these questions regarding freshwater resources, international capital and the development of natural resources, I chose to examine hydroelectric dam projects in Chile and Argentina, which are funded by multinational businesses. As I enter the final stages of my thesis research before graduation, I once again realize that, although I have learned a ton, I am confronted with newer and more precise questions.

In the end, what I discovered during every step of my journey at the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors



Joe Bell

College and the University of Mississippi is that truly exploratory questions often beget more specific and challenging questions. None of this is to say answers are impossible to find, but instead to highlight the value of asking good questions and listening to a multitude of answers.

To find the answer to any question, one must listen. The Honors College experience is not about regurgitating facts or simply achieving goals. The Honors College experience teaches one how to not only do these things but more importantly to challenge what we presume to know, to seek the truth by asking questions of yourself and the world, and to ask the most accurate and keen questions of all. ■ HR



Spotlight on

MICHAEL BARNETT

DEVNA BOSE (SMBHC 19) AND SAM HARRES (SMBHC 19)

“It’s challenging, demanding and at times frustrating, but above all, I think it is rewarding,” a teacher evaluation reads from fall 2013, describing Michael Barnett’s Honors 101 class.

One of the most rewarding facets of Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College membership, Freshman Honors I and II classes grant students the unique opportunity to interact with professors originating from all across campus through discussions on weekly readings and contemporary events. This unique arrangement grants students an opportunity to form bonds with professors they would never have met otherwise, professors like Michael Barnett.

Current theatre department chair, past faculty senate chair and lifelong learner, Barnett can often be found down a narrow hallway on the first floor of Isom Hall, nestled in a spacious, warmly lit office. Golden lights wash the walls, and a guitar, symbolic of his passion for music, can be seen in the corner. He typically wears a black polo, a garment of which he estimates he owns roughly 20, and black Ray-Ban Wayfarers are probably resting on top of his peppered head. A poster for “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” adorns the wall of his office, and he sits in front of his desk, reading teacher evaluations.

Coming across a less-than-exceptional one complaining about one of his in-class statements, he quips, “I stand by that,” shrugging his shoulders.

Barnett was born in Columbia, South Carolina, but has always called Franklin, Tennessee, a suburb about 14 miles south of downtown Nashville, home. Barnett’s love of theatre manifested itself from a very young age. He played Joseph, of biblical notoriety, and a reindeer in his first play at the age of 5. His girlfriend played Mary. “I remember thinking,

‘Oh, this is good,’” Barnett said.

After graduating from high school, the aspiring actor briefly moved to Nashville. Barnett worked at a Chili’s restaurant over the summer, moonlighting as an actor searching for work.

“Nashville was not a cool place at the time. I love it, but at the time, it wasn’t the place to make a living as an actor,” Barnett said. “But at Chili’s, there were good tips, and all of the chips and salsa I could eat.”

In July of that year, Barnett received a letter of acceptance from Washington State University. He had no recollection of ever applying but packed up his waterbed and moved 2,170 miles away for his first year of college.

The town of Pullman, Washington, boasted a population of 2,000 at the time and a single stoplight outside of a McDonald’s “because that’s where the heaviest traffic was.” In Washington, Barnett saw tumbleweeds for the first time and frequently dined at Denny’s, journeying there late at night and, on occasion, staying until the sun came up.

“I did that for a year. It was great. It was as far as I could get away from my family and still be in the United States,” Barnett said.

After his first year, Barnett transferred to the University of Tennessee. The university housed a professional theatre in residence, and he thus found himself surrounded by professionals at all times, including a number of Tony award-winning designers. Barnett was the only lighting design student in the department and soon realized that he had stumbled into an opportunity to learn, one-on-one, from the best.

Along the way, Barnett met his future wife and decided to finish his graduate work at Florida State University. He and his wife got married six months after completing graduate school and, soon after, had their first child before moving back to Franklin to raise a family.



Caricature by Jake Thrasher (SMBHC 18)



Sam Harres
(Photo courtesy Sam Harres)



Michael Barnett
(Photo by Robert Jordan)



Devna Bose
(Photo courtesy Devna Bose)

Barnett worked at Tennessee State University, a historically black college, for three years. There, he claimed to have learned far more from the students than they learned from him.

“Going into the job, I had always assumed that anyone can write and do these things that I did if they worked hard enough, but with bad foundation and no support, I realized that many can’t do those things,” he said. “It took me a year there to realize that I had to approach [teaching] differently than I had been.”

He cites his time at Tennessee State as a huge influence on his chosen discussion topics for his honors classes. These discussions often center around race, religion, politics and other controversial topics. Barnett typically plays the roles of both moderator and devil’s advocate, carefully calming overly passionate students while prodding stubborn ones from every possible angle.

After his stint at Tennessee State, Barnett finally arrived in Oxford, unsure of what to expect from life in Mississippi. He described the

Ole Miss environment as very different from that of Tennessee State University.

“I didn’t know what I was going to find here,” Barnett said. “Growing up in Franklin, there was a Civil War battlefield. We had the largest cemetery that houses both Union and Confederate soldiers. That was our history. I had some sense, but I didn’t realize this university was so invested in the discussion of race, which is a positive thing. We don’t shy away from the challenges we face and continue to face. That creates an important climate of possibility, change, and creating an even better environment for students.”

Barnett comes from a long line of educators, so his dedication to academics seems almost natural. His occupation as a teacher stemmed from a desire to continue learning; a career in education was simply a means to further his own education. “That’s the environment I wanted to be in,” he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



Ray Brown (left) (SMBHC 19), Bella Gonzalez (SMBHC 18), Claire Hubacek (SMBHC 18), Bryce Johnson (SMBHC 18), Arielle Wallace (SMBHC 17) and professor Virginia Chavis stand together at the opening reception of 'A Visual Exploration of Water Rights in Mississippi' at the Honors College on May 11. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

EXPLORING ART

Water Rights through

BRYCE JOHNSON (SMBHC 18)

Honors College courses offer unique ways to experience and express global topics. Honors Experiential Learning (Fluid Power: Exploring Water Rights), taught by chair and professor of art Virginia Chavis, was no exception.

We began by defining water rights from legal and cultural perspectives and then introduced ourselves to domestic and international challenges surrounding water. We realized that Mississippi battles water preservation, sanitation, quality and availability, and we wanted to bring awareness of these issues to our community.

We shared the theme "exploring water rights through art" with the Santa Fe Art Institute. Two of my classmates, Bella Gonzalez (SMBHC

18) and Claire Hubacek (SMBHC 18), Professor Chavis and I traveled to Santa Fe to meet the artists in residence working with the topic.

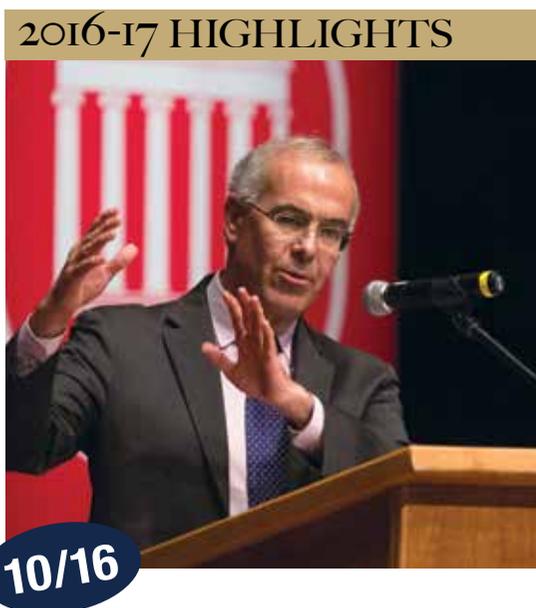
The artists' backgrounds were as diverse as their approach. An Irish artist focused on rural, indigenous peoples. She was sewing a



banner for a New Mexican tribe whose water had been contaminated by nuclear testing. A young Icelandic student pondered, “What if spit was enough?” through a variety of media. Another has been fighting poverty through art for decades. His performance art project (painting himself and dancing on canvas to local, improvised music) has generated enough funding to install two water wells in the Cameroon village where he was born.

Santa Fe is known as the “City Different,” a place full of unique art, personalities and attractions. We explored the historic town square, iconic Canyon Road (with over 100 art galleries), local theater and an interactive psychedelic museum called Meow Wolf. To gain broader, local perspectives, one student visited a sustainability fair, a brewery and the Santa Fe wastewater treatment plant. We also participated in a fun activity of making paper with the institute’s artists.

This honors course afforded us a stimulating, creative collaboration across academic and cultural backgrounds. It allowed us to transcend ideas and research beyond words. For our final project, we each translated our exploration of water rights through art, which was on display in the Honors College from May 11 through Aug. 31. ■ HR



Columnist and author **David Brooks** took the podium as a guest speaker at the 2016 Honors Fall Convocation, which served as a signature program celebrating the investiture of the University of Mississippi’s 17th chancellor, Jeffrey S. Vitter. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

A teacher evaluation from one 2016 Honors 102 student read, “Although intimidating, Michael really cares about his students,” and that is clear in his approach to education.

“My passion for students is a desire for them to know themselves and define who they are for themselves,” Barnett said. “I think a big part of that is in theatre – we try to reflect society. For us to be able to do that, we need to know ourselves first.”

Principal among his teachings, Barnett undertakes the lofty task each year of helping students discover themselves.

“I love teaching in the Honors College. It’s a wonderful experience to interact with students of all disciplines. We have a very structured program in the theatre department, so I mostly just interact with theatre majors. In these classes, I get to step outside of that and explore issues that have nothing to do with theatre,” he said.

“I learn so much in the honors classes from students who have different perspectives and cultural backgrounds. Honors classes are amazing because I get to throw out a question and listen to 15 people argue about it. I have no idea what’s going to happen when I go to class.”

At the beginning of each semester, he asks students, “How do you define yourself?” Students list their name, their major, where they are from, and then the big one – who they are and why.

“I’ve spent over 20 years trying to define who I am. Why do I feel the way I do? Why am I attracted to this idea and not this one? I want everyone to have that curiosity. Honors classes are a great opportunity to explore that. I want students’ thoughts to be their own,” he said. “Hopefully it makes them a happier person and one who has ownership of their ideals.”

As for himself, Barnett still hasn’t settled on a good answer.

“The truth is, I don’t know. I don’t know that I have a good answer. There have been times when I thought I knew the answer. I got to a good place where I was in my mid-20s, and then I had my first child and I had no idea. Five years later, I had another kid and my answer changed. I learned a lot over the decade.”

Barnett reclines in his office chair, looking satisfied and conclusively states, “If I had to define myself, I would say I’m a student. I love learning.” ■ HR

PAYNE'S PERSPECTIVE

Founding director relates history, trailblazing contribution of Honors College

ELIZABETH PAYNE

Creating the Honors College at the University of Mississippi stemmed from Jim and Sally Barksdale's profound love of their alma mater. They donated their initial gift to the university as they were moving back to their natal state. Jim made it clear that he and Sally hoped that in time "its graduates will be a force that will impact

Mississippi's educational, economic and cultural life as they invest, create and produce in the context of their state." As the founding director of the college and a daughter of Mississippi, I made the Barksdales' hope my beacon.

We had a committed faculty excited about teaching seminars to bright undergraduates. We wanted the new Honors College to provide a vibrant center of academic excellence by attracting students who would shape a new and more serious intellectual culture. We sought students who combined intellectual curiosity with moral passion, students who were not simply resume builders. We recruited individuals who evidenced promise that they would be intelligent, compelling and generous contributors over their lifetimes. We looked not only at their four years at this university, we also asked what kind of world citizens they would likely be 30 years later.

The original goal of the university's planning committee anticipated 75 students for the college's first class. After reading the applications, we agreed that the quality of the pool of applicants demanded more acceptances. This resulted in a class of 121. For the first year and a half,



A view of the Honors College lounge in 1999, as well as the 'Iron Horse,' which stood guard at the front of the building (Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Payne)

we had only a secretary and myself. Because the classes were larger than the initial funding provided, we turned to work-study students and student volunteers.

Ultimately, relying on students was an asset because it developed in them a sense of “sweat equity” and ownership of the college. And they claimed the building as theirs. They placed an art student’s interpretation of the horse in Picasso’s “Guernica” in the courtyard and named it “the iron horse.” They released koi in the fountain area and carefully tended them. They hung their own art on the building’s walls.

The first two classes set the high standards with which the college came to be identified. Honors students became leaders at the university. In 2000-01, for example, the president of the student body, the editor of *The Daily Mississippian*, as well as the president of the student judicial council all came from the Honors College. During the first five years, we had a Rhodes scholar, a Marshall scholar, three Truman fellows and five Goldwater scholars. A majority of Taylor medalists and Hall of Fame winners came from the Honors College.

And make no mistake: The Honors College was essential to establishing a Phi Beta Kappa chapter on this campus. The evaluation team spent twice the time allotted them to review material on the honors students and courses. Ron Schroeder, the professor who wrote the university’s application and escorted the team, later asked me, “What happened? They were smiling!”

The Honors College became a source of innovation on campus. We, for example, chose a book to be read over the summer and brought the author to campus for a retreat to engage the students. Ultimately, the university adopted our model and uses it today with entering freshmen.

The Honors College was the first to offer a computer lab. Again, we relied on volunteers. The father of one of our students, an engineering professor, for example, set up the computers. We hired a graduate student to supervise the lab. He later suggested that we should offer a wireless connection — the first on campus — so that students could work with their computers even on the back porch. We did it, and other programs followed.



Elizabeth Payne and Fred Laurenzo
(Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Payne)

I vividly remember the day one of our most outstanding members of the second class came to me after a football game saying, “I had heard about the Grove growing up. I dressed up to go, but there was nowhere for me. It was lily white.” I immediately ordered a tent with McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College emblazoned at the top. Now, I walk across the Grove during football games, seeing academic departments and student associations under tents with their identifications.

The Grove is different now because it is more inclusive. I could go on in ways that I saw the honors students making a difference. They were a gift to the university. During the second year, Jim Barksdale asked, “What can we do to make this honors college the best one in this country?” I responded that we should offer every honors student an opportunity to study abroad. He responded, “We can do that!” Now many students assume that they will, at some point in their college years, study in another country.

Substantial numbers of Honors College graduates from the first five classes are fulfilling Jim and Sally Barksdale’s dream of the college’s alums returning to Mississippi to offer their services to their natal state. Across the state, I see graduates who “invest, create and produce.” They work as teachers, journalists, physicians, attorneys, business officers, musicians, social workers, engineers and research scientists. They are “givers, not takers.” I feel privileged to have had the opportunity of working with these pathbreakers in building the Honors College at the University of Mississippi. ■ HR



Michèle Alexandre, professor of law, teaches Hon 102 in one of the new classrooms, dubbed 'The Fishbowl.'
(Photo by Robert Jordan)

SMBHC CELEBRATES BUILDING RENOVATIONS, 20TH ANNIVERSARY

More than 100 University of Mississippi students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and constituents gathered on March 30, 2017 to celebrate the completed renovations and 20th anniversary of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. The college started with 121 students in 1997 and has grown to more than 1,400 students. The size of the building has more than doubled — to 32,290 square feet — and includes a new kitchen, study area, the Great Room, three new study rooms, new staff offices and seven new classrooms.

“Our students enjoy deep conversations, and this is

a welcoming space that encourages us to take time to engage in meaningful discussion,” said Dean Douglass Sullivan-González, remarking on the new space.

The Barksdales’ first gift to the Honors College allowed for the purchase and renovation of the Alpha Delta Pi sorority building as well as endowing 16 scholarships and additional funding for operating expenses. Other generous donations followed suit, including endowments from the Parker estates for scholarships, and study abroad fellowships from Lynda and John Shea. When Sally McDonnell Barksdale

passed away in 2003, the Honors College was renamed in her honor. For 20 years, the Barksdales have supported the Honors College, and because of their support, hundreds of students have been afforded extraordinary opportunities.

“The University of Mississippi and, indeed, all of the state’s citizens are indebted to the Barksdales for their continued and transformative support,” Chancellor Vitter said. “For 20 years now, the impact of the Honors College has been far-reaching, helping create a vibrant legacy of attracting the best and brightest to Ole Miss.” ■ HR

Jim and Donna Barksdale lunch with Barksdale scholars in the new SMBHC conference room. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



From left: Ryan Upshaw (BA 06, MA 08), a former coordinator of recruitment and admissions for the SMBHC and current assistant dean of student affairs for the University of Mississippi's School of Engineering, stands with Dr. Marc Walker (SMBHC 06) and Christin Gates Calloway (SMBHC 11), who delivered moving speeches during the building dedication and 20th anniversary of the SMBHC. (Photo courtesy of Ryan Upshaw)



Chancellor Vitter addresses attendees in the Honors College's new Great Room. (Photo by Kevin Bain)



SMBHC New Building Dedication Ceremony

MARC WALKER'S SPEECH

March 30, 2017

Thank you very much, DSG, for inviting me back to Oxford to join you all on this important and exciting day. I want to share with you all my experience as a student at the Honors College and how that time has influenced my path since I left. Twelve years ago, an Ole Miss buddy (Robert Wicks, SMBHC 06) and I had an idea. We wanted to see more. We were both pre-med and as sophomores (or “wise fools” as it were), we were just smart enough to know that we knew virtually nothing about medicine.

We wanted to learn more about what it meant to be a doctor.

We had both taken science classes and shadowed in the local hospitals and clinics, but we had seen only a small glimpse of the life of a physician and an even smaller picture of the life of patients. And before we continued on this path (which now is in its 13th year for me and counting), we wanted and needed to know more ... to see more.

We had learned of a primary care doctor who had been traveling to Bolivia, South America, every year to care for a population of patients living in a state of such poverty that to this day I still have identified no proper point of comparison ... and we wanted to go with him. Not only did we want to join him, we wanted to organize a mission trip from Ole Miss to go to Bolivia and help on a larger scale.

We were even willing to sacrifice our spring break to make it work because it was an opportunity for us to further expand our worldview through community action (a critical part of the Honors College mission), and we wanted to be exposed to life that in almost every way was different from our own.

So we walked through an open door.

This open door ...

And we asked.

With the support of the Honors College and the university leadership, a few months later, as a junior, I boarded my first flight out of the country

and joined my first medical mission. We spent 10 days in Montero, Bolivia, with some of the most incredible and inspiring people I have ever known.

I had the opportunity to observe Dr. Baumrucker care for the sick when no one else would. With the local nurses, we walked door to door delivering vaccines and medical supplies to a suffering people, we built homes for their families and playgrounds for their children, and we all discovered something entirely different and exciting about ourselves.

The world was changed for me after that trip, and I had found a place for myself in it.

But the influences of the Honors College didn't start with me there.

On my Freshman Ventures trip to Seattle, our team met with one of the corporate executives of the Weyerhaeuser paper company, where I learned that in order to make and sell paper products, you had to know more about paper than the size and color of the sheets. You had to know the difference between hardwood and softwood, you had to know the international treaties that allowed for the planting and harvesting of raw materials, and the complex regulations on importing and exporting. You needed to know about supply chain management and global logistics, and you had to know about the competition and the customer. I learned that in order to be a leading producer and seller of paper products, you had to know the industry inside and out.

As a first-year student at Harvard Medical School (in 2006), I knew biology, chemistry, physics and calculus, and I even knew a little about the clinical exam and the diagnosis of disease, but I knew absolutely nothing about the medical industry, nothing about the business or political landscape of health care in this country — and even less about how it was going to change.

So I took that lesson from my Freshman Ventures trip to Seattle, and I attended Harvard Business School to learn more about medicine.



Marc Walker, Cristin Gates Calloway and Jim Barksdale (Photos by Kevin Bain)
An aerial view of the complete Honors College building (Photo by Robert Jordan)

Not only did this experience provide me with a unique perspective on the practice of medicine, it also exposed me to avenues by which my personal impact on patient care could extend well beyond the clinic walls.

The willingness and almost burning desire to step outside of my comfort zones from the “known” to the “unknown” to learn and see and do more all started for me in the Honors College at Ole Miss just over 10 years ago.

Ten days ago, I returned from my fifth international medical mission trip.

But this time it was different.

This time I wasn’t watching. I was doing.

I was operating on children with hand deformities and adults with traumatic hand injuries. For that week, my team and I were the only hand surgeons in the entire country of Nicaragua.

We screened over 200 patients in one clinic day and performed nearly 100 surgeries. And every morning that I woke up in Nicaragua, it was like waking up in Bolivia all over again ... and I credit those memories and that passion for giving back in large part to the Honors College.

Now there is certainly no substitute for the personal drive and commitment that it takes to succeed as an undergraduate and thereafter. For years and years, you have already spent countless hours of every day and night studying and preparing for where you are now. But I can tell from personal experience that surgery (like most professions) is a lot easier when you have all of the right tools and a dedicated and supportive team there along with you.

And that is exactly what you have here.

Your experience as a student at the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College will not only present you with open doors, but it will keep them open as long as you’re willing to walk through them.

It is no exaggeration when I say that my life over the past decade has been a near-perfect reflection of the education (both academic and social), the influences (both personal and professional), and the encouragement and support that I received during my four years as a student in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College at the University of Mississippi.

I want to thank DSG, Dr. Samonds and Dr. Young for opening those doors, helping me to see the world, and for encouraging me to play an active and engaged part in it.

Every time I reach someone on a medical mission, I think about the people who stood beside me here that have made that possible.

I also want to thank the chancellor and the university leadership for believing in the Honors College mission, and for supporting the very important and inspiring initiatives that have elevated this place to a position of great academic pride and recognition in this country.

This new building is a standing testament to the significant impact that the Honors College has had on education in the state of Mississippi over the past 20 years.

And none of this would have been possible without the incredible generosity and commitment to academic excellence demonstrated by the Jim Barksdale family. I cannot thank you enough, sir, for the legacy that you have created and for allowing me and many others to be a part of it.

This new building is an investment in the University of Mississippi, but more importantly, it is an investment in the students!

And I think I speak for everyone here when I say that we are all very excited to see what you will do after graduating from the Honors College at Ole Miss.

Thank you very much for inviting me to share this moment with you. It is great to be back in Oxford.

Marc E. Walker, M.D., MBA
(SMBHC 06)



Throughout his tenure at the University of Mississippi, professor emeritus John Winkle has been awarded the Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award (1980), Faculty Achievement Award (1992) and the Frist Service Award (2006). Here he stands with (left to right) Mitchell Redd (SMBHC 18), Katie Snodgrass Morrison (SMBHC 2001), Savannah Smith (SMBHC 18), Kathryn James (SMBHC 17), Kellie McClelland (SMBHC 17) and Eloise Tyner (SMBHC 17). (Photo by Thomas Graning)

Conversation STARTER

JOHN WINKLE

First day of class. Honors 101. Fifteen students sitting in uneasy calm around an imposing table. New setting. New experience. Expressive faces. Anticipation. Uncertainty. Anxiety. We start with the unexpected: Introduce yourself and tell us a funny story about you. The self-disclosures produce smiles, laughter, random comments and the beginning of a special connection.

It is the first step of many in a fresh and unforgettable journey of learning together. On this path of discovery, our learning will be largely communal. Each student will learn from one another and from me, and I will learn from them. I always do.

The HON 101 and 102 courses are especially joyous for me. They address transformative ideas that touch minds and hearts. Our readings and writing assignments are means to ends, not ends. They challenge us to think and feel in lateral and layered ways along our journey. The essence of learning lies in the ability to ask the better question, so we will be attentive throughout our time together to the questions that our novels, essays, poems and discussions provoke.

My companions and I travel from the recesses of the inner self to the distant origins of the universe. We explore together contemporary challenges: societal pressures to conform; tensions between science and religion; threats of global warming to life forms; and, impacts of escalating advances in artificial intelligence. Not all topics are comfortable to consider or, much less, discuss aloud, but such is the nature of the process of meaningful self-discovery. If the learning environment feels safe, then my fellow travelers will express deep-set beliefs that elevate our awareness. From the first day of class, I work to instill that sense of security.

By the end of each semester in this 101-102 sequence, we have learned to appreciate the value of becoming open and receptive to the multiple ways in which we learn. We have become more willing and able to take intellectual risks. We have redefined our own creativity. We have found, or refined, our voice to speak out on matters that engage or disturb us. We have learned much more about, and even laughed at, ourselves.

We have bonded with our fellow travelers in this, our first, meaningful academic expedition

on the tortuous path to understanding who each of us is becoming, how we each reconcile the inconsistencies of human existence, and how we each situate ourselves in the ever-changing and complex world that awaits.

It has been my privilege to teach in the first-year sequence, in conversation courses and in upper-level seminars since the then McDonnell Barksdale Honors College opened its welcoming doors in the 1997-98 academic year.

Conversations classes are great fun. Sophomores, juniors, seniors and I gather for one hour to consider an ever-changing weekly array of international, national, state or even campus issues. The dynamic of this journey is unique. We dart from politics to economics to science to medicine to human rights to religion to environment to fashion and to sports, among others. The level of participation is always lively, the laughter hearty and the insights meaningful.

Often, it seems, our discussions result in the blurring of ideological and partisan lines as we seek to find practical solutions to complex problems. (If only state and national lawmakers would follow suit and set aside self-interests in order to seek reasonable compromises that serve the best interests of the state and nation.)

Upper-level Honors College seminars also bring me special fulfillment. They represent the capstones of the honors classroom experience. The journey here is different. It is more in-depth and more complex. Seniors and juniors enter these courses with refined intellectual maturity and introspection and sentience. They are eager to extend themselves on an unfamiliar topic or unrelated elective. And these classes for the most part rely on unvarnished primary documents that stimulate us to think about not only the content itself but the context of the times in which these sources were crafted as well.

Over the past 20 years, the honors seminars I have taught or team-taught include the following: Constitutional Convention of 1787; Genocide and Memory in the 20th Century; U.S. Supreme Court (its political role, or its treatment of fundamental values of liberty, order and equality, or its approaches to legal reasoning); and, Dystopia. The subject matter is sobering, and discussions often take on a similar tone. And almost without exception, questions that students ask are the better ones.

Honors education emphasizes critical analysis and is, therefore, an integral element of higher education. It encourages thinking in fresh and unconventional ways. For me, the essence of this distinctive learning process lies in the students. The peripatetic adventurers who join me in these journeys make all the difference. Their journey defines mine.

I am a lifelong learner, and I hope to convey that joy to my students. As I reflect on my life, I might have been an architect or an attorney or, in the most secret of childhood fantasies, an outfielder for the Boston Red Sox. No doubt in those professions I would have continued to learn. But the learning there would arguably have never been as rich and as edifying as that of a university professor. Each and every Honors College class I teach reminds me that I made the right choice. ■ HR



Professor Winkle stands with his 2007 honors Pol 398: Law and Politics through Literature class in Edinburgh, Scotland. The course examined selected fundamental values underlying legal and political systems through the lens of literature. With a focus on justice, freedom and equality, four novels, a law review article and two short stories provided unique cross-cultural (U.S. and Great Britain) visions of law and politics and the boundaries they create. (Photo courtesy of John Winkle)

A FORCE ON CAMPUS

FRED LAURENZO

The announcement of the Honors College 20 years ago was perhaps the most important development in the University of Mississippi's undergraduate program since World War II, and I was elated by the news.

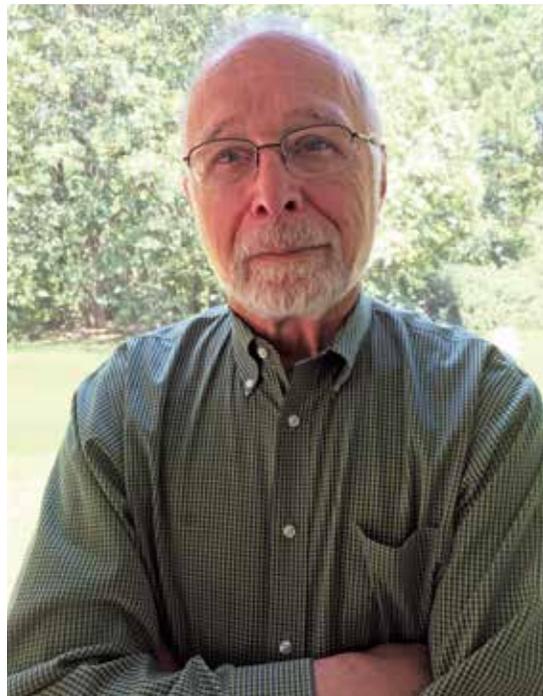
I had taught in the Honors Program, which preceded the college, and along with many other faculty felt that we could do more for our best students. The fact that the college would be amply financed by an endowment from Jim and Sally Barksdale had me ready to nominate them for Mississippi "sainthood." They set an example for creative and socially responsible philanthropy without which the college would not have been possible.

Also vital to the creation of the college were the leadership and vision of Chancellor Robert Khayat and Provost Carolyn Staton; both were determined to enhance the quality and reputation of undergraduate education at the university.

I was honored to be given the responsibility for chairing the Curriculum Committee for the new college. We gathered together a diverse group of strong-minded faculty who were passionate about undergraduate education and set out to create a program that would challenge and promote the intellectual growth of our ablest and most enthusiastic students.

We spent a large part of our time debating and devising the Freshman Seminar, which we saw as foundational to the honors experience. The course was intended to be a rigorous intellectual experience that would introduce the students to the world of learning and create a sense of community among them. By all accounts, we succeeded; the course continues to be taught essentially as conceived with the positive support of the college's graduates.

No doubt, the Freshman Seminar experience looks better in hindsight to a new graduate. At 18 years old, eager and a little frightened, that same student would join heartily in the class moan: "Not another paper!" And I would smile brightly and say, "You don't dare say it in public, but admit it, you really like school!"



Fred Lorenzo, associate professor emeritus of history
(Photo courtesy of Fred Lorenzo)

Indeed they did and do like to learn, and it has been the greatest pleasure of my teaching career to introduce these inquisitive and ambitious learners to some of the great texts produced in answer to humankind's perennial questions. "Does race or society define a person?" Ask Toni Morrison. "Who best explains human nature, Freud or Skinner?" "What is humankind's relationship to the natural world?" Ask the book of Genesis or Darwin. "Do we live in a just society?" Read Plato and Bryan Stevenson. And on and on we would go reading, thinking, debating, writing. The students challenged and learned from each other, and the professor learned along with them.

The honors curriculum provides small classes, close contact with faculty, and extra opportunities for research and learning not generally available in a public university. Honors education requires extra resources. That investment of resources is not merely in individual students but in the future of our society.

My faith in the future was strengthened as I realized that the students in my classes were those who would be the leaders in the next generation. From the beginning, we have asked the students for a return on the investment. We have expected them to work harder, produce more and give back through public service. We have seen a return of our investment in the positive impact honors college students have had on undergraduate life both inside and outside the classroom.

Within a very short time, the Honors College became a recognizable force on campus, producing responsible and creative leaders in student government, student publications and various organizations. More importantly, those first students are now taking their places as responsible leaders in their chosen fields and in society, and it has been my great pleasure and privilege to have had a role in their education. ■ HR

20 Years in Pictures



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1. Truman scholar Joel Fyke (SMBHC 05), beneficiary of a Barksdale scholarship, poses with children from El Salvador, where he traveled on an honors fellowship in 2005. Fyke earned his master's degree in fundamental rights from the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and is a graduate of Stanford Law School. He is an associate of Forman Watkins & Krutz LLP and lives with his wife and daughter. (Photo courtesy of Joel Fyke) **2.** Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel breaks bread with SMBHC students. He addressed them at the Honors Spring Convocation on Feb. 8, 2010. Wiesel passed away on July 2, 2016.

3. In October 1998, Markeeva Morgan (BSEE 01) speaks at the dedication of the McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College.



3

4. Amelia Purser Bailey (left) (MBHC 2002), Chinwendu Onwubiko (MBHC 2003), Jim Barksdale (BBA 65) and Robert Khayat (BAED 61, JD 66) pose for the camera in 2005.

5. For several years, the Honors Senate hosted a Pumpkin Carving Contest each October. (2002)

6. Logan Wilson (left) (SMBHC 16), Jim Barksdale and Mary Ball Markow (SMBHC 14) visit during the March 2007 groundbreaking ceremony of the new SMBHC building.



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4

An Enduring FRIENDSHIP

KAITLYN BARTON (SMBHC 15) AND CHRISTINE DICKASON (SMBHC 15)

Our friendship began in the summer before our senior year of high school as participants in the Lott Leadership Summer Institute. While we bonded during that program's trip to D.C., it wasn't until we both entered the Honors College as freshmen that we became how people lovingly referred to us: "The Terrible Two."

We completed our thesis together (much more on that later), we traveled abroad together, and we took numerous Honors College courses together. The summer after our freshman year, we traveled to Oxford University in England with two Honors College fellows — Abby Loebenberg and Vince Evans.

The experience was so much more than academically stimulating; it forced us outside our comfort zones and led us on adventures to ancient baths and Olympic ceremonies. We became close friends with English students, and we even created a short documentary about our trip — a precursor to our thesis work.

We traveled to D.C. (again) during our sophomore year for an Honors College political science class taught by Dr. Jonathan Winburn. We learned about the tumultuous history of race at the University of Mississippi that is too often swept under the rug and how that history still has an impact on the campus

today, and we peppered former Attorney General Eric Holder with questions.

However, our thesis was the defining moment of our Honors College and university careers — and our friendship. Our thesis was conceived on a typical HoCo night spent in an abandoned classroom, writing a paper, spending just as much time laughing at funny Vines as actually writing. As is a characteristic of the Honors College, a few deep and meaningful conversations were also involved.

It was during one of these late-night writing sessions that we found ourselves discussing our high school experiences and our lack of preparation for the demanding rigor of Honors 101. Neither of us had ever taken a final exam in high school. Realizing that we were not in Kansas anymore, we began to wonder if our peers were feeling the same pressures.

As if by fate, the college gods heard our cries and placed in our path a poster. This poster advertised a student cinema competition, and one of the categories was documentary film. On a late night in October of our freshman year, a spark ignited — a spark that would grow into the greatest challenge either of us had faced to date,

a fully fledged thesis and a passion that would drive our future careers.

Being freshmen and feeling invincible, we decided that we would accept this challenge and create a short documentary about education in Mississippi. All of it. We had not yet learned to focus our interests. We were zealous young people who could accomplish anything because we were top-performing students at our high schools, and now we were in the Honors College. This bubble of naiveté was short-lived. After writing what we thought was the most amazing project proposal ever written, we walked confidently into Dr. Andy Mullins' office to present him with our ideas. A quick Google search would have told us that we were walking into the office of the godfather of modern Mississippi education, but we were green, and this did not occur to us. Instead, we walked into Dr. Mullins' office blissfully unaware, completely consumed in our own brilliance. After listening thoughtfully to our presentation, Dr. Mullins set our proposal down, slowly took his glasses off and gave us our first dose of reality. We left his office with the distress of children who'd just been scolded. We walked down the

**REALIZING THAT WE WERE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE,
WE BEGAN TO WONDER IF OUR PEERS
WERE FEELING THE SAME PRESSURES.**

steps of the Lyceum in silence — a new sensation in our friendship — contemplating next steps.

After a week of reflection, we regrouped with a new determination: the kind of resolve that can only be born out of failure and a burning desire to prove someone wrong. We were both fortunate that we'd found in each other a friend who also strove to be the best. Thinking back on that first conversation, we knew we needed to find a way to hone in our shared experiences and interests to produce one cohesive question of discovery, so we decided to explore college preparation and student aspirations in public high schools in Mississippi.

We also knew that our meeting with Dr. Mullins, however embarrassing, was the single greatest moment of growth to date in our college experience, and if we were to continue growing, we were going to need consistent feedback. We needed someone who would take our ideas and ambitions and help us focus while still encouraging us to dream and step boldly into research. We found that in Dr. Andy Harper and Dr. Melissa Bass, our thesis advisers, and for the next three years, we never stopped running.

Whether it was filming focus groups with students in Mississippi schools or interviewing Mississippi state



Christine Dickason (left) and Kaitlyn Barton (Photo courtesy of Kaitlyn Barton)

senators, we found the work invigorating. Dr. Bass was always our northern star, keeping us on track when we veered off and helping us complete a project that was later used by the Mississippi Department of Education for training. Despite our initial setbacks — and obstacles along the way (hello, Institutional Review Board) — our final product made us proud. (And we sincerely hope it made our mentors and advisers proud too.)

The Honors College taught us so much, from learning to persevere despite challenges to recognizing the value of understanding history (thanks, Dr. Marvin King and Mr. Curtis Wilkie) to realizing that the friends we made in the Honors College would last a

lifetime. We interned at the White House together, taking on the whole new world of the nation's capital by using the skills we had learned back home. The Honors College's values and lessons kept us motivated and resilient as a Teach for America Mississippi corps member (Kaitlyn) in the inspiring but too oft-forgotten Delta, and focused through the end of the Obama Administration in a hectic political world (Christine).

The Honors College taught us that learning — and life in general — is messy, but we must embrace those challenges and truly become citizen scholars to make the world a better place than when we found it. And what more important purpose could there be? ■ HR



John Chappell; Vivian Ibrahim, Croft associate professor of history and international studies; and Ashleen Williams, Barksdale fellow (Photo by Robert Jordan)

Where all sit at the **SAME TABLE**

JOHN CHAPPELL (SMBHC 19)

I came from New Mexico to Mississippi so that I could study the Middle East. At the time, those three places seemed like they couldn't be more different. However, since arriving to this initially unfamiliar place, I have had the privilege of getting to know some of the best people that the university has to offer and have made a home here.

Dr. (Vivian) Ibrahim and Ms. (Ashleen) Williams, two of my favorite professors in the Honors College, have a talent for making faraway places seem closer. They help their students build nuanced, textured images of people, places and events that initially seem like they couldn't be more far away and different from the lives that we live every day.

Just about anyone who has read Edward Said's *Orientalism* knows that it is both an

immensely important and dreadfully dry book. When introducing a room full of freshmen in her International Studies 101 class to orientalism, which deals with the prejudiced ways in which Westerners view "the East," Dr. Ibrahim showed us a clip from "Aladdin," opening up a conversation about our biases toward the Middle East.

Homework for that day involved bringing an example of orientalism in popular culture, which

yielded a stream of music videos, advertisements and movies, each of them offered up by a group of 18-year-olds ready to critically assess their biases and rethink their assumptions.

Dr. Ibrahim allows her students to channel their lived experiences into innovative ideas and fresh approaches to problems. In her class on Middle Eastern water security, we often sat in the Honors College conference room comparing the day's readings to our own experiences, drawing links between water usage patterns in Lafayette County and Palestine, or musing about the potential for innovative solutions to water scarcity based on practices in our own hometowns.

Each one of us in the class contributed our experiences from in and out of the classroom. I could always count on an insight about public health implications from one person and agricultural practices from another. Each day, with Dr. Ibrahim's facilitation, I felt us pushing the boundaries of the field of water security, one prying question or casual musing at a time.

Dr. Ibrahim makes a deliberate effort to form relationships with each of her students. She occasionally mentions that she hopes to get to know someone better, as if she's setting a goal for herself. When we walk from building to building on campus, Dr. Ibrahim inevitably stops to talk to a current or former student, checking to see how they're doing and offering advice.

This year, I had to choose between accepting an internship in the federal government for the summer and working on a nonprofit startup in Mississippi, and I knew I had to ask Dr. Ibrahim for her thoughts, just as I had done at so many other key junctures. As always, I felt I had a teammate in Dr. Ibrahim, someone looking out for me, willing to hear my concerns and ambitions. By the time we finished our conversation, for which she made time during a passing period between two of her classes, I felt at ease and confident in my decision.

Ms. Williams, it seems, has been everywhere and done everything. That intimidated me for the first month of her class. Sometimes, when discussing a place relevant to a class reading, she would casually pull up her Facebook page to show us what it was like to live in Yemen, for instance, before the country's civil war broke out. We got to know each other better, walking from the Lott Institute back to the Honors College after classes, discussing current

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"Over the past year, I have learned more in **Ms. Williams'** Honors 101 and 102 classes than I ever have anywhere else. Ms. Williams pushed me to reach my full potential both inside and outside of class, and she has fully supported me in reaching the goals that I have set for myself. To me, Ms. Williams is not only a Barksdale fellow, professor and professional reference, she is also a colleague and friend that I know will be there in all the years to come." – Elizabeth "Liza" Boyer (SMBHC 20)

"I had **Ms. Williams** for Honors 101 and 102, and we seemed to work particularly well together as teacher and student. I wrote some of my best papers for her because Ms. Williams always knew the train on which my thoughts traveled, allowing her to criticize my work most effectively. In addition, she knew just how rigorous to make her courses in order to maximize the potential she saw in each of us without giving us excessive amounts of work.

"More importantly, though, she has extensive life experiences from which she drew on throughout the year to complement and provide perspective for our discussions, whether exploring the role of women in the Middle East or the food industry issues in the United States. These new perspectives that she has consistently provided have made a significant impact on my development as a productive member of society, proving to me that more often than not, I am not looking at the whole or bigger picture.

"Ms. Williams' even-keeled demeanor especially impressed me while discussing particularly touchy social issues such as racism, public policy and current events. She never let us in on what her own considerations of the situation were, all the while asking us probing questions, encouraging us to consider all the potential points of view, and helping us from our very own, relatively unbiased opinions.

"Her encouraging thinking in this way helped me more than anything in my approach to social issues and my role in society. Before freshman year, I could've never predicted getting so much out of two freshman courses, and I am genuinely a better and more productive member of society and a more considerate human being because of Ms. Williams."

– Adam Weekley (SMBHC 20)

events or talking about the experience of being Westerners in Mississippi, comparing the culture here to that of other places or reflecting on the state's politics.

In both of my classes with Ms. Williams, anyone who could arrived to class early to enjoy conversations about the day's news, or our classes, or whatever came to mind. On one of those days, Ms. Williams came with stacks of photos and corresponding captions. Each photo bore the image of a Shi'a cleric, with captions showing their names and a quote from each one of them. Divided in half, we quickly realized the difficulty of the task at hand, debating our choices based on what we knew, finding nuance and shades of gray between people who most Americans would regard with fear or disdain.

In her classes, Ms. Williams is never satisfied with her students just knowing what goes on in the world. She always pushes us to better understand what it is like to be in a place in the midst of monumental occurrences. Of course, we read about and discuss turning points in conflicts and various schools of Islamist thought, but perhaps more importantly, we caught crucial glimpses of personal experiences, glimpses that help us learn in ways that academic texts cannot.

The Middle East, a place where Ms. Williams has spent much of her life, draws ample attention from security and intelligence professionals, people who assess threats to national security. I think that Ms. Williams comes into each of her classes determined to broaden her students' range of empathy.

She pushed us to see through the eyes of people with whom we have, on the surface at least, relatively little in common. She believes in the power of literature and conversation to foster empathy. Alongside academic articles, she assigned short stories, novels and memoirs. She invited her friends from across the world to Skype with our class or to speak with us in person, allowing us to form personal connections with people who lived real lives in the contexts of situations we only knew from the pages of books.

Professors such as Vivian Ibrahim and Ashleen Williams make the Honors College the special place it is; they bring their subjects to life and form strong bonds with their students that stretch far beyond the confines of the classroom. They care, deeply and genuinely, about their students' academic and personal growth. The Honors College, myself included, is incredibly lucky to have them. ■ HR

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"My friends were not joking when they said **Dr. Ibrahim's** classes were no joke.

"I originally decided to take her course on water security in the Middle East my sophomore year simply to fulfill one of my history requirements, but it soon became my favorite class I've ever taken and a gateway to my thesis.

"In a discussion-based, 300-level honors course of just six students, it's tough to be a shy introvert. For the first week or two, I didn't participate much in class conversation — I just listened (but I promise I did all of the readings!).

"As I left class one day and started to make my way through the bustling Grove to beat the lunch rush, Dr. Ibrahim caught up with me. She told me with the most enthusiastic, encouraging smile that I should speak up more in class — I had great ideas that deserved to be heard. Little by little I did, and I quickly realized that this class meant more to me than just a prerequisite. Of all my classes, this one had the fewest assignments but got the biggest devotion of my time!

"Dr. Vivian Ibrahim is such an amazing, empowering role model. I really don't know how she does it — from teaching introductory Croft classes to thesis advising and being on advisory and national scholarship panels, her schedule seems impossible. However, that has never stopped her from answering emails or being available to talk to. She truly cares about and respects all of her students, devoting individual time to each person. Once, a simple visit to her office to turn in a paper turned into an hourlong conversation about my thesis, interests and life goals. I have never before met a professor so invested in the success and happiness of all her students.

"I highly recommend that everyone take at least one course taught by Dr. Ibrahim, whether it be related to your major or not. It certainly was one of my best decisions and might just be yours too."

— Lauren Burns (SMBHC 19)

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"I had **Ashleen** for Peace and Conflict Studies. She was the first Montanan I have ever met, and she definitely embodies the adventurous fur-trapping, cowboy, lumberjack stereotype perfectly. From whitewater rafting down the Zambezi to doing field research in Bahrain during the Arab Spring protests, I loved hearing about her experiences all over the world during class. She once said that she didn't like Costa Rica because it felt too safe.

"She is also great about making time for her students and getting to know them personally. We had many great conversations after class about "citizen scholarly" things like history, religion and politics. I greatly enjoyed my time in class with the 2017 version of Indiana Jones (Montana Williams has a nice ring to it, huh?)." – *Jacob Gambrell (SMBHC 19)*

"During my freshman year, I was nervous. It was my first time being in a new environment and in an environment where I was the minority. I was afraid that I would not fit in and that my personality would be considered different or far too left from those surrounding me.

"I possess a personality to which people would politely refer to as 'unique' to avoid saying things like 'weird' or 'queer.' That feeling immediately left when I met my honors teacher, **Ms. Ashleen Williams**. I met a woman who was adventurous and spontaneous. A person who laughed at her oddities and shortcomings yet was not afraid to say she enjoyed a good book from time to time. Ms. Williams showed me that being different is not a misfortune, but rather simply a way to express to the world new and interesting individuals. It is because of the life lesson she taught me that she will remain one of my favorite individuals." – *Tia Floyd (SMBHC 20)*

"Over the course of my studies at the Croft Institute, I took classes on Middle Eastern history and politics by **Dr. Ibrahim**. She was also my faculty mentor for my Croft/Honors senior thesis, for which I benefited tremendously from her mentorship and advice.

"Without her guidance and expertise in Middle Eastern historical and political studies, I would not have been able to earn the Croft prize for Best Middle East Thesis and the Portz Scholar award from the NCHC (National Collegiate Honors Conference) in 2015 for my thesis on language policy in Algeria.

"Dr. Ibrahim's mentorship and strong guiding hand were also extremely critical in shaping my academic journey at Ole Miss. In her classes, she is incredibly focused, driven, and takes tremendous care and attention in fostering a positive learning environment where valuable skills in critical thinking, self-reflexivity and mutual respect are foregrounded, allowing her students to expand and enrich the ways they approach varied social and historical issues discussed in class.

"But the best quality of Dr. Ibrahim makes itself manifest through the ways she inspires, animates and empowers her students to succeed beyond the contours of the classroom and the university setting. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Ibrahim for demonstrating to me and embodying the highest of standards not just in her teaching and scholarly contributions as a historian of the Middle East but also in her conduct, character and the boundless wealth of tenacity and wisdom she possesses to push her students beyond their limits!

"It was through her mentorship that had inspired me to pursue a career as an aspiring educator and teacher in social justice issues, as I am now pursuing a Ph.D. in women's and gender studies at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. We still do keep in touch regularly even after my graduation from Ole Miss, and I've sought her advice and opinions on issues ranging from graduate school to possible career trajectories.

"On a personal note, I only wish I were eloquent enough to express fully and to do justice to the myriad of ways she has demonstrated care, kindness, compassion and understanding while I was undergoing various challenges and trials laboring to complete my senior thesis. It has been a tremendous privilege working under her, and I thank her deeply for all the ways in which she has helped me grow as a student, scholar and individual." – *Amir Aziz (SMBHC 15)*

"Every morning I walked into **Professor Ibrahim's** class over the years, I was excited to learn from her. She has an innovative teaching style and gives thoughtful, exciting lectures on topics ranging from Middle Eastern water history to Egyptian religious minorities to the Arab Spring. Though she is known for being a challenging professor, she has a devoted following (me included) who line up to take her courses. She expects hard work and dedication, but I have seen her lend a listening ear to struggling students who needed guidance. During my tenure at the university, Professor Ibrahim was one of my fiercest critics, strongest encouragers and role models. It was an honor to be advised by her and take her courses over the years." – *Miller Richmond (SMBHC 17)*

EBENEZER GOODMAN

JOHN BRAHAN (SMBHC 18)

“**T**hat’s a good band name,” my friends and I thought as we passed the exit sign on I-55 displaying Ebenezer Goodman and an arrow pointing northeast.

With connotations of the Deep South, our bassist’s surname, and religion, the double name of the neighboring Southern cities fit perfectly as the alias for our nascent rock group. Two-and-a-half years later, we recorded our first album. When we started, I never imagined listening to our own original material on Spotify or seeing our green, exit sign-inspired stickers on the laptops of strangers studying in the J.D. Williams Library. Drumming for Ebenezer Goodman has been one of the most memorable and meaningful parts of my time at Ole Miss, and it all started with the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

During my freshman year, I lived on the honors floor in Minor Hall, the residence hall formerly known as Ridge South. For the first couple weeks of school, other residents and I would hang out in the first-floor study room. One night, Collin Dietrich (SMBHC 17) brought out his guitar. Inspired by Collin, Blake Sowers (SMBHC 17), Will Walker (UM 17) and I grabbed our instruments. Then, the study room became a music room where we repetitively jammed “Wagon Wheel,” the only song all of us knew.

Connecting with these talented musicians came in handy later that spring in my Honors section of Music 103 with Michael Rowlett. The final assignment required each student to record his or her own song, and with the help of my hall mates and fellow honors students, Collin, Blake, Will and Adam Schoenbachler (SMBHC 17), I recorded an acoustic version of Jason Derulo’s “Talk Dirty to Me.” Will replicated the synthesized horns using his violin, and Adam provided the bottom end of the track with his cello. Blake and Collin played acoustic guitars and sang the pop lyrics with a whiny, pop-punk flair. I added the percussive touches using my cajón, tambourine and shaker. This assignment became the foundation of my career as a musician at Ole Miss.

At the end of my freshman year, Zach Newton (SMBHC 15) and Rob Barber (SMBHC 16), two honors upperclassmen whom I admired, encouraged me to apply to be on the RebelTHON board. When I joined the team, the directors asked me to plan a benefit night at a bar in Oxford. For a successful fundraiser, I needed to provide roughly four hours of entertainment. At one of our meetings, I offered my band for the task, saying, “We’ll do it for free.” The board happily agreed, but there was one problem. I did not have a band. Luckily, I had met several musicians through the Honors College, my fraternity and RUF.





Ebenezer Goodman (Photo courtesy of John Brahan)

Finding a group of people who could learn about 60 songs in a month proved incredibly challenging. I ended up starting three separate bands to split up the load and played drums for all three groups.

First, Blake Sowers, former SMBHC assistant student director, and I gave a shout-out to our former chancellor and created Dan Jones and the Black Bears, featuring Cal Wilkerson (SMBHC 16), Will Walker and Sam Mooney (UM 18). To put the fire under our feet, Blake got us a gig with Union Unplugged, and one sunny Tuesday at lunch, we played my Honors Music 103 project, the cover of “Talk Dirty to Me,” which defined us as an acoustic pop/rap cover band playing mash-ups of all the hits from our middle school dances.

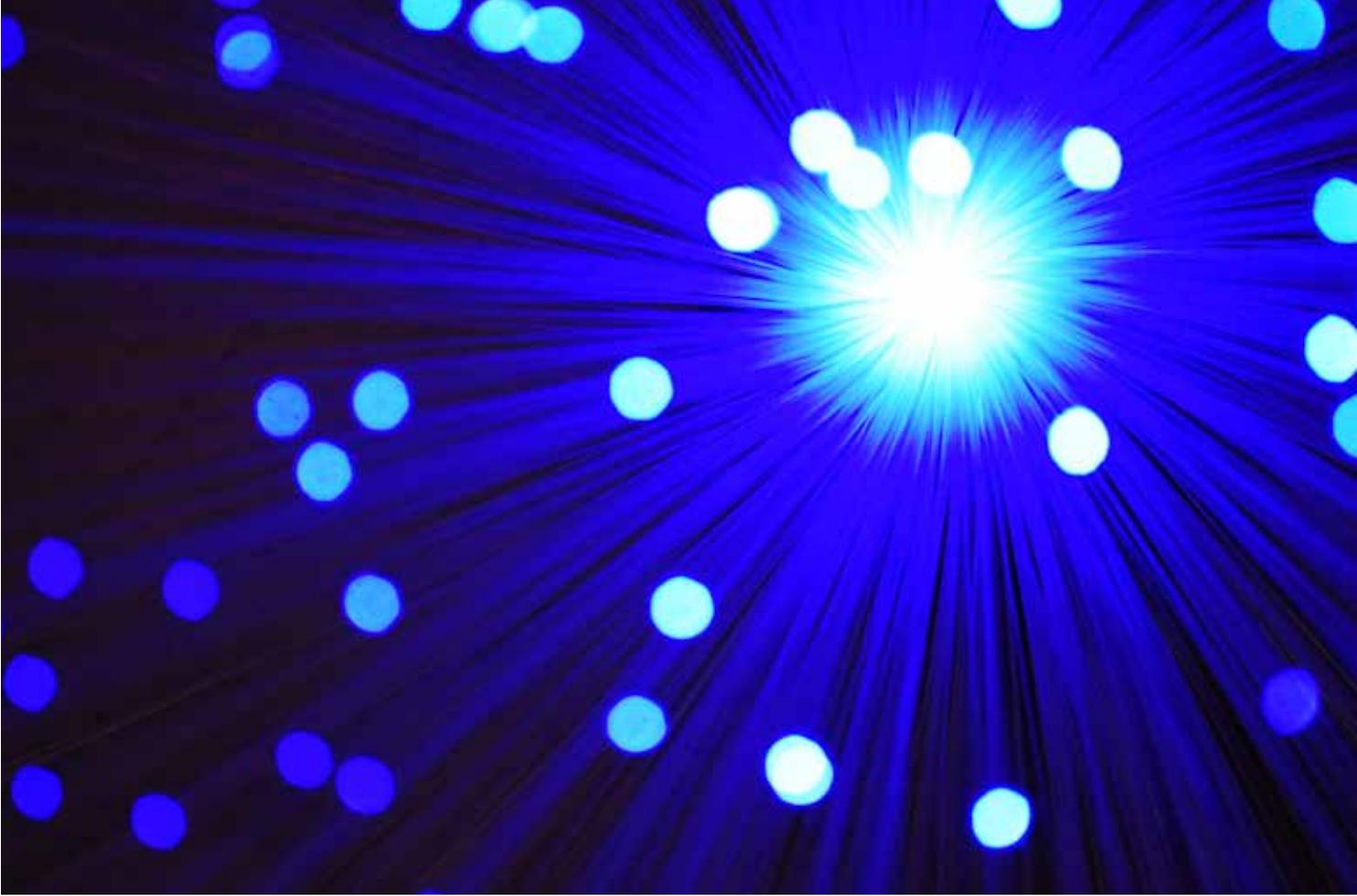
Next, I formed Constantine with Avery Goodman (UM 18), the best bass player in the student body, and four other Sigma Chis. Then, Avery introduced me to Andy Shine (UM 17) and Caleb Carroll (UM 17), both guitarists and vocalists who knew a lot of classic rock and the band My Morning Jacket. Andy, Caleb, Avery and I formed what would later become Ebenezer Goodman. After a month of long practices in the basement of the Sigma Chi house, all three bands were ready to play at Rooster’s to benefit RebelTHON.

After that night, other student organizations started asking all three bands to play at their benefit nights. For the rest of my sophomore year, I juggled three bands that played for a variety of student organizations such as Coaching for Literacy, Safe Ride and Medlife. Then, we started playing at bars on the Square, sorority and fraternity date parties, and other events on campus.

Once junior year started, Constantine fizzled out, and Dan Jones and the Black Bears played our final show in the Grove at the Honors College welcome dinner for the incoming freshmen. That night, the SMBHC helped me live my dream of playing on the Grove stage. Though the other two bands broke up, Ebenezer Goodman kept chugging along by doing pro bono work for student organizations, playing at venues around Mississippi and Alabama, and even opening for Moon Taxi at The Lyric. We started making a small name for ourselves in the local music scene.



Ebenezer Goodman (Photo courtesy of John Brahan)



'Light Series 4'
by Phillip Waller

As the brains behind the operation, Caleb began writing songs about being in Mississippi, relationships, religion and the struggles of life through the lens of an aspiring physician. Andy, our outstanding front man, and Caleb dreamed of being more than just a cover band. Avery began throwing in some original bass licks, and after a year, we had nine originals that we wanted to make into an album. At Dial Back Sound in Water Valley, we recorded our self-titled album, fulfilling another dream of mine since the first day I picked up a pair of sticks.

My connected experiences in Ebenezer Goodman and the Honors College taught me the value of music. By performing at fundraisers, Ebenezer Goodman could support diverse causes such as children's hospitals, mission trips and afterschool programs. Though these performances raised as little as \$50 and as much as \$4,000, each one showed us that our music could help other people.

Through playing at honors convocations and teaching a discussion class on Art and the Republic, Artist-in-Residence Bruce Levingston showed me the artist's ability to educate and act as the impetus that makes others feel, think and change. Overall, my appreciation for music has grown significantly. In high school, playing the drums brought me joy, but now, playing the drums gives me purpose and allows me to contribute to society.

As I look back on my development as an artist, I thank the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College for introducing me to inspirational, artistic faculty and students and ultimately showing me that music provides an outlet for personal expression, a way to lend others a helping hand and a medium to educate communities. ■ HR

Spiritual INSPIRATION

EMILY TIPTON (SMBHC 18)

In sixth grade, my American history teacher told our class, “I knew exactly what I wanted to do when I grew up from my first year of middle school. Can you guess what that was?” The logical 12-year-olds we were, we all replied, “A history teacher!”

“No,” she answered, cocking an eyebrow and grinning wisely, “a nurse.” She explained that she’d dreamt of being a nurse since breaking her arm falling out of a tree as a child. She’d gotten a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, enrolled in nursing school and suddenly been struck by a change of heart in her second year. By volunteering for a tutoring program in her spare time, she’d been inspired to completely change course and become an educator.

I scoffed at this story. I knew I wanted to be a lawyer, and I certainly knew I’d never change my mind. And I didn’t — until halfway through my freshman year, because of a professor named James Bos.

I arrived at the University of Mississippi majoring in international studies through the Croft Institute. I planned to take the International Governance and Politics track within the major, score a D.C. internship, and then matriculate to a law school with hopes of returning to the capital to pursue a career in immigration law.

Then, in my second semester at Ole Miss, I sought to fulfill my humanities credit by taking an Honors section

of Religion 101. On the first day of class (and, I would come to learn, on the first day of all his courses), my professor, Dr. Bos, asked each of us to explain why we wanted to take this class. Inevitably, student after student answered with an awkward and hesitant, “I need this credit for my major.” I can’t say confidently what my answer was, but I doubt it strayed from that trend. However, somewhere between Dr. Bos’ easy-to-understand lectures, his openness to my (often ignorant) questions and his encouragement that we research the news surrounding the religions we studied, I became intrigued.

My decision grew clearer on the early Saturday morning that my classmates Rachel and Jack picked me up from the honors residence hall to drive to the Indian Cultural Center and Temple in Eads, Tennessee. Because our class was honors and therefore a smaller group, we were able to split up into teams and travel far and wide to experience the religions we had learned about in practice, not just on paper and PowerPoint.

Together, we attended a full day of Hindu Holi festival



Assistant professor of religion
James Bos (Photo by Kevin Bain)

activities. We tucked our shoes into cubbies, walked cautiously into the temple, and were guided through the meticulous and sacred process of offering fruits, milk, perfumes and honey to Vishnu. We spoke to a priest, ate lunch with the congregated families and danced with hundreds of strangers during the Holi celebration, a bright and beautiful festival of colors. The three of us returned to Oxford with colored powder permanently embedded in our tennis shoes and with knowledge we’d never

expected to gain from a simple 101 class.

Some of the things we'd learned, though, conflicted with what we'd been told in class. We shared this with Dr. Bos upon our return, and he accepted our corrections with grace, unafraid to confess that even his knowledge was limited. He specializes in biblical studies and Judaism, not Hinduism, after all.

After catching a glimpse of the vast, unknown world of religious studies outside my lifetime of practicing religion, I couldn't get enough. Though I loved the Croft Institute, I knew (with the same certainty I believe my sixth-grade history teacher felt) that I needed to pursue religious studies. I spoke with Dr. Bos about becoming a religious studies major; since then, I've taken four of his classes.

He has become one of my greatest mentors, pointing me to the other honors students in his classes to collaborate

on study guides, notes and peer review of papers. He has guided me through changing my major, helped welcome me to the small, tight-knit community of religious studies students and faculty, and shown constant patience with me as I've endured the many difficulties of collegiate life.

On April 9, 2017, Dr. Bos and his wife welcomed their new son, Kieran, into the world. If Dr. Bos parents anything like he teaches, he will be a devoted, honest, challenging, encouraging father. If Kieran grows up to be anything like his father, he will be an open-minded,

well-educated, even-keeled child supported by the same community of Ole Miss and honors students and faculty who admire and respect the man who is raising him.

No words could express my gratitude to the SMBHC for giving me incredible mentors like Dr. Bos, unlikely opportunities such as attending a Holi ceremony and rare guidance through the difficult decision to switch majors.

While I struggled with my decision and the emotional conflicts around essentially abandoning my carefully determined life plan, not

“

WE SPOKE TO A PRIEST, ATE LUNCH WITH THE CONGREGATED FAMILIES AND DANCED WITH HUNDREDS OF STRANGERS DURING THE HOLI CELEBRATION, A BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL FESTIVAL OF COLORS. THE THREE OF US RETURNED TO OXFORD WITH COLORED POWDER PERMANENTLY EMBEDDED IN OUR TENNIS SHOES AND WITH KNOWLEDGE WE'D NEVER EXPECTED TO GAIN FROM A SIMPLE 101 CLASS.”

– Emily Tipton



Jack Freveletti (left), Rachel Dennis (SMBHC 17) and Emily Tipton (SMBHC 18) (Photo courtesy of Emily Tipton)

only Dr. Bos but many of his fellow honors professors and faculty members reached out to me. Dr. Sarah Moses, now my adviser, encouraged me to speak to her before making the decision. Her husband and my previous adviser, Dr. Will Schenck of the Croft Institute, aided me in my transition even after I left the Croft major. Dr. Fei Lan, on the advice of Dr. Bos, invited me to participate in the Religious Studies Student Research Symposium.

And in my most dire moments of indecision and distress, our ever-patient dean, DSG (a religious leader himself), counseled me on one of the hardest ideas for many honors students to accept: Grades and plans are not and cannot be everything. "Take good, managed risks," he told me, "and let the grade come to you. The grade is not the end product here. ... We believe in what you will do over your life — that is the end product."

I came into the Honors College thinking that the "honor" was to be chosen as a member. But now, two years in, I know that the real honors given by the SMBHC are to learn from incredible professors like Dr. Bos, the opportunity to delve wide and deep into all areas of academia, and the privilege to take risks and change course without losing track. ■ HR

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

D.J. Johnson (SMBHC 18) perfects the curve of a fireplace poker he and other Honors College students made under the watchful eye of blacksmith Andy Waller. Some honors students kicked off 2017 with unique wintersession experiences, including cooking up delicious dishes with award-winning chef John Currence. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



1/17



2/17

Twenty-six groups of honors freshmen (SMBHC 20) convened at the Jackson Avenue Center on Feb. 4 to share their videos of the interviews they conducted and the adventures they experienced while traveling coast to coast to answer the **2017 Freshman Ventures** question: What does the majority owe the minority? Two groups won Best Presentation and a trip to New York City and tickets to a show. Traveling to Bismarck, North Dakota, Matthew Saucier, Ethan Burroff, Gabi Wells, Laura Conwell and Emily Cobb interviewed people regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline. Anna Stephens, Emily Haupt and Alston Tyer traveled to Tucson, Arizona, to inquire about the Tucson Border Patrol. The winning students stand with DSG. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



“America Selfie” (detail)

by native Oxonian

LAURA ELKINS

on exhibit through

Sept. 29

Sally McDonnell Barksdale

Honors College,

Great Room

ABOUT THE WORK

“America Selfie,” a site-specific painting installation for the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College at the University of Mississippi, is a portrait of America now, and then — in essence a contemporary take on history painting — and uses current events, American history, national symbols, and contemporary and art historical imagery to explore and develop a portrait of America.

See her work on her website, lauraelkinsartist.com, and her Instagram pages, @lauraelkins and @aliasart. Friend her and follow her on Facebook.

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



Over 1,000 students danced the night away at the **Second Annual HOCO Formal** at The Lyric on Feb. 3, 2017. (Photos by Elijah Gaddy Photography)

2/17

From professor TO MENTOR



Mariah Cole and John Rimoldi (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

MARIAH COLE (SMBHC 17)

I couldn't help but grin with excitement as I descended the stairs of Faser Hall, a building that would soon become all too familiar. I had just been granted the opportunity to work in Dr. (John) Rimoldi's lab with his graduate students and research scientist.

My decision to join the Honors College hinged on the ability to complete a thesis project. During my freshman biology honors recitation class, our teacher encouraged us to find an adviser early in our college career to decrease the stress of completing our projects.

Serendipitously, I was taking Dr. Rimoldi's Hon 101 class, and he had mentioned the research currently underway in his lab. His research revolved around synthesis of compounds structurally similar to natural products that provide relief of symptoms caused by neurodegenerative disorders. This piqued my interest as I have several family members dealing with neurodegenerative disorders.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"I took Professor Rimoldi's class at 8 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Not once did I dread walking halfway across campus on those mornings because I knew I was in for an intriguing discussion. You could tell Dr. Rimoldi really valued his students' opinions because he would allow us to express ourselves without interjecting too often. Because of that, I got to see how my peers genuinely felt about the topics we discussed instead of being taught how to feel by a professor. In and out of class, Dr. Rimoldi was a really cool teacher — most definitely my favorite so far." —

Christina Epps (SMBHC 20)



Professor John Rimoldi, 2017 Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher, shakes hands with the 2016 winner, law professor John Czarnetzky, who also teaches honors classes. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

Though I had no research experience, I took a risk and asked to join Dr. Rimoldi's lab. After nervously knocking on his office door, I walked into his office, where he invited me in with a warm smile. Dr. Rimoldi has a distinct, intense and attentive stare that gave me no indication of what he was thinking. However, once he spoke again, the smile returned, and he expressed

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"When I came in as a freshman to my Honors 101 and 102 classes, Rimoldi encouraged me to use my voice as a writer and gave me the intellectual stimulation and environment that I needed to grow as a scholar. He showed me how to explore the most important questions one will ever ask in a uniquely diverse community of fellow Honors College students, and his charisma and enthusiasm for both learning and life made me excited every day to wake up for his 8 o'clock class." – *Thomas McFann (SMBHC 19)*

enthusiasm in having me in his lab the next year. Little did I know how his acceptance would change the course of my college career.

During the fall of my sophomore year, I began shadowing Dr. Rimoldi's graduate students. I watched and participated in several experiments that year as well as learned other helpful skills along the way. I was afforded the opportunity to participate in the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) Summer Research Program within his lab the following summer.

As the summer marched on, I developed a love for research, and Dr. Rimoldi was instrumental in this process. Always encouraging, his kind words often inspired me to experiment by taking calculated risks and to feel pride in my growth and success. After the program ended, I continued working in his lab the following year and into the summer. It was during that period that I witnessed Dr. Rimoldi's interactions with other students, and I saw that I was not the sole benefactor of his encouragement; he always found a way to engage his students in the scientific process.

His assistance surpassed working through problems in synthesizing compounds. He also helped me in planning my professional future. My COBRE research experience left me with the desire to include research in my career path. However, I was unsure of where pharmacy fit into the research world.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

“As a groggy student stumbling into an 8 a.m., I found Dr. Rimoldi’s smile a refreshing start to the day, and it wasn’t long before I was walking into that same 8 a.m. with a smile of my own.

“One of the defining moments of his class for me was also arguably one of the hardest to swallow. About midway through the semester (probably more so around the third-week mark if I’m being honest), I think that Dr. Rimoldi recognized that I wasn’t hesitant to share my opinion. However, there were a few individuals in the class that were more reticent. Because of this, Dr. Rimoldi would occasionally about halfway through the class say, ‘Alright Caroline, you’ve reached your word count for the day,’ or something to that effect.

“Admittedly, I initially felt a little put out, but then I began to listen to classmates who seemed to have hardly spoken the entire semester make these magnificent statements that brought so much more to the table than what had been there before. Dr. Rimoldi taught me one of the best lessons in college that I’ve learned so far; he taught me that everyone deserves to have a voice and that everyone deserves to have that voice listened to.

“The great thing about Dr. Rimoldi, aside from the absolutely infectious kindness that he exudes, is that he has a knack for making everyone around him feel included in whatever conversation is going on. He never forced his opinion, and he never belittled anyone for theirs. Instead, he created an atmosphere that our entire class was able to thrive in. There wasn’t a student in my class that he didn’t pay attention to, and I feel that there’s not a person he comes into contact with that isn’t better for it. Dr. Rimoldi is truly an inspiration to me, and I’m so glad that I had the opportunity to know him.”

– Caroline Bell (SMBHC 20)

Dr. Rimoldi helped me explore my options. I decided to take the Honors College’s Junior Quest trip to Boston, Massachusetts, seeking more answers. Dr. Rimoldi helped me reach out to his colleague in the pharmaceutical industry, and through him I learned so much about the industry as well as created some career options for myself.

From the beginning, he has always encouraged me and given me ample opportunities to grow as a person and student. His personality and actions command a certain respect from his students, which, in turn, makes us not want to disappoint him. Inevitably, we push ourselves to accomplish more. This is only part of what makes him an outstanding teacher! I am forever grateful that Dr. Rimoldi took a chance on me. ■ HR

“Hamblett’s Dreams and Visions”

Bethany Fitts

Childhood’s captured August waits
with branches clothed in golden tones.
A tree-framed path from memory
now leads me to my bygone home.

My home was painted with the strokes
of leaves and autumn-dusted lawn
and streaks of pine stark green against
the ashen winter coming on.

At evening Father’s frame approached
with his old horse not far behind.
His voice was warmth like winter’s flame.
His words were always kind.

But now I see neither autumn tree
nor Mother laughing or Father’s eyes,
but an owl perched on branches dead.
They’ve been dead for quite some time.

Where once was movement, youth
and spring now sits that owl’s carcass-tree
And moon, an orb with piercing gaze,
glares down at my broken body.

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



Blair Wortsmith (SMBHC 19) celebrates her Most Beautiful title at the annual Parade of Beauties with Austin Powell (SMBHC 17), who served as ASB president during the 2016-17 school year. In June, Wortsmith competed in the 2017 Miss Mississippi Pageant and was a preliminary winner in Swimwear. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



The Barksdale Award is an award of \$5,000 to enable students to undertake projects they have dreamed up, planned out in some detail and are ready to implement on their own, if they just had some money to make it happen. That's why our single criterion is 'Make us jealous.' **The 2017 Barksdale Award winners** are **John Chappell** and **Elizabeth Taylor**.

(Photo by Kevin Bain)

Chappell (SMBHC 19) is working toward majors in both Arabic and international studies, with a focus in the Middle East and international governance and politics. For his Barksdale project, he will conduct a comparative study of irrigation systems in Morocco and New Mexico. Chappell believes that the similarities between the two systems are linked to the influence of Arab systems of irrigation. He hopes to test this hypothesis and to learn more about the socio-political structures at work in water-scarce environments.

After 12 years of Barksdale Awards, for the first time, a Junior Entry student has won a Barksdale Award. Congratulations to **Taylor** (SMBHC 18) for breaking that barrier. She does not waste time! With this award, Taylor will spend a month in Dublin, Ireland. A not-for-profit there has met with success in its work with women affected by sex trafficking and prostitution. Taylor wants to figure out how to create similar nonjudgmental social, psychological and infrastructure support in the U.S. She is seeking a degree in sociology.

The Art of

REFLECTION



TIM DOLAN

I never know when a future Rhodes or Fulbright scholar will walk into my office.

Occasionally a student comes to me with a specific scholarship in mind. More commonly, I find students who only have a vague notion that prestigious awards exist but have never considered themselves contenders for such top honors.

I never tire of meeting with students and talking about the many ways they can turn their academic curiosity and civic engagement into a pathway for success. Most of my work involves current students, but alumni may also be good

'Winged Victory of Samothrace' (Photo courtesy of Lyokoï)

candidates for national scholarships. Certain awards such as the Fulbright Public Policy Fellowship or the German Chancellor Fellowship Program seek young professionals with advanced degrees and several years' work experience.

As a freshman or sophomore, students may not feel very competitive for a nationally prestigious award. But SMBHC students who become zealous about learning and committed to the public good often end up with resumes that show impressive service, research or internships.

My job as director of the Office of National Scholarship Advisement is to help students start early to find ways to pursue those passions. For many of those highly motivated students, applying for a national scholarship becomes the next logical step in achieving their academic and career goals. Those experiences allow students to deepen their academic training or experiential learning and connect students to networks of like-minded peers.

I encourage students to talk to their professors early on in their freshman year

to learn about the campus community and beyond.

In his freshman year, Hunter Gabbard (SMBHC 16) turned an interest in physics into a research position with the LIGO Scientific Collaboration. He began writing computer programs to help filter out false positive readings so the group could measure gravitational waves. Four years later, he became a Fulbright Scholar to Germany to learn machine learning programming at the Max Planck Institute.

Olivia Davis (SMBHC 17) became interested in the music, religion, history and art of Greece while completing a classics minor. She will be a Fulbright Scholar to Greece in fall 2017 and teach English. She is a compelling and competitive candidate because she is fascinated by how history informs the present in Greek life: especially how artists are using their work to respond to the current economic downturn there.

Austin Powell (SMBHC 17) is passionate about civil rights and entrepreneurship and had an opportunity to teach entrepreneurship in the prison system in order to help

inmates become successful once they are released. His interests and experience helped him become a Rhodes finalist. Although he was not successful in his Rhodes bid, he was accepted to Oxford University and will be pursuing a Master of Science in criminology there in fall 2017.

Faculty at the University of Mississippi know how to connect students to interesting opportunities to expand their learning and serve the public good. College is the time for students to explore and learn what inspires them.

I became the director of ONSA in fall 2015, and I inherited a successful program built by Dr. Debra Young, the associate dean of the Honors College. I promote national scholarship opportunities, identify potential applicants, mentor students and provide editing advice as they complete the application.

Each national scholarship has its own mission, eligibility and application requirements. My office helps students find a good fit between the mission of the scholarship and their own long-term goals. Students who are most competitive have a demonstrated



OLIVIA DAVIS WINS FULBRIGHT ASSISTANTSHIP TO GREECE

Olivia Davis (SMBHC 17) won a 2017 Fulbright U.S. Student Program English Teaching Assistantship to Greece. Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Olivia grew up in different cities and states throughout the South and went to high school in Jackson, Mississippi. She graduated this past May with a bachelor's degree in English and minors in chemistry, music and classics, with an emphasis in ancient Greek. She hopes to study Byzantine chanting and Christian hymnody in the Greek Orthodox Church as a side research project while she teaches English as a second language.

history of genuine academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, determination and a sense of purpose.

Of all the perks that come with my job as director of the Office of National Scholarship Advisement, what I enjoy most is finding a student for whom college has been a life-changing experience. I work with plenty of students who know exactly what they want or who have the support of family or mentors who can help them navigate the complex world of graduate or professional school and the national scholarships to pay for it. But I enjoy finding the student who is on fire about an idea or a cause or who has discovered a passion in a research lab or an internship but who has never considered himself or herself worthy of a scholarship such as the Rhodes or Truman.

I like those humble, self-effacing students who excelled in high school and college but worked hard because that is “just what you do.” In the best situations, college allows students to connect their core values with a career and have a life that serves a greater purpose in addition to providing financial stability.

Rural students often lack adult mentors and struggle to access or create professional networks in college.

I encourage them to try to learn from faculty and more experienced students about how academic networking works. There are many funding opportunities, especially during the summer, but students need to learn to ask mentors and professors about their resources and how to strategize for continuous support during their degree program. And they need to learn to take

pride in their scholarly accomplishments and practice sharing the news of those accomplishments in genuine language. Students also learn from being mentors to younger students.

I’ve had the great blessing to travel to many interesting places in the world. When I went to Paris right out of college, my brother-in-law suggested I read Hemingway’s *A Moveable Feast*. The Paris I visited was nothing like Hemingway’s Paris of the 1920s, but it provided me with plenty of touchstones of culture: bars, cafés, hotels and neighborhoods that fired my imagination and gave me a well-worn road map to follow once I got there.

Hemingway is correct when he says, “If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.” It is also an overwhelming place. My host family shook their heads at my itinerary and told me the number of places I planned to visit in three weeks was more than most Parisians visited in 10 years.

Museums were bewildering. One great work of art is overwhelming. The 38,000 masterpieces in the Louvre Museum become numbing. I eventually learned to slow down, sit down, and try to focus my attention on one or two works in each room that seemed to speak to me. Some masterpieces are attention grabbing. Others communicate their charms in subtler ways.

There are two ancient Greek statues depicting images of



(Photo by Bill Dabney)



(Photo courtesy of James DeMarshall)

2017 BOREN SCHOLARS

Madeleine Achgill and James DeMarshall, 2017 graduates of the SMBHC and Croft Institute for International Studies, are 2017 Boren Scholars and will be spending the 2017-18 year in China. Boren Awards provide funding for U.S. students to study abroad in areas of the world that are critical to U.S. interests and underrepresented in study abroad, including Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America and the Middle East.

victory that I find immensely moving and interesting. The “Winged Victory of Samothrace,” housed in the Louvre museum in Paris, instantly grabs your attention. It is a large marble sculpture thought to depict the goddess Nike as a woman, buffeted by wind, standing, perhaps, on the bow of a ship victorious with outstretched wings. The masterpiece implies a relationship of the goddess to the space around her and is dynamic and somehow both human and divine. It is unmistakably symbolic, and its placement at the top of the Daru staircase creates a powerful vision, framed by a limestone arch, towering above you as you climb the stairs.

The other statue, the “Charioteer of Delphi” in the Delphi Archaeological Museum, is a much more subdued version of victory. It is a life-sized bronze statue of a very young charioteer wearing a tunic, with his hands gripping the reins as he takes his victory lap. His clothes hang naturally, and his hair is plastered to his head with sweat. His feet are bare. His pose is stiff but solid. His head tilts to one side, and his inlaid eyes show intensity. He radiates calm inner power and self-assurance.

Each statue has its grace and potency, and each reminds me that victory in our world comes in many forms. Some students enter my office like the winged victory, triumphant and larger than life. Most come to me as the charioteer, drenched in sweat from their efforts, focused on holding onto the reins to stay in control.

“Ode to Biscuits”

Bethany Fitts

Saturday-morning soft cake
mixed in, made from
finely ground grain
and raised in a blaze—
years of younger memories
blend into your batter
with its dashes of branches
like open arms painting sun-down
shadow across landscape or a pinch
of glass pond rippling across
Grandpa’s reflection as your scent
wraps around the porch and
mingles with wind-chimes.
Now weekdays’ plodding humdrum
drains, those dry-toast mornings
making me crave handcrafted
downy layers of dough.
Thrown in a bowl, whisked
into course crumbs, tossed around
in wheat, rolled out thin
and cut into separated circles.
Tiresome process it seems,
but Self-rising flour, you climb
in heat and when the time
comes around, showing
Midas’ touch baked into your
exposed edges like honeyed
spheres dusted in dawn’s rays,
the oven will open
and your soft center will be lavished
in butter, stuffed with sweet
strawberry jam.
Jelly will flow from
your flaky layers,
dripping onto my hands that
have waited for your
work to be finished.

It has been a busy and productive year for the Office of National Scholarship Advisement with one student winning a Fulbright Scholarship, two students winning Boren scholarships, six students winning Critical Language scholarships and one student named a Rhodes Scholar finalist. We also had an increase in the number of students applying for national scholarships. And while some of our best students did not receive the scholarship they applied for, the process of applying for a national scholarship led them indirectly to other awards and appointments.

Vera Gardener (SMBHC 17) did not get a Fulbright

Study grant to France but instead earned a full scholarship for aeronautical engineering at the Institut Supérieur de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace in Toulouse, France. Instead of a Boren Scholarship, Nathaniel Williams (UM 18) received a SALAM Scholarship from the Sultanate of Oman to study Arabic.

Winning prestigious awards is important, but students benefit from the process of applying for scholarships regardless of the outcome. The mission of the ONSA is to inform students about the scholarship opportunities that exist, identify high-achieving candidates for national scholarships,



Tim Dolan, director of the Office of National Scholarship Advisement

and provide mentoring for students as they navigate the application process.

This often involves casting a large net to find appropriate



'Old Post Office Building'
by Phillip Waller

matches between students and opportunities. Some top students have set their sights on professional schools, which often make them ineligible for certain scholarships. Other students' career and academic goals shift as they gain experience and they unknowingly become good candidates for national scholarships.

Once the application is finished and winners are announced, I meet with each student to assess the overall process. While putting together a competitive application is a time-consuming and rigorous process, students find it valuable for many reasons. They appreciate taking

the time to reflect on their experiences and find the continuity between seemingly disjointed experiences. They enjoy turning their experiences into descriptions and narratives because it helps them see their roles as contributing to and participating in the world in which they live.

Reflection develops a stronger sense of identity and confidence in their sense of self-authorship. Making meaning out of experience is really at the heart of what it is to be human. All the students appreciated the time they spent considering their personal and academic goals and graduate school options. Cognitive scientists

acknowledge the role of reflection in learning, even asserting that learning occurs not because of the experience itself but as a result of reflecting on the experience and testing it against further experience and the experience of others.

Any alumni or current students interested in exploring national scholarship options are encouraged to contact me at tadolan@olemiss.edu or 662-915-1798.

It is an exciting time to work with students in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, and I look forward to the coming year's scholarship application cycle. ■ HR

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



2017 SMBHC graduates **Heather Poole** and **Sarah Sutton** presented posters at “**Posters in the Rotunda**” in Jackson, Mississippi, on March 23, 2017.

Keller, Texas, native Heather **Poole** presented “Improving Health of Rural Mississippians through Farmers’ Markets.”

Poole graduated with a degree in nutrition and dietetics. Her faculty mentor was David Holben, and she received external funding from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation. After graduation, Poole began pursuing a dietetic internship program to complete her rotations in order to become a registered dietitian.

3/17



Albuquerque, New Mexico, native Sarah **Sutton** presented “Spectroscopic and Computational Study of Chlorine Dioxide/Water Interactions.” Her faculty mentor was Nathan Hammer, and she received external funding from the National Science Foundation. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry.

Jason Hale, director of research development for the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the University of Mississippi, coordinated UM posters for this event.

(Photos courtesy of Sarah Sutton and Heather Poole)



CITIZEN SCHOLARS IN THE WORLD

1991 — The Rev. **Wade Cox** (BA) was appointed senior minister of Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, on July 1, 2017. Cox is in his final year of a Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary.



2000 — **Mike Juhas** (BBA, BA) is in his second year of serving as superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, which has two high schools, seven elementary schools and three early learning centers, with a total enrollment of about 3,000 students from across the Florida Panhandle.



2008 — **Mimi Abadie** (BA, UMMC 13) completed her combined residency in internal medicine and pediatrics this past June at Georgetown University Medical Center

in Washington, D.C., where she served as chief resident. Pursuing her passion for global health, Abadie will be joining Texas Children's Hospital Global Health Corps this fall as a staff physician to serve in Swaziland with the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative. BIPAI is a medical organization that aims "to provide high-quality, high-impact, highly ethical pediatric and family-centered health care, health professional training and clinical research, focused on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, malnutrition and other conditions impacting the health and well-being of children and families worldwide." BIPAI serves as a primary pediatric HIV/AIDS and TB care and treatment provider in Swaziland, which has the highest HIV prevalence of any country in the world.

2009 — **Meghan Milloy** (BA) is director of financial services policy at the American Action Forum. Last year, she started a group called Republican Women for Hillary, which has since been incorporated as a 501(c)(4) and relaunched as Republican Women for Progress (gopwomenforprogress.org). The group's long-term plan is to be an Emily's List for moderate Republican women, but in the short term, the group hopes to empower women to get more involved in politics, serve as thought leaders in the media, and work as mediators for

women in state chapters to connect to D.C.

2010 — **Kent Ford** (BA) received his J.D. degree from the American University Washington College of Law in May. This fall he will join the international law firm Ropes & Gray LLP as a litigation associate in the firm's New York City office.

2011 — **Chelsea Caveny** (BA) graduated in May 2016 from the University of Alabama School of Law and began work at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Jackson, Mississippi. Caveny's practice focuses on criminal justice reform issues, and she spends most of her time working on a class-action lawsuit dealing with the conditions of confinement in Mississippi prisons.

2012 — **Abby Olivier** (BA) is museum and program director at ESSE Purse Museum in Little Rock, Arkansas. Before joining ESSE, she received her M.P.S. from and worked full time for the Clinton School of Public Service.

2012 — **Mary Alex (née Street) Thigpen** (BA) has been promoted to director of marketing for the Mississippi Children's Museum.

2013 — **Joshua Holdenried** (BA) is a fellow at the Public Interest Fellowship, where his positions included political analyst at Opportunity Alliance Services Inc. and policy analyst at the Foreign Policy Initiative.

Previously, Holdenried was on the rapid response team on foreign policy for the Marco Rubio Presidential Campaign and a research assistant for K.T. McFarland. Holdenried was recently selected to participate in the Claremont Institute's Publius Fellowship program, which "brings together a selective group of promising young conservatives to study the distinctive moral and political principles of the American constitutional order. In over 40 intensive daily seminars and relaxed evening symposia, Publius fellows discuss political philosophy and American government with distinguished scholars."



2013 — Gabby Coggin (BA) completed her master's degree in anthropology at the University of Mississippi in 2016 and now works as an academic counselor for the university's College of Liberal Arts.

2013 — Jess Waltman (BAccy, JD 16) is an associate attorney with the law firm of Davis & Crump PC in Gulfport, Mississippi. Waltman primarily works on complex pharmaceutical and medical device litigations, and he is licensed to practice law in all state and federal courts in Louisiana and Mississippi.

2014 — Rachel (née Lowe) Cramer (BSPS 14, PharmD 17) has begun a one-year postgraduate pharmacy practice residency at the Mayo Clinic Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. She married Alexander Cramer at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, on June 3, 2017.

2015 — Colton Herrington (BS) is living in Los Angeles, where he continues to forge a path in the entertainment industry. After working in the marketing department of a mini-major film studio for two years, he has transitioned into a new role this year with MarketCast LLC. As a research manager on the campaign analytics team, Herrington works closely with several major film studios on their various film campaigns, providing valuable insight from consumer market research that informs the studios' strategies and hones their creative materials to deliver the best targeted messaging possible.

2016 — Alexandra Bensel (BSPS) has been accepted into the University of Mississippi's School of Medicine Class of 2021 and is beyond excited to begin her journey in medicine this fall.

2016 — Hannah Hultman (BA) anticipated teaching English in China for a year upon her graduation, but she stayed in Oxford working at Saint Leo until she was offered a job at Nasdaq. She moved to New York in January, lives in Brooklyn, and works in the market tech department, supporting three of Nasdaq's executives.

2016 — Sara Kiparizoska (BA) will begin her M2 year in the fall and has been working on congenital heart disease research with Dr. Michael McMullan at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. In June, Kiparizoska's honors thesis was published in the *International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology*.



'Cherry Blossoms at Peak Bloom'
by Phillip Waller



Giver of **COURAGE**

SARA PORCHEDDU

When someone does you a favor, it is proper to thank them. But what does one do when someone does so much for you — lends you so many helping hands and offers so many kind words — that “thank you” just is not enough? I still do not know the right answer to that question, but I do know the person who made me ponder it in the first place.

Dr. Bob Brown, a legendary professor of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, has done more for me during my short time at the University of Mississippi and beyond than I could have ever dreamed, but I am not the only one to have experienced his one-of-a-kind friendship. Dr. Brown, more than any teacher I have ever known, goes above and beyond his call of duty every day to provide his students with compassion, guidance and patience through what can only be described as acts of selfless devotion. That is why when he was awarded the Thomas Frist Student Service Award last spring, I was anything but surprised, and I could think of no one more deserving.

Over the past three years, I have had the honor of getting to know Dr. Brown — starting with my Honors 101 class in fall 2014. During what would prove to be one of the most

Sara Porcheddu stands with Bob Brown, who is (of course) wearing a Cubs hoodie. She attended the Honors College from fall 2014 to fall 2016. She is now pursuing her undergraduate studies in Texas. Her presence on the Ole Miss campus is missed. (Photo courtesy of Sara Porcheddu)

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

“An angel disguised as a hardcore Cubs fan.” – *Jessica Tran (SMBHC 19)*

“While Dr. Brown meaningfully engages every person during class, he also invests his own time and energy into the well-being of his students. He refines the role of the teacher by NOT focusing only on educating the student. Rather, he also seeks to encourage, drive and advocate for the individual’s personal transformation.” – *John Yi (SMBHC 16)*

“Dr. Brown is a phenomenal professor, one of the most compassionate people I know, and a dear friend. He has the exceptional ability to move a classroom by provoking interesting discussions. He asks hard questions to examine what roles we play in society and how it affects ourselves and others. He pushes his students to consider all aspects of an issue and views of people who are different from ourselves.

“Dr. Brown has shown me the beauty of getting down in the mud because life is messy and the world’s problems won’t be solved by being comfortable. I admire Dr. Brown greatly not only for his work in the classroom but also for his compassion outside of the classroom. He is a confidante to many students, values the best traits in others and encourages students to recognize their abilities. I know many people who have been affected by his sincere kindness. Dr. Brown transcends simply being a professor to students by being a genuine friend.” – *Dottie Reid (SMBHC 19)*

challenging few months of my young life, Dr. Brown’s class served as a dependable haven of intellectual discussion, honest conversation and introspective debate that fueled my personal growth.

I told those classmates things about myself that I had never told anyone else before, and we grew closer than any of us ever imagined to be possible. As he put it in his closing email to the class, it was an environment “where a diverse group of people with different economic backgrounds, races, genders, political viewpoints, sexual orientations, religious views, ... people who started off as strangers ... came together and became a group of allies.” That would have never been fostered without Dr. Brown’s guiding hands at the helm.

My relationship with Dr. Brown, however, certainly did not fade or fizzle when I walked out of his Honors 102 class and into my sophomore year. Through meetings over coffee, frantic political ravings over text, endless chains of emails and constant exchanges of articles, Dr. Brown became — without a single doubt — the greatest friend I have ever had. Yes, it is a bit hard for some to understand (and for me to explain) that my best friend is a man my parents’ age, but that small inconvenience is well worth all I have gained with Dr. Brown as my friend and role model.

I have learned so much by his example. Among many things, he has taught me how

important it is, even in the face of hardship or moral challenge, to be selfless, honest, curious, humble and courageous in everything that I do. Of those, however, my ability to be courageous in spite of the challenges I face is the trait I have developed and cherished most while under his wing.

It took that courage, after semesters of struggling and finally hitting rock bottom, for me to leave the University of Mississippi last spring. Moving back home and starting over was a daunting path to accept, but, in the end, the most difficult part of saying goodbye to Oxford was leaving Dr. Brown. There were a few moments closer to my departure date that I wished he hadn’t given me that gift of courage (and I think he might have felt the same), but he supported me through it all, and I knew it was the right choice.

My story is likely a bit extraordinary in comparison to most accounts of Dr. Brown’s service to students, but it is one that illustrates perfectly why Dr. Brown was, and will always be, so deserving of the Frist Award. His compassion and selflessness makes the 560 miles between us feel like a walk across campus, and I know, without a single doubt, we will be great friends for life. After all, he did promise that we’d go to Chicago one day, and who can turn down a trip to Wrigley Field? Go, Cubs, go! ■ HR

Thank You

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(Photo by Madelyn Parsons)

Dear SMBHC Friends and Family,

Thank you for investing in our honors students.

Thank you for spreading the word about the extraordinary and enlightening opportunities the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College provides to its students.

Thank you to members of our honors alumni who have traveled to Oxford to sit down with students and dispense advice, share stories of failure and success, and listen and respond to students' apprehensions and questions about the "real world."

The Honors College thrives because of your generosity.

Whether you give \$5 or \$500, 100 percent of your contribution helps prepare citizen scholars who are fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good and driven to find solutions.

With gratitude,



Jennifer Parsons
Assistant Dean

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Around the nation with DSG



Last May, the Manship Wood Fired Kitchen in Jackson welcomed over 40 honors alumni and staff, including John Samonds (left), Shad White (SMBHC 08), Bracey Harris (SMBHC 14), Claire Graves (SMBHC 10), Chelsea Caveny (SMBHC 11), Jake McGraw (SMBHC 10), DSG and Debra Young. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



Chancellor Jeff and Sharon Vitter joined SMBHC Dean Douglass Sullivan-González; UM Chief of Staff Sue Keiser (BA 83) and honors coordinator Penny Leeton (BA 04) for brunch with honors alumni and students at The National in New York City. Front row, from left: Elam Miller (SMBHC 18), Sue Keiser, Penny Leeton. Second row, from left: Marc Walker (SMBHC 06), Grant DePoyster (SMBHC 17), Adam Stanford (SMBHC 13), Martina Cotelo (SMBHC 14), Sharon Vitter, Chancellor Jeff Vitter, Caroline Walker. Back row, from left: Julie Neyhart, David Neyhart (SMBHC 12), Kent Ford (SMBHC 10), Peter Milligan, Lauren Freeman Milligan (SMBHC 07), DSG, Joshua Horton (SMBHC 15), Dion Kevin (SMBHC 18). (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



This past June, DSG, Associate Dean John Samonds and Oliver Dinius, director of the Croft Institute for International Studies, brunched with honors alumni at The Hamilton in Washington, D.C. From left: Phillip Waller (SMBHC 15), Parker Wishak, Alicia Dixon (SMBHC 17), Kelly Kennedy (SMBHC 15), Stephen Worley (SMBHC 11), Jessica Moeller (SMBHC 10), Anna Rubenstein (SMBHC 11), Gregory Rubenstein, Emily Duke Wishak (SMBHC 12), Luke Jenkins (SMBHC 18), CJ Jenkins (SMBHC 14), Kellee Usher Wicker (SMBHC 09), McDaniel Wicker (SMBHC 09), Neal McMillin (SMBHC 14), Alison Bartel (SMBHC 15), Lacey Shaver (BA 07), Cody LeBlanc (SMBHC 13), Alyssa Yuen (SMBHC 11), Michael Aubrey (SMBHC 11), Bob Lynch (SMBHC 08), Mimi Abadie (SMBHC 08), Anthony Yuen (SMBHC 08), Elizabeth Joseph (SMBHC 10), Andrus Ashoo (SMBHC 08). (Photo courtesy of Phillip Waller)

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



4/17

Eight of 10 students inducted into this year's University of Mississippi **Hall of Fame** are members of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. Congratulations to Acacia Santos, Yujing Zhang, Alex Martin, Chase Moore, Austin Powell, Miller Richmond, John Brahan and James Roland Markos. (Photo by Robert Jordan)



5/17

Joe Bell (SMBHC 17) stands with Barksdale fellow Ashleen Williams along the Mississippi River. Participants of this year's **Mississippi Water Security Institute** confronted questions about the relationships of water quality and availability to sound economic development and healthy ecosystems in urban environments. Funding for the MS WSI is through the Robert M. Hearin Foundation. Professor Cliff Ochs serves as director. (Photo courtesy of Ashleen Williams)

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



This May, 230 men and women composed the Honors College's **largest graduating class**. At the Honors College commissioning ceremony, Michael Holman welcomed everyone, Yujing Zhang delivered the main address, and Austin Powell bid farewell to the SMBHC Class of 2017 with a charge. Cayla Cardamone served as class marshal. (Photo by Robert Jordan)

7/17

Students from Arizona State University have started an oral health program for their honors thesis called "**Operation Toothbrush**." In this photo, the group was visiting the on-site Horizons education program at Ole Miss to teach the participating kids about oral health and its importance. The ASU students are passionate about the program and excited to spread it to the dental society at Ole Miss.



From left: Miller Myers (SMBHC 20) stands with Gitika Virdee, professor Abby Loebenberg, Kunal Mansukhani and Toral Patel from the Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University. Loebenberg is a former Barksdale fellow and is currently an Honors faculty fellow at ASU. (Photo courtesy of Abby Loebenberg)



Painter Philip Jackson (left) offers advice to a University of Mississippi art student. (Photo by Robert Jordan)

PHILIP JACKSON

Philip Jackson is an associate professor of art at the University of Mississippi in Oxford where he currently teaches and heads the painting program. His work is part of the permanent collections of art museums in Evansville and Fort Wayne, Indiana; Huntsville, Alabama; and most recently the Mississippi Arts Commission in Jackson.

His paintings have been featured in a number of premier magazines, including *Art in America*, *Southwest Art*, *American Art Collector* and *American Artist Magazine*. Jackson received an international grant for representational painting from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation in Montreal, Canada. He is a two-time recipient of the Mississippi Arts Commission Fellowship, with numerous scholarly research grants from the University of Mississippi. Most recently he was named this year's fellow of the Jane Crater Hiatt Fellowship from the Mississippi Museum of Art.

Jackson received his B.F.A. from the Columbus College of Art & Design in Columbus, Ohio, and his M.F.A. from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio, and studied abroad at (SACI) Studio Art Centers International in Florence, Italy.

Working in the established genre of still life, Jackson takes a traditional subject and invigorates it with a fresh, contemporary vision. Jackson's paintings are seen through the eyes of another world. Overlooked and commonplace, objects are suspended in a single moment. However, it is in the intimate act of seeing that one can observe an unveiling universe. Bathed in light, the mystery of each object is revealed. The haunting silence of what has happened or the inevitable finish of what is yet to come fills the air with anticipation. Imbued with a human-like presence, these inanimate objects seem as though they have been having a conversation long before our approach to the picture. ■ HR

PREPARES **CITIZEN SCHOLARS**

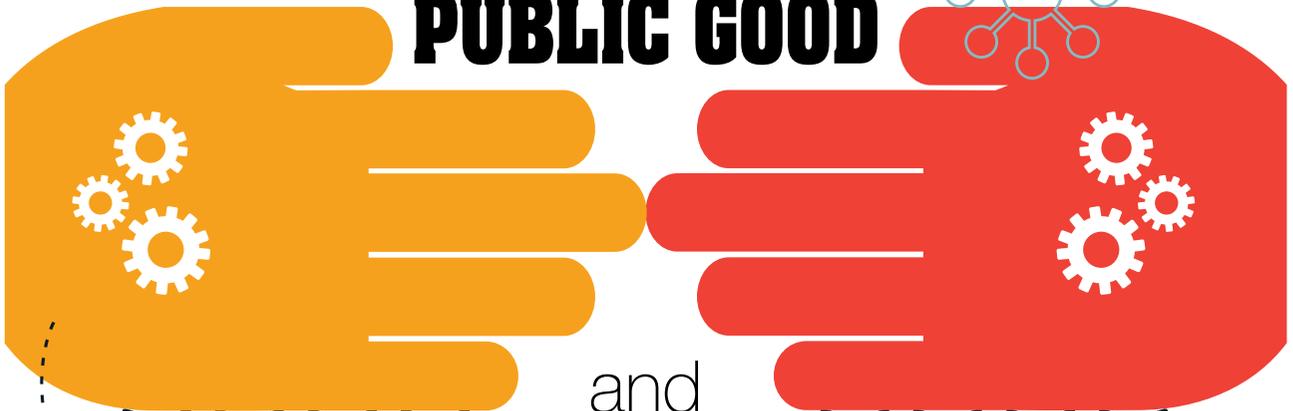
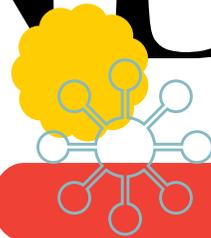


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SOLUTIONS



'Portrait'
by Nakiyah Jordan



Swinging

INTO THE NEW YEAR

The SMBHC Class of 2021, along with honors upperclassmen, enjoys swing dance lessons, one of a variety of sessions offered during the college's Welcome Week.

(Photos by Robert Jordan)





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