

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
HONORS REPORT

FALL 2018



From the DEAN

We live for change at the SMBHC! Each year, a new group of first-year honors students fills our halls and classrooms with hopes and expectations, anxieties and fears, some with crystal-clear professional goals and others with deep intuition about their future choices. These students, with our current honors scholars, galvanize a deep resolve within us to engage the tough questions that challenge the republic, to prepare them as both citizens and scholars. When the nation recognizes the distinctive contributions of our citizen scholars, we celebrate.

Our SMBHC senior Jaz Brisack became UM's 15th Truman scholar. Professors noted early on in her first two years how Jaz distinguished herself in the classroom and maintained an incredible itinerary as a labor organizer in Mississippi and as an advocate for women's reproductive rights. You can easily hear Jaz in the hallways with her singular jocularly challenging both colleague and professor to consider the tough questions from her vantage. To become our UM's next Truman scholar enables her to carry her voice to the national stage. We are very proud of Jaz and her accomplishments.

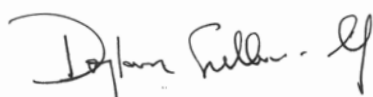
Dr. Debra Young retires after 18 years of dedicated service to the SMBHC. Debra has shaped so much of our intellectual journey. From the early years as the director of our emerging Office of National Scholarship Advisement to the producer of our Water Security Institute that garnered an amazing grant from the Hearin Foundation of Jackson, Debra has pushed the SMBHC to set the debate on campus and tackle substantive issues that affect our communities directly. She is an intellectual heavyweight who has challenged and changed all of us and our communities for the better. We wish her well in retirement.

We cannot succeed without the support of our alums and friends of the SMBHC. You have donated both time and resources to sustain the number of opportunities for our students and faculty. From the great gifts to our Koi Society to the extraordinary gifts that create fellowships and research opportunities for our students, we are deeply grateful. Thanks especially go to Jim and Donna Barksdale, who have committed \$5 million over the next five years to ensure the dream. All of these gifts enable us to keep the promises we have made to our students and to raise the academic bar of achievement for our great university.

A true team effort makes the SMBHC one of the most successful honors colleges in the nation. Your continued support and participation make this hope come alive. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.



Douglass Sullivan-González


Douglass Sullivan-González



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by Elizabeth Atkinson

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Another Year to Remember

BRUCE LEVINGSTON

This has been another extraordinary year at the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, replete with exciting events and projects; brilliant, inquisitive students brimming with thoughtful questions and exuberant energy; and a palpable communal passion that has continually encouraged learning and the sharing of ideas.

In the fall semester, I was delighted to teach a class called Art and the Republic in which students grappled with issues relating to how society influences art and artists and how they, in turn, influence our world through their art and work. This year was particularly lively as the class confronted many of the complex issues of the day in our increasingly complicated and rapidly changing world. In an era when questions of freedom, civil rights and liberties are very much at the fore, our students were deeply engaged in what it truly means to be a citizen scholar in our country.

A particularly poignant moment for me was when I was honored to present a performance at the opening of the newly built Mississippi Museum of History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. Myrlie Evers-Williams, the widow of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, was present along with many leaders from across the state and nation to celebrate the opening of this extraordinary symbol of our state's thoughtful and evolving reflection on its past and its future.

In January, I released a new album called "Windows," which contains music inspired by poetry (Wallace Stevens), art (Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse) and the memories of childhood. It contains the kind of multidisciplinary approach that I try to encourage my students to employ as we study and discuss art, history and society.

In February, I brought my friend Katie Ford to the Honors College Spring Convocation to speak about human trafficking. Katie is the former CEO of Ford Models, the largest modeling agency in the world, and one of



Bruce Levingston (Photo by Tony Notarberardino)

this nation's most prominent advocates for human rights and education about trafficking. Katie brought along her colleague Shandra Woworuntu as a co-speaker and participant in the convocation. Shandra is a survivor of trafficking who is now a leading advocate for survivors and speaks around the world to educate people about this major issue. Our students packed the Ford Center to hear them speak and share their moving stories. The students' unfiltered and unflinching questions on this challenging and complex matter were thoughtful, informed and inspiring.

In April, we brought a touch of Mississippi to New York City. I performed a solo concert at Carnegie Hall that included the world premiere of a new work by Mississippi-born and University of Mississippi and Honors College-educated composer Price Walden. The piece was originally commissioned in honor of Mississippi's bicentennial and the opening of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. Its title, "Sacred Spaces," refers to the many churches that were used as meeting places and safe spaces for African-Americans during the tumultuous and difficult civil rights era.

The program also contained a beautiful work by the distinguished African-American

composer William Grant Still called “Summerland.” Born in Woodville, Mississippi, in 1895, Still believed “Summerland” represented his vision of heaven, a place where no hatred or racism exists and souls there help the living find paths to tolerance, respect and peace.

Over 200 Mississippians attended the Carnegie Hall concert including many UM students. The renowned concert soprano and Honors College professor Nancy Maria Balach, who founded the innovative live-streaming music program “Living Music Resource,” brought four of her most gifted music students to the performance. A few days before the concert, she and her “dream team” of students conducted an interview with me for their “LMR Live” program that was seen and heard around the nation. It was thrilling to be a part of this cutting-edge series.

In September, I performed in the Honors College Fall Convocation at the Ford Center with the legendary ballet dancers Alessandra

Ferri and Herman Cornejo. In January, we three will join up once more to perform in the Royal Opera House of London and in the Teatro Fraschini in Pavia, Italy. That same month, I will release my newest solo album titled “Citizen.” It contains music by composers who have championed freedom and liberty for all peoples. I hope you will check it out!

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for continual support of our gifted students and the amazing programs in the SMBHC. It is a joy to be a part of such a special and inspiring place.

Wishing you another wonderful and adventurous year ahead!



Bruce Levingston
Chancellor’s Honors College Artist in Residence
Holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair



Each fall, Bruce Levingston teaches HON 445: Art and the Republic. Here he gathers with his fall 2017 class. Front row, from left: Dottie Reid (SMBHC 19), Levingston and Liz Clutton (SMBHC 18). Back row, from left: Kara Kennedy (SMBHC 20), Tamara Kalmykova (SMBHC 18), Jaz Brisack (SMBHC 19), Masa Miscevic (SMBHC 18) and Bethany Fitts (SMBHC 19). (Photo by Robert Jordan)



Nancy Maria Balach, associate professor of music, HON 101/102 instructor, and founder of Living Music Resource, and Bruce Levingston worked with four of Balach's top students before traveling to New York City to perform a special 'LMR Live' program. From left: Lacey Hindman (BM 18), Melanie Culhane (BM 17), Balach, Levingston, Ava Street (SMBHC 19) and Jocelyn Sanabria (BM 18). (Photo by Kevin Bain)



Bruce Levingston had the opportunity to visit with Myrlie Evers-Williams at the opening of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum on Dec. 9, 2017. (Photo courtesy Bruce Levingston)



The Honors College welcomed Shandra Woworuntu (center) and Katie Ford for the 2018 Honors College Spring Convocation on Feb. 20. Pictured with them are Bruce Levingston (left) and Douglass Sullivan-González. (Photo by Thomas Graning)



Bruce Levingston stands in front of the poster promoting his solo concert at Carnegie Hall on April 9, 2018. (Photo courtesy Bruce Levingston)

Meet our SMBHC FEATURED ARTISTS

Soso native **Nakiyah Jordan** (SMBHC 21) created this year's *Honors Report* cover: "Mostly White Speckled Black: A Mississippi Map." Jordan is seeking a B.F.A. in studio art. She is an honors ambassador and public relations chair of the Black Student Union. Should her dream of becoming an art professor not happen, then she is confident that her comedic routines will provide a roof over her head. Follow her art account on Instagram: @nakiiart. (Photo by Brianna Read)



Anna Hayward is a second-year honors early entry pharmacy student from Holcomb. She has a passion for photography and loves taking pictures around campus. You can view more of her photography on her Facebook page: AHHmazing Images. (Photo courtesy Anna Hayward)

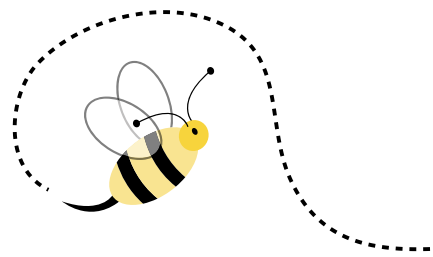
Bethany Fitts is an honors senior from Tupelo. She is a 2018 Barksdale Award winner (see details page 33) and the creative content editor for *Populi Magazine*. Last year, Fitts interned with the Sunflower County Freedom Project, and she volunteers with Mississippi Votes. For this *Honors Report*, Fitts has contributed two poems: "Thoughts of Earth upon Waking" and "Young Girl Survives Hurricane Floods." (Photo courtesy Bethany Fitts)



Honors sophomore **Elizabeth Atkinson** is an international studies major from Memphis, Tennessee. This past summer, she served as the head of painting at Camp Skyline in northeast Alabama. She serves in leadership roles for Alpha Delta Pi sorority, Model United Nations and Rho Lambda. For her artwork, Atkinson gains inspiration from her travels, colorful life and experiences. (Photo courtesy Elizabeth Atkinson)



Beekeeper DSG pulls the top shelf off one of his hives to inspect the bees and honey below. (Photo by Christian Johnson)



OH, HONEY!

The Buzz about Bees

DEVNA BOSE (SMBHC 19)

“No one is an island unto themselves.” 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.

The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College functions on this idea, so it makes sense that its dean does, too. In the last few years, he’s found a hobby that embodies that same sentiment.

Dean Douglass Sullivan-González, known affectionately as DSG, is the face of the Honors College. Almost all of the students in the program have met DSG at some point in their college careers, and almost every one of them has instantly become a fan of his. However,

something many might not know about him is his hobby outside of the office — beekeeping.

DSG first assisted a beekeeper and worked a couple of hives with him as an undergraduate. Over the course of the last five years, he read up on

beekeeping and “took the plunge” two years ago and bought his first hives.

Today, DSG has over 10 hives on his property and said he is still “learning daily.”

The facet of beekeeping that really drew him in is the mutualism that bees offer humans, and the idea that something as small and seemingly insignificant as a honeybee can affect so many, that no one is an island.

“The world of honeybees invites the observer and beekeeping into an intricate world of insect democracy,” he said. “Bees talk to the beekeeper. Learning to understand their conversation, their distinctive hum when pleased or displeased is thrilling.”

DSG said he finds the challenges confronting beekeeping intellectually stimulating as well, reminding him of the sensitive nature of the relationship between humans and bees. One of the recent challenges facing beekeeping is the Varroa mite, “a nasty little critter that attaches to the bee larvae and plants a deadly virus that deforms the wings of the new honeybee.

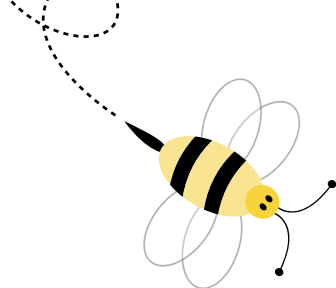
“It has wiped out tens of thousands of colonies in the USA in the last two decades,” he said. “How researchers work with beekeepers to combat this challenging pest has proved to be intellectually stimulating and provides an incredible passageway between the academy and the world of nature and human economy.”

That “passageway” is something DSG is sharing this year with some students in the form of the newly formed Beekeepers Club within the SMBHC. After a group of students contacted him about helping to pioneer the club, they met and began to take action.

The club plans to purchase hives and raise bees starting next spring. The project allows students to get a hands-on approach to beekeeping, and they will get to see the fruits



Devna Bose is the managing editor of *The Daily Mississippian*, where this story first ran on June 14, 2018. (Photo courtesy Devna Bose)



of their labor if everything goes well. The honey should be ready to harvest 15 months after they begin.

“Students need to step into this dynamic world to get a sense of the key questions beekeepers and biologists are asking in order to sense future challenges coming their way,” DSG said. “We humans, how we organize, how we combat our challenges, are not all that different from the world of bees.”

Caroline Bailey (SMBHC 20) is acting as the “go-between” for the university and the club while it gets firmly on its feet. Bailey decided to get involved with the club because she has been interested in honeybees and the beekeeping lifestyle for a couple of years, but she never had the opportunity to keep bees until the club was formed.

“When I saw the announcement about the club, I knew this was something I had to try,” Bailey said. “I am fulfilling a dream.”

Bailey’s initial interest came from a misconception detailed in the opening credits of the “Bee Movie,” funnily enough.

“The narrator mentions the myth that bees should not be able to fly, but they are able to anyway,” she said. “I was astounded by how a small black-and-yellow insect could defy the

laws of physics. While I now know, bees do not defy any scientific laws, I am still interested in the important role they play in our world.”

And that, they do. Honeybees pollinate about a third of major U.S. agricultural crops and serve as an essential part of the agricultural economy.

The club planned to host elections in August and appoint its first president. It will start with four to six hives, cultivating their growth. The club also hopes to make beekeeping more affordable by doing the project as a group.

“It is pretty expensive on the front end — suits, smoker, hives, bees — so working with a group mitigates some of those costs,” DSG said. “I would encourage anyone with an interest to join the bee club and get a sense of the year-round commitment to the world of honeybees.”

Bailey said she loves being a part of the club because it allows her to discuss her shared interest in beekeeping with her peers.

“I am so glad DSG wanted to share his wisdom and love for beekeeping with the next generation,” Bailey said. “He will be a great resource when our hives come in, for questions and advice.”

The club’s goal is to continue to grow in number, in bees and beekeepers. Right now, the club is mainly made up of Honors College students, but anyone can join ... “as long as they don’t mind being stung a few times.” ■ **HR**

“

I AM FULFILLING A DREAM.”

– Caroline Bailey



(Adobe Stock)

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

9/17

Bruce Livingston, the Chancellor's Artist-in-Residence and holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair, was inducted into the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame.



The Honors Fall Convocation welcomed **Jim Barksdale** and **Fred Smith** of FedEx. Prior to Smith's speech, he dined with Jim and Donna Barksdale, honors students and other honored guests. Pictured left to right: Jessica Tran (SMBHC 19), Galina Ostrovsky (SMBHC 19), Christopher Cross (SMBHC 18) and FedEx founder and CEO Fred Smith. (Photo by Thomas Graning)

10/17

Blair Wortsmith (SMBHC 19) won Miss Vicksburg and went on to compete in Miss Mississippi in June 2018, where she was named to the top 11 and won the Miss America Community Service Award for her time and efforts toward her platform: Guiding Youth to Financial Freedom. (Photo courtesy Blair Wortsmith)

"Unfolding Truth: Photographs by the Documentary Project Fund Awardees" was on exhibit in the SMBHC Great Room for two months and kicked off with a reception, featuring a panel of winning photographers **Kim Raff** and **Dustin Chambers**.



CAMINANDO con los COTELOS

JOHN RHODES MARTIN (SMBHC 09)

It seems like the east wing of Bondurant Hall was always overcrowded with people trying to get into or out of a classroom. I remember if you showed up too early and had to wait, there were only a few places to sit. Most of us would just stand around and clog up the foyer and stairs with our backpacks, and when the bells rang, the students' moshing through the narrow space was fast and physical. But I also loved how in the spring, Bondurant's tall classroom windows afforded beautiful views of blooming crepe myrtles, azaleas and Japanese magnolias.

That very first day, 15 or so of us freshmen filed into a corner classroom on the ground floor. The course was intro Spanish. However, having just met a group of my classmates outside, I felt like I was the only one who really needed the intro.

"I took four years in high school," said this one girl from the coast, adding, "but it wasn't AP."

"My parents are from Mexico, so we speak a lot at home," said another guy from



Backpacking along El Camino de Santiago.
(Photo courtesy Martina and Maia Cotelos)

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"I showed up at the Trent Lott building for my first day of college classes, young and I'm certain a bit nervous. By my good fortune, I was placed in Irene's intensive Spanish class. My next four years were shaped in many ways by that stroke of luck.

Irene is a great professor but a far better person. Whether setting up coffee hours or Spanish-speaking dinners, or lending personal storage space to students in need over the summer, the Cotelos are some of the most giving people I know. They truly go above and beyond to give their students every chance possible to succeed but also to feel at home, and I'm thankful to know them." — *R.J. Malenfant (UM 10)*

central Mississippi. "I just don't know the rules and stuff."

I was pretty nervous. In high school, to satisfy my foreign language requirement, I had taken two years of Latin. To this day, I cannot pronounce a word of Latin! But, I could read some simple passages OK at the time, and so I was holding out hope that my knowledge of declensions would help me understand conjugations and that my ear would catch up somewhere along the way.

We sorted ourselves into the semicircle of desks that faced the board, and shortly thereafter, la profesora appeared in the doorway. She set her things on the table at the front of the room. The bell sounded the appointed time. Immediately and unceremoniously, she began, "¡Hola, clase!" A spattering of Spanglish responses, ranging from the timid to the over-enthusiastic, echoed her

greeting. She gave a knowing smile. She then turned to the board and wrote in elegant cursive as she spoke, slowly and in clear voice, “Yo ... soy ... Irene ... Kaufmann.”

In hindsight, that otherwise innocuous moment — now 13 years ago this month — marks an indelible step on my journey. Many significant choices and achievements of my life have been fundamentally shaped by the mentorship and the very dear friendship of Irene Kaufmann, Enrique Cotelos, and their two daughters, Martina (SMBHC 14) and Maia (SMBHC 16).

The Cotelos’ story is full of adventure worth telling. They grew up in a circle of mutual friends in the suburbs of Montevideo, Uruguay, members of the second generation of a community of Jewish exiles who had fled Europe during World War II. When I was 21 years old, I had the privilege to meet Irene’s mother, Medi. At that time, I had lived my entire life within an hour’s drive of Oxford. Medi had crossed an ocean when she was not even a teenager to flee genocide. Yet as we visited, most of our experiences were more similar than different. We spoke of our love for family, we related favorite memories with friends, and we laughed that we had both learned Spanish as a non-native language, even if under wholly different circumstances.

Irene and Enrique first came to Oxford in the early ’90s to study music, Irene with her flute, and Enrique with his assemblage of drums and percussion. Secretly, I have always felt that their chosen instruments are manifestations of their personalities. Irene is thoughtful, caring and generous — a lovely, melodious person, you could say. Enrique is energetic; interactions with him are punctuated by passionate debates, and his internal drive is persistent.

Irene was my first teacher who truly embodied a professorial archetype. Early on in my time at Ole Miss, she sensed our struggle to make spontaneous conversation within the framework of our vocabulary and grammar lessons. El café de los lunes was born of her selfless desire to afford us extra opportunities for practice.

This weekly coffee shop congregation of students, in which any topic was fair game so long as you spoke Spanish, has persisted every Monday afternoon for over a decade now. You would have a daunting task to make a list of all the students who have conversed around this table. I imagine a good many of you reading this are among them and that you could also attest

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

“To say **Irene Kaufmann** and **Enrique Cotelos** are outstanding professors would be an understatement. To say that this incredible duo has gone above and beyond for the modern languages department and its students would not do their work justice. To say that these wonderful people have touched my life and countless others’ lives in the university and Oxford communities would not adequately express their lasting impact. Professors Kaufmann and Cotelos devote numerous hours outside of the classroom to assuring that their classes are engaging, investing in students via language tables and cultural events, and opening their home to students and community members. I am lucky to have taken classes with both professors, and I am even luckier to still call them family. Thank you both for all the love and passion that you share each and every day.” — *Katie Jo Wright (SMBHC 16)*

“**Irene** and **Enrique Cotelos** are a wonderful couple. Not only they are phenomenal educators, but they are also mentors and friends to their students. They show tremendous care for their students and always try to motivate them to strive for the best. They advocate for the student’s success and truly refine the role of a college professor by establishing personal connections with each one of us.” — *Tamara Kalmykova (SMBHC 18)*

“**Irene** and **Enrique** are two absolute gems at Ole Miss. Not only are they inspiring professors, but more importantly they are leaders, mentors and friends. Whether it be El café de los lunes or a Friday morning class, their dedication to our university rings true. I feel truly lucky that both played such an important role in my experience, and it is an honor for the Ole Miss community to share in their knowledge, compassion and dedication to learning and growth.” — *Joe Bell (SMBHC 17)*

“I was lucky to meet **Dr. Cotelos** in my first semester at Ole Miss. He helped make my time there feel like home. Second only to his kindness, what I remember about his classes were his wild facial expressions. If you didn’t know what he was saying in Spanish, there was a good chance that his face told you everything you needed to know. It meant a lot to me that throughout my time at Ole Miss, he continued to remember me and keep up with what I was doing.” — *Hunter Nicholson (SMBHC 14)*

to Irene's exceeding patience with the novice speaker, her ability to propel the intermediate speaker and her exacting expectations of the advanced speaker.

Irene undoubtedly gave me the gift of a second language, with which has come so much more

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

“Professor Cotelo was part of my introduction to Ole Miss and the Honors College and continued to be a constant during my four years in Oxford. He brought so much enthusiasm to the classroom and made what once seemed daunting and foreign feel familiar. Through the Honors College community, I met Professor Kaufmann, whose warmth and patience are boundless. Their passion for their students and teaching continues to inspire me as I continue in my studies. I am so thankful for the Honors College for introducing us; they taught me not only to speak Spanish but to love language, culture and, above all, people.” – *Ashley Maiolatesi (SMBHC 16)*

“It is difficult to translate **Irene and Enrique’s** excellence into words, but I will try. In short, Irene and Enrique are both remarkable educators and remarkable people. Irene and Enrique are remarkable for their generosity, enthusiasm and curiosity; most importantly, however, they are remarkable for their compassion towards their students. The readiness with which they’ve invited students into their home, life and family, is worthy of the greatest appreciation and recognition. They are wonderful friends and excellent ambassadors for Ole Miss and Uruguay.” – *Michael Malenfant (UM 10)*

“Irene wasn’t my first Spanish teacher, but she was the first to make it into an adventure outside the classroom. She set up our weekly coffee group to practice, even before I had the skills to say anything intelligible. Irene, **Enrique** and their daughters also opened their home to us: I watched the World Cup there, learned how to make empanadas, and met travelers from Uruguay, Cuba and other locales. The Cotelos were always willing to be more than just teachers — they treated us like friends and family, and for that I will always be thankful.” – *Ryan Ezelle (SMBHC 13)*

than I could have ever anticipated. Spanish has unlocked new continents and cultures, has increased my understanding and empathy for marginalized people, and has allowed me to enjoy new music and literature. But most importantly, it has been a bridge to provide comfort and care to my patients and their families in their darkest and most desperate moments.

As a fond and more lighthearted anecdote, I also think about how Irene wore her glasses perched on her nose. Upon the recognition of some difficulty a student was having, or upon the epiphany of some point a student was trying to make (but for which he or she lacked the necessary grammar or vocabulary), she would tilt her head back slightly with an “ah” or “ta” of understanding, always followed by that same warm, knowing smile, and then the glasses would come off. She would help or explain in a way that always made sense, that always made you feel successful. Then the glasses would go back up, and it was back to the book or the board and the business at hand.

My first extended experience with Enrique was on a summer exchange to ITESM (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey), in Pachuca, Mexico, through the Lott Leadership Institute. He does not know it, and I could not have named it at the time, but I must give him retrospective credit for introducing me to skepticism. The simultaneous joy and frustration of Enrique is how he approaches any claim I have ever laid before him with a combination of indignation and intellect. He is witty. He is probing. He can and will play the devil’s

LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

“I first met **Irene and Enrique** in the fall of 2001, when they started teaching Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages. We instantly connected! Call it a neighboring affection; after all, our native countries of Brazil and Uruguay share borders. They both develop some kind of bond with their colleagues and their students that we do not see very often. I consider them both natural teachers, with a remarkable level of confidence and efficiency. They consistently exceed in their class performances. Most fortunate is the department that can count on Irene’s and Enrique’s teaching skills.” – *Julia Bussade, director of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Mississippi*



Scarlett Andrews Martin (SMBHC 11), Irene Kaufmann, John Rhodes Martin (SMBHC 09) and Enrique Coteló spend time together in Oxford. (Photo courtesy Martina Coteló)

advocate, to the benefit or ruin of your argument. And though he might not wish to appear too compassionate, he, in fact, very much is.

I do not recall the pretext, but at some point not long after Mexico, a group of us students ended up at Irene and Enrique's home one afternoon. I assume it was a continuance of some unsettled theme from *El café*. Whatever the catalyst, from then on (and perhaps to their chagrin) I just ... kept showing up.

Their home was a welcoming cacophony: deep discussions in English, Spanish or the occasional sprinkling of German extended for long hours over coffee or a mate; Radiomundo streamed "En Perspectiva" in the background; the girls and their friends belted out Broadway show tunes; someone sat on the sofa and strummed guitar late into the evening. At the peak of my intrusion, I used their kitchen table to study for the MCAT, and once even ate a ham sandwich that Martina, their eldest daughter, had been saving for herself. (She has never let me hear the end of this!) You may think it hyperbole, and that is fine, but as a hub of free thought, of music, of inspiration, and of love, an afternoon in their living room aspires to what the wider world can be.

In closing my thoughts, I would mention that Irene and Enrique recently realized a lifelong dream of backpacking northern Spain's El Camino de Santiago, one of the oldest and most beloved pilgrimages in the world. During the monthlong trek, they maintained a blog of fascinating reflections on the natural and spiritual elements of their journey. And while any more personal revelations from their walk will necessarily remain so, I cannot imagine any moment of self-discovery could lead

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"**Enrique** was my Spanish professor for several semesters, and I can say that he was definitely one of my favorites. When I think about the professors that have had the most impact on my life, he and his wife as well as John Gutiérrez are the first to come to mind. I was able to get my first job out of college due to my language skills and have since used them to build a successful career, trading agricultural commodities.

"Enrique Coteló's classroom was always stimulating. His classes quickly became the most fun and inspirational moments of my week.

"I believe that had it not been for my education in languages at Ole Miss, my life would have taken a dramatically different path. At this point, I have spent almost all of my professional career outside of the English-speaking world. I have been able to build countless valuable relationships that never would have been possible had it not been for my language skills.

"Mastering Spanish at Ole Miss eventually led to learning Portuguese, and the combination of the two led to my international employment. Currently, I live in Mexico City managing the México wheat desk for Bunge North America's milling division. I use my languages every day as I trade wheat in Mexico and around the world.

"I miss Enrique, Irene and Ole Miss and think ... the university should be proud of the work that these fine professors have done." – *Cotter Norris (UM 09)*

"It's difficult to overstate the impact that **Irene and Enrique** have on their students. Like many freshmen, I came to Ole Miss without much exposure to the world beyond Mississippi's borders. Señora Kaufmann welcomed me not only into her classroom, where I learned to love the Spanish language, but also into her home, where she and Enrique enthusiastically shared their culture, food and music with my classmates and me. These two go above and beyond for their students, and Ole Miss would not be the same without them." – *Amanda (Boozer) Zarrow (SMBHC 09)*

two people to more kindness, humility or selflessness than that which we, their friends and students, have witnessed.

Beyond the little I have expressed above, their contributions have been such that, in any language, what would I even begin to say? ■ **HR**


FROM OUR **ALUMNI**

THERE and BACK AGAIN

“ I STARTED TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT
SUFFERING, LOVE, HISTORY THROUGH LITERATURE,
AND FELT MORE CONNECTED TO THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE
THAN EVER BEFORE.”

BLAIR MCELROY (SMBHC 02, JD 06)

Great Wall of China (Photo by Blair McElroy)



“Mā, Má, Mǎ, Mà.” Four completely different words, just said with a different tone. I thought to myself, “Well, this is going to be different from learning French.” In the basement of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College as a freshman, I started learning Chinese. I didn’t even know how to say “Hello” or “Thank you” when I walked into CHIN 101. Little did I know my decision to study in the Honors College as a freshman at the University of Mississippi would have a profound impact on my life.

In the Honors sequence my freshman and sophomore years, the literature selections provided a new touchpoint for a wider perspective than I had ever imagined. In HON 101 and 102, I was exposed to magical realism through Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, writers I still consider two of my favorites. Professor Arrington’s beautiful selections provided context for the Latin American experience that I still reflect upon today, and since I chose Asia as my regional concentration for Croft, it was a different area than what I was immersed in daily through the Croft Institute.

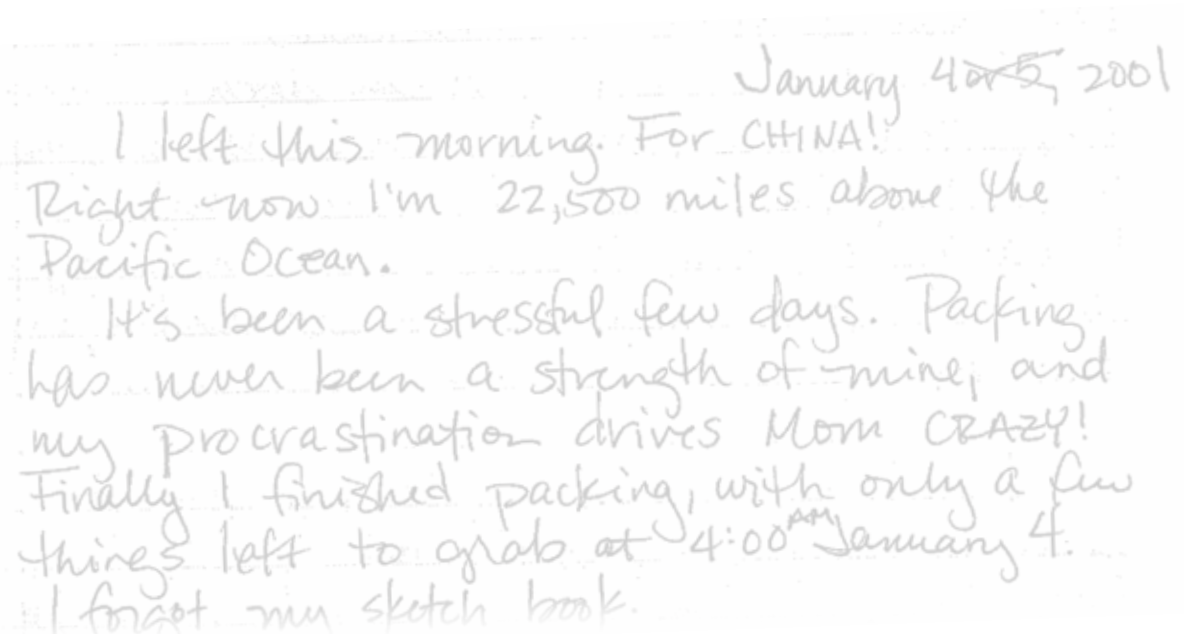
In Honors English classes, Professor Schroeder introduced us to Japanese writers with haunting reflections of the experience after the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Coupled with learning Chinese history during World War II with Professor Howard, I started to understand more about suffering, love, history

through literature, and felt more connected to the human experience than ever before.

Junior year brought about studying abroad. We were all so excited to embark on an overseas adventure. While studying abroad to improve my language proficiency, I kept in touch with my fellow Honors College and Croft classmates through our embarrassingly named Yahoo accounts, hearing stories of their travels and experiences in a different country.

We embraced the world and came out better, broader (in mind and in body) and ready to explore even more. My roommates had studied in Namibia and Argentina, and when we returned, our discussions of the cultures, differences and understandings sharpened the focus on our individual places in the vast new world we had discovered.

Study abroad was not just about our language studies and courses. We knew we had to write a thesis, and frankly the thought



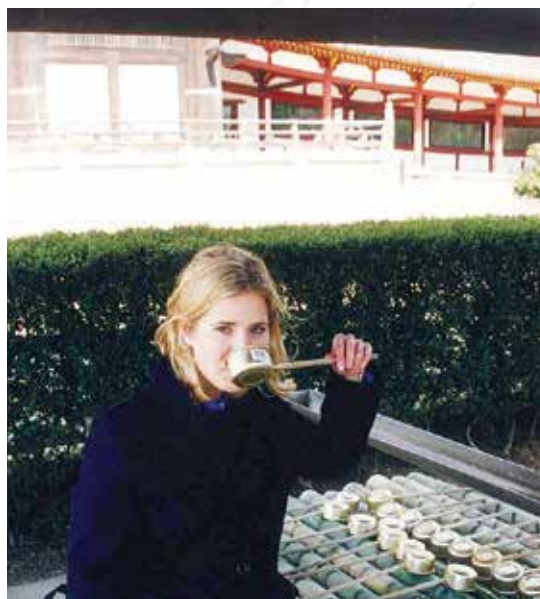
January 4~~th~~ 2001
I left this morning. For CHINA!
Right now I'm 22,500 miles above the Pacific Ocean.
It's been a stressful few days. Packing has never been a strength of mine, and my procrastination drives Mom CRAZY!
Finally I finished packing, with only a few things left to grab at 4:00^{am} January 4.
I forgot my sketch book.

017 January 2001
 OK so it's really hit me. We went to Tiananmen Square today. We didn't get to go inside and look around, but seeing Chairman Mao's portrait was pretty amazing. And being where the 1989 Incident was is also really amazing.

of it was daunting! Had I not gone abroad, I wouldn't have learned firsthand about the numerous ethnic minorities in China, and I wouldn't have decided upon my thesis topic related to the experience of the Uyghurs, the Muslim ethnic minority, after 9/11. From personal interactions with Muslims in China, I was able to get a meaningful look into the lives of people whose daily lives were different from my own but who were very much the same as me.

Fast forward to now, and I have continued to use the intercultural communication skills I learned while studying abroad — though I didn't know what they were called then. I studied once again at the University of Cambridge through the University of Mississippi School of Law, which was an amazing experience. My husband and I got married in Prague, Czech Republic, and the experiences I have had abroad continue to touch my life every day.

In my work in the Study Abroad Office and the Office of Global Engagement, I have had the wonderful opportunity to see how study abroad changes the students I meet. Students go abroad to take classes, learn languages and see the world. But they also learn so much about themselves. They grow as individuals, being able to answer the questions "What do I believe? How do I view other people and cultures? What do I value?" They become more empathetic by learning about other cultures and walking in other peoples' shoes, even if for a moment. They mature — being able to navigate the Italian train system or Japanese toilets are lessons in self-reliance themselves.



McElroy drinks from the purification fountain at Sensōji Temple in Tokyo, Japan. (Photo courtesy Blair McElroy)

Students emerge with valuable skills that translate onto resumés and are attractive to employers. They become global citizens who understand that there exists a world community and are aware of their place within it. They use the tools they've learned abroad to contribute to a local, national or global community, and the effects of their experience resonate forever.

Now, before going to any other country, I always learn how to say "Hello" and "Thank you" in the host country's language. Thank you goes a long way everywhere. Xiè xiè, Ole Miss, for the experiences abroad and the opportunity to share study abroad and its immeasurable value with students. ■ HR



As the senior international officer of the University of Mississippi, Blair McElroy oversees several departments within the Office of Global Engagement. These include the Office of International Programs, Intensive English Program, Study Abroad Office and U.S. – Japan Partnership Program. She also serves as director of the Study Abroad Office, with extensive overseas experience and risk and crisis management expertise. She teaches in the Department of Legal Studies and is a licensed attorney in the state of Mississippi. Although she grew up in Jackson, Tennessee, McElroy has been a resident of Oxford since the day she set foot on the UM campus as a freshman. She is a graduate of the Croft Institute for International Studies, where she minored in Chinese and French. Before graduating from the UM School of Law, she studied abroad at Cambridge University. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

11/17

John Brahan (SMBHC 18) tackled sexual harassment in “IX,” a play he wrote and directed for his honors thesis. His play sold out twice during its four-day run.

Douglass Sullivan-González, SMBHC dean; **John Samonds**, SMBHC associate dean; **Tim Dolan**, director of the Office of National Scholarship Advisement; and **Ashleen Williams**, Senior Barksdale Fellow, met with honors alumni in Atlanta, Georgia.

The **Honors Senate** hosted the annual Dollar Dinner, catered by Taylor Grocery and benefiting the Pantry of Oxford and Lafayette County.



Yazmin ‘Yazie’ Goulet (SMBHC 21) won the Girl Scout of Distinction Award. Only one Girl Scout is recognized each year. (Photo courtesy Tamar L. Goulet)



Caroline Rader
(Photo by Thomas Graning)



Katarina Pittman
(Photo by Robert Jordan)

Caroline Rader (SMBHC 19) won second place, and **Katarina Pittman** (SMBHC 18) won third at the 25th Conference on Current Trends in Computational Chemistry. Both women are members of Gregory Tschumper’s research lab: the Tschumper Group.

12/17

Dean **Douglass Sullivan-González** met with honors alumni in Houston, Texas.

Eighty-one honors juniors traveled to Boston for Junior Quest, a free opportunity for students to gain more insight into their honors thesis topics and/or chosen professions. (Photo courtesy Dottie Reid)



FACULTY SUMMER STIPEND COMPETITION WINNERS

Looking ahead to 2020 and the opportunities and challenges of a quickly changing world, we know we need visionaries who can focus on what is true and what is important. We need citizen scholars whose vision for the future is 20/20. Below are the course titles selected for the 2018 summer stipend course development awards of \$5,000 each. These courses will be taught at some point over the next two years. Congratulations to these impressive and creative University of Mississippi faculty!

Faces of Poverty

Susan Allen, associate professor of political science

What does the face of poverty look like? The reality is that, even within our own community, there are people who scrape by and go unnoticed. The faces of poverty are not just black people in Africa or elsewhere. They are the people we pass on the streets. The folks we politely nod to as we drive through our town. They are all around and often go unseen. In this interdisciplinary, experiential learning course, we will explore what poverty looks like. Drawing on theories from sociology, economics, psychology, political science and anthropology, we will examine issues surrounding poverty and economic inequality in the 21st century. In addition to reading about these issues, students will participate in a variety of service-learning experiences in Oxford, the Mississippi Delta and East St. Louis to gain insight into poverty in our community, in the rural areas of our state and in nearby urban areas. This is not a class about trying to “solve” poverty, but rather an opportunity to consider how we will respond to and fight poverty in our local communities, in our country and in the world.

Politics in a Post-Truth Age

Robert Brown, professor of political science



To a large degree, representative democracy is premised on the idea of a set of shared norms and values. While citizens may prioritize these values differently, there tends to be general agreement on what it means to be a

democratic citizen. In our current political era, however, we see evidence of important and

damaging shifts. What happens when politics becomes so polarized and tribal, that political discourse is no longer about how to manage agreed-upon challenges from different political philosophies, but, rather, about disagreement on whether these challenges actually exist (e.g., climate change, election fraud, race relations, etc.)? As we approach the 2020 presidential election season, there are significant concerns about whether citizens are living up to their part in our democratic experiment. What happens to our democracy if we continue to slide down the path of “post-truth,” and into believing whatever is convenient and comfortable? What happens when we can no longer approach political debate from a common set of facts? The course will feature an honors seminar/discussion format. In addition to shorter assignments, student engagement will likely include exploring new avenues in experimental political science that are being used to examine these important topics.

Modern Environmental Chemistry: Emerging Global Contaminants and Current Issues

James Cizdziel, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry



The solution to pollution is not dilution! New technologies, fresh insight, optimism and action are needed to preserve our environment — our air, water, land and climate. This course focuses on two emerging contaminants of global

concern in our water, air and food chains: microplastics (MPs) and toxic heavy metals. We will travel to the Mississippi River to collect MPs using newly designed sampling equipment and employ

spectroscopic analytical methods to quantify the particles, determine their sizes and identify the type of plastics, as well as to determine the load of MPs delivered to the Gulf of Mexico by the river. We will also examine the complex biogeochemical cycle of mercury (Hg), a global pollutant that is responsible for the most fish-consumption advisories in the nation, and we will determine Hg in fish across trophic levels and from local lakes extensively used for fishing, as well as in hair of individuals who consume seafood and those who do not. Students will also assess drinking water samples for lead (Pb) contamination.

Mississippi Jukebox: A Master Class on Interviewing and Storytelling

Brian Foster, assistant professor of sociology and Southern studies



“Mississippi Jukebox” has two primary objectives. Most fundamentally, the course will equip students with the theoretical frames and technical skills required to design, conduct, edit, analyze, compose and share high-quality,

long-form audio interviews. In particular, the course will teach qualitative research design, the mechanics of effective long-form interviewing, best practices for recording and editing audio content for public consumption (using software like GarageBand and Adobe), and approaches to effective storytelling. Secondly, the course will introduce students to the most innovative and compelling approaches to storytelling in contemporary American popular culture, with special attention to works that focus on, or are otherwise related to, the state of Mississippi.

Course materials will include both scholarly and nonscholarly works, and cover a variety of “texts.” Possible storytelling projects for the “Mississippi” section of the course include “Mississippi Damned,” a feature film about a black family in the Mississippi Delta and *Long Division*, a novel about a group of Mississippi teens who time travel. I will draw on scholarly texts from a variety of social science and humanities disciplines. In this way, Mississippi Jukebox is an interdisciplinary course, with relevance for aspiring sociologists; geographers; regional-, gender- and African American studies scholars;

and journalists. The final product of the course will be “The Mississippi Jukebox” podcast, a series of long-form interviews with notable public figures in Mississippi. Students will also share content of their progress through the course via the @MississippiJukebox handle across all major social media platforms.

Natural Language Processing in Python

**Naeemul Hassan, assistant professor
of computer and information science**



In this era of internet and social media, data is generated in such a huge volume and in such a high speed that it is practically impossible to process it and find insightful patterns out of it in traditional ways. That is why students, instructors and

researchers of various domains are embracing computational tools to perform statistical textual content analysis. This course will be designed to teach the principles and methods of statistical natural language processing and provide hands-on experience of text analysis using Python. Python is a simpler, easy-to-learn programming language compared to other languages and brings a rich and unique suit of language-processing features. After successfully completing the course, the students will be able to

- Describe the fundamental concepts and techniques of natural language processing
- Distinguish among the various techniques, taking into account the assumptions, strengths and weaknesses of each
- Use appropriate descriptions, visualizations and statistics to communicate the problems and their solutions
- Analyze large volume text data generated from a range of real-world applications

Students from a range of departments, including but not limited to computer and information science, journalism, mathematics, political science, psychology, social science, communication science and modern languages, can take this course. Prior knowledge in programming and statistics is highly recommended.

Care Ethics and Social Policy

Deborah Mower, associate professor of philosophy; Bryant Chair of Ethics



Care Ethics is a new family of normative theories within ethics that alters assumptions about what we should seek as individuals within personal relationships and social arrangements. Because it is the newest family of theories within ethics, it

is rarely taught, little-known and often misunderstood, yet scholars within ethics, economics, education, criminology, psychology, sociology and political science are beginning to apply it to specific moral issues, social problems and policy questions. Three questions will guide our study for this course:

1. What is an ethic of care and what criteria does it establish for how one should treat and interact with others?
2. Can an ethic of care be extended beyond personal relations to social policy?
3. What is unusual or unique about policies developed on the basis of care ethics?

To answer these questions, we will examine four primary policy areas as a working ethical “think tank”: poverty and deviance, education, economic systems, and employment. For each policy area, we examine the theoretical arguments posed by a care ethicist along with empirical research. Guests for each topic area provide students with counter-arguments and in-depth research as students work on developing care ethics-based policy proposals.

Food: A Global History

Alexandra Lindgren-Gibson, assistant professor of history



Global history is one of the most challenging types of history. It is also one of the most essential. It forces us to move outside our comfort zones to engage with the histories of people, places and periods that are often

unfamiliar. It helps us to understand the past not as static and defined by national boundaries, but

interconnected, global and ever-changing. This course takes up the challenge of global history by focusing on a topic that unites us all: food. Food history allows students to explore the interconnected histories of exploration, imperialism, trade, capitalism, environment, technological innovation, scientific discovery, slavery, migration and family life. It also brings up questions about authenticity and cultural appropriation, whose stories we tell, and how we can bring in voices that have not traditionally been part of the historical record. To examine these questions, Food: A Global History will explore the histories of tea, beer, chocolate, curry and potatoes, among other topics, through research, discussion and experiential learning. Students will better understand historical contexts by both working with archival sources and experiencing the labor that goes into making the foods we take for granted today. Assignments include researching and writing a brief history of a food item, cooking a historical recipe and presenting it in context to the class, and researching the history of and annotating an old family recipe with the goal of creating an online historical recipe book for the class. Students will learn the research and analytical skills of a historian while developing a richer understanding of the global histories of major ideas, events and everyday life. And everyone will eat really well.

The Color Line in the 21st Century

James M. (JT) Thomas, assistant professor of sociology and anthropology



In his 1903 *Souls of Black Folk*, the sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois famously opined that the problem of the 20th century was the problem of the color line: the creation and maintenance of racial order by law and cake of custom. If recent

research is any indication, the color line remains as bright as ever. War, disease and famine disproportionately ravage people of color the world over. Those fleeing from death and destruction encounter shifting sands that recraft religious differences as racial distinctions. Meanwhile, populist movements in Latin America, Europe and North America use race as a key vehicle through which to channel widespread outrage into political action that threatens the very foundation of liberal

democracy. Yet, if popular culture is any indication, many maintain we are well on our way toward a “post-racial” society. This contradiction between the continued significance of race and widespread perception of its decline presents an urgent need to examine the color line in the contemporary milieu and identify what, if anything, can be done. The nature of the course is diagnostic rather than prognostic. First, this course promises deep engagement with the latest empirical and theoretical analyses in sociology, anthropology, human and cultural geography, and history. Second, this course promises students hands-on training in collecting, analyzing and interpreting a wide variety of data: from national and international data sets on demographic shifts and population dynamics, to national-level data on various forms of racial inequality, to field-based methods including participant observation. Finally, this course commits to an analysis of the color line that moves beyond a provincial race concept. Our approach will be holistic, yet complicated. We cannot begin to imagine a world “beyond race” without carefully and intentionally walking our way through the world as it exists today.

Honors Philosophy of Film

Timothy Yenter, associate professor of philosophy



Trying to make sense of the dizzying array of information available to us is one of the most damnably difficult problems we face today. This becomes exponentially harder when the information comes in many different forms

(text, images, sounds, etc.). Sorting the good from the bad, the true from the false, and the useful from the useless seems overwhelming. We try to develop that 20/20 vision, but what should we make of what we see? What does it mean not only to see but to understand? This course will draw on methods from philosophy, traditional film studies, contemporary television studies, feminist theory, film criticism, journalism, history and more to explore questions of fiction/nonfiction in film. What does it mean for our historical understanding to be shaped by narrative films based on true stories? (Consider for example some of the Oscar-nominated films from the last four years that

were based on a true story: “The Post,” “Dunkirk,” “Darkest Hour,” “Lady Bird,” “Hidden Figures,” “The Big Short,” “Bridge of Spies,” “Steve Jobs,” “The Danish Girl,” “The Theory of Everything,” “The Imitation Game,” “Spotlight,” “Straight Outta Compton.”) How is our understanding of the world we live in shaped by these fictionalized, dramatized accounts? What responsibilities do the filmmakers have? What responsibilities do the viewers have? Shift to classic questions about nonfiction filmmaking that are just as important: Should documentaries advocate for a position? Should they be neutral? Can they be? Should some things never be shown? The basic idea of the course is to explore the fiction/nonfiction distinction from both directions while encouraging students to develop a wide range of tools to think through these crucial issues. These skills are needed to navigate a world saturated with cable news, Snapchat, GIFs, multiplex films, Netflix and more. How can we be engaged citizens who critically analyze audiovisual media?



‘Nightlights’
by Elizabeth Atkinson



WATER SECURITY on the COAST

LILLI GORDON (SMBHC 21)

Water consumes our day-to-day lives. We drink it, we use it to produce food, we wash our clothes with it, we bathe in it. Without water, our society would fail to survive. The problem looming over the use of water, however, is the mindset that there is an unlimited flow of this precious resource.

The human race is surrounded by water, yet only about 3 percent of this water is accessible for human use. As humans continue to expand their environmental footprint, this water becomes more contaminated and polluted, depleting the reserve even further.

For the past three years, the University of Mississippi has received a grant from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation to fund the Mississippi Water Security Institute. For the third and final MS WSI, honors students from Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi commiserated with and challenged one another on

issues of water security and the Gulf Coast region.

Through this interdisciplinary program, we, as students, were able to participate in discussions with a variety of officials ranging from political leaders to marine scientists. Although this program gave us the opportunity to learn about and discuss obstacles facing the coastal area, we took it one step further, discussing possible solutions and ways to counter these issues from spiraling into irreversible conditions.

As a biology major, at first it seemed like the only issues that could possibly arise from this natural resource would be environmental. And this was partly true. During this program, we learned that multiple rivers drain into the Gulf of Mexico, forming the Mississippi Sound, a fragile ecosystem of brackish water that mixes together saltwater and freshwater. Specific species of oysters, fish and other marine life thrive in these low-salinity conditions.

However, a major problem

that occurs in the Gulf near the mouths of these rivers is eutrophication, a result of high nitrogen runoff. Anything and everything flows from farms, including fertilizers, which causes algal blooms to form and flourish in the Mississippi Sound. When these algal blooms die, marine life below the surface is denied the appropriate amount of oxygen, and the large populations of animals and plants disappear.

We also discussed government policies and actions during our time with the MS WSI. When meeting with the mayor of Biloxi, he brought our attention to the massive amounts of money being spent on removing sand from the city's highway, since sand builds up on the roads and endangers drivers. Nothing really separates the sand from the highway, so we discussed the mayor's intention to build a waterfront walkway along an extensive part of the coast to create an increase in tourism and reduce the buildup along

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is home to a vital seafood industry greatly affected by water quality.
(Adobe Stock)



MS WSI 2018 participants stand at the edge of the Wolf River. Back row, left to right: Timothy Misoy, Kristin Howitt, Senior Barksdale Fellow Ashleen Williams, Jenna White, Emily Shy, Lilli Gordon, Kingsley Bimpeh, Isabelle Townsend, Mayukh Datta, MS WSI director and biology professor Cliff Ochs, Regine Harris and Tyler Yarbrough. Front row, left to right: Jordon Wescovich, Abdoulaye Ba, Brooklyn Mooney, Shanika Musser, Ariana Rosado Estevez, Natalene Vonkchalee and Nikki Park. (Photo courtesy Cliff Ochs)

the road. New ideas such as this are focused on engaging citizens with the coastal waters and cutting costs in government.

What concerned me most throughout the trip was how uneducated the public was about the water quality along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The state of Mississippi has installed huge pipes along the coast that dump rainwater and groundwater into the ocean. With three major rivers running into the ocean, a massive accumulation of sediment and minerals is flowing into the sea and creating a dark, murky

color within the sound.

Citizens and tourists are alarmed because they believe the accumulation in these pipes is a direct deposit of septic tanks and sewage right into the water. Naïve beliefs such as this create a real buffer to tourism, the region's main industry. To correct these beliefs, education is a crucial step that we must take to help benefit these coastal cities.

So often we assume the actions of one person do not have a meaningful impact on the world. This weeklong program was enough to

make me believe differently, to see that we, as college students, are the minds and the start to these real changes. Spreading the word to families and friends about water quality within our community is the start to a real solution. The MS WSI was an outlet that was crucial to the beginning stages of change not only in Oxford but in the state of Mississippi, and I'm so grateful I was able to participate in a program that encouraged thinking beyond simply our personal needs. ■ HR

2018 MS WSI Honors Students

Abdoulaye Ba

Political science, public policy
Jackson State University

Kingsley Bimpeh

Biology
Jackson State University

Mayukh Datta

Chemical engineering
Mississippi State University

Lilli Gordon

Biology
University of Mississippi

Regine Harris

Math education
Jackson State University

Kristin Howitt

German
University of Mississippi

Timothy Misoy

Environmental health, biology
Mississippi Valley State University

Brooklyn Mooney

Public policy leadership, philosophy
University of Mississippi

Shanika Musser

Civil engineering
Mississippi State University

Nikki Park

Accountancy
University of Mississippi

Ariana Rosado Estevez

Science education, biology
Mississippi State University

Emily Shy

Biology
University of Mississippi

Isabelle Townsend

Biochemistry
University of Southern Mississippi

Natalene Vonkchalee

Microbiology
Mississippi State University

Jordan Wescovich

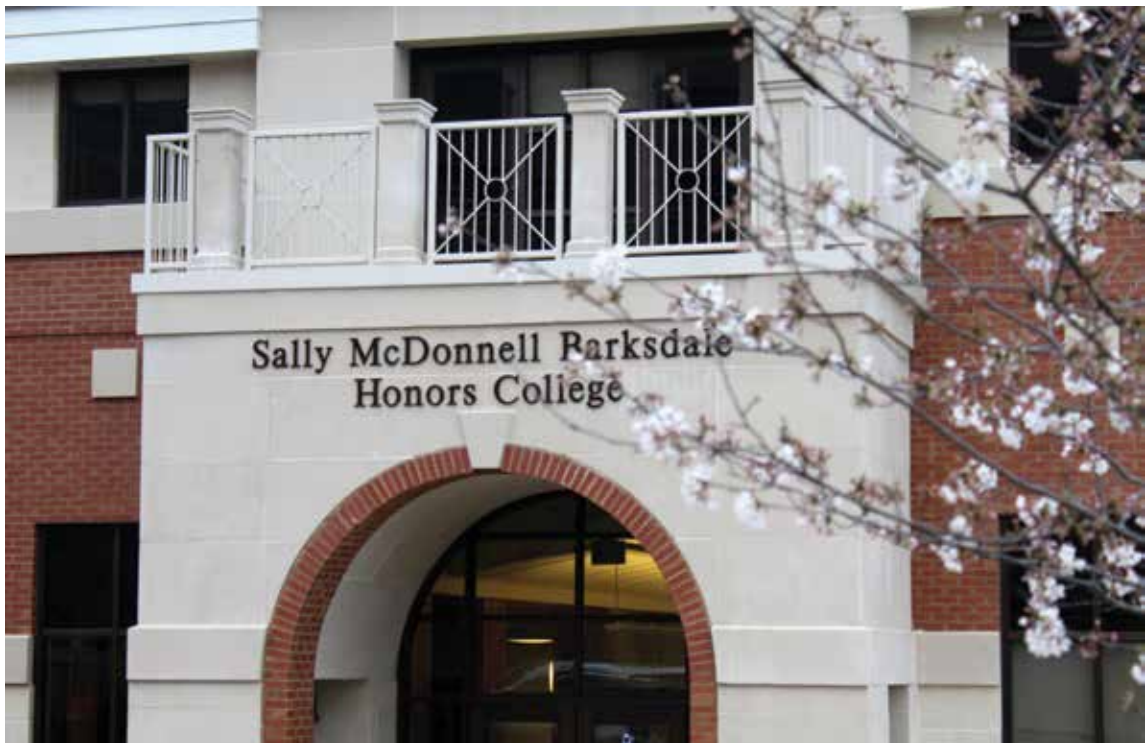
Chemical engineering
University of Mississippi

Jenna White

International studies, Spanish
University of Mississippi

Tyler Yarbrough

Public policy leadership
University of Mississippi



'Spring at the Honors College'
by Anna Hayward

INVESTING in What's OURS

CLAIRE GRAVES (SMBHC 10)

In the fall of my freshman year, a group of my honors classmates and I wanted to host a dinner party. We were dorm-dwellers, and so we needed a suitable space to hold the meal. Someone suggested that the back deck of the SMBHC would make a wonderful setting for our gathering, and I was tasked with securing permission to use the space. I went directly to the seat of power at the Honors College: Penny Leeton, whom most people affectionately call "Ms. Penny."

She listened as I described our plans and explained our need for the space and asked what the process was for having our request approved. Then, she got a perplexed look on her face. She said, "You don't need permission to use the building, Claire. You can use it any time you want — the building is for you to use. Just treat it with respect."

Penny didn't know it then, but her response had an incredible impact on me and my fellow dinner party hosts. She captured in her words

one of the core elements of the culture of the SMBHC: It was ours. Ours to use, ours to enjoy, ours to shape, ours to make our own. And so we did.

That group of classmates hosted the most beautiful dinner party on the back deck of the Honors College. Then, along with many more SMBHC friends, we proceeded to take advantage of every shred of opportunity the SMBHC could offer just as quickly as we could get our hands on it.

We dove deeply into our honors course work, reading and discussing and challenging one another. We traveled to New York, Boston, Miami, Palo Alto and elsewhere to answer the question: "Are there things we should not remember?" We spent a Martin Luther King Jr. Day volunteering together in Chicago after an all-night train ride from Memphis.

When there was no existing SMBHC-sponsored trip for juniors, we drew up a proposal for Junior Quest, presented it to DSG



SMBHC students regularly take advantage of the various study spaces provided by the Honors College. (Photo by Robert Jordan)

and made it happen. We learned languages, won and lost elections, took in performances, studied abroad, hosted cooking shows, gave interviews to the press, became the press, hosted political leaders, organized new campus initiatives, and wrote and wrote and wrote until our theses were complete.

Through it all, we found that Penny was right. The Honors College was ours. There was no need to ask permission to take hold of the opportunities it offered us. We were only asked to treat these opportunities with respect. I think we did.

Now, the SMBHC building has been renovated and expanded, and a new group of scholars is coming to realize that the SMBHC is theirs, too. Those of us who have benefited in so many ways from our time as SMBHC scholars have a new role to play in our Honors College. We get to invest. We get to contribute to the scale and scope of opportunities available to current and future scholars. And then, we get to look on in amazement at the ways in which they take up these opportunities and make the SMBHC their own. ■ HR



Claire Graves is the Mississippi site director for First Place for Youth, an organization that supports foster kids as they learn to support themselves. A resident of Jackson, she is a member of the Koi Society. (Photo by Ken Gordon)

“Young Girl Survives Hurricane Floods”

by Bethany Fitts

Last week Mama
bought a toy rubber duck
to float with me
in the bathtub
“so you don’t get
lonely,” she said.
And I think that’s why
Mama floats with me
now although rubber ducks
are yellow not blue like
the arms that hold me
above ice-water that smells
like the day my dog
knocked over the trash can
and Mama came home
and yelled, “It smells
like someone died
in here!” And I asked
if died has a smell,
and she looked
at me kinda funny and
didn’t answer but
now she won’t look
at me even though
I keep trying
to get her to look at me
but I don’t think
she’s awake right now
which is strange
because her eyes
are open, looking
at the sky
the way they sometimes do
when she is praying.

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

1/18



Tyler Yarbrough (second from left) (SMBHC 21), **Madison Thornton** (SMBHC 21), **Kayla Grace Lovitt** (SMBHC 20), **Dawson Buettner** (SMBHC 19), **Amelia Grace DeWitt** (SMBHC 19), **Josh Dolsen** (SMBHC 19) and **Will Sistrunk** (SMBHC 19) traveled with their PHIL 328: Biomedical Ethics professor, **Neil Manson** (far left), to Washington, D.C., during wintersession. Here they stand in the National Women's Law Center, where they interviewed Gretchen Borchelt, vice president for reproductive rights and health.

Brittany Brown (SMBHC 19) was one of 26 students from 19 universities selected to participate in a major national investigation into hate crimes in the U.S. as part of the 2018 Carnegie-Knight News21 multimedia reporting initiative. She spent the summer at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication in Phoenix and reported on hate crimes, hate groups and their victims alongside other student journalists from all over the world. From Quitman, Brown is majoring in broadcast journalism at the Meek School of Journalism and New Media with a minor in Spanish. (Photo by Thomas Graning)



2/18



Two Freshman Ventures teams won trips to NYC and tickets to a show! **Connor Jones, Lilly Herring, Katherine Dames, Melissa Sang** and **Nick Weaver** traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and **Ainsley Ash, Youssef Osman, Jeanne Torp, Trevor Davis** and **Flint Christian** journeyed to Austin, Texas. Both teams explored the 2017-18 FV question: How do we know what is true? Thirty-eight teams of over 160 students participated in this year's FV, and all teams convened at the FV Retreat at the Jackson Avenue Center on Feb. 3 to present videos of what they learned on their travels. Winners were chosen by faculty, staff and students in attendance. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

The third annual **Honors College Formal** took place at The Lyric, where over 900 students danced the night away. Over 175 pictures are posted on the SMBHC's social media accounts.

TIMOTHY NORDSTROM

NIKKI SULLIVAN (SMBHC 20)

I am sitting in my first Honors 101 class of freshman year. I'm greatly anticipating this class. In fact, it played a major role in my decision to come to the University of Mississippi. As a senior in high school, I came for a campus tour and had the opportunity to sit in on an Honors 101 class. I was struck by the atmosphere in the room — everyone seemed comfortable with one another. It seemed like more of a gathering of friends than a formal university classroom. I was impressed by the grace with which the class handled difficult topics and with the depth of thought shown through the conversation. Halfway through the class, I found myself joining in the discussion. I left with high expectations for my own honors experience.

Dr. Nordstrom begins this first day of class by putting us in pairs and having us get to know one another. He then has us introduce our partner to the class. This seemingly simple exercise set the tone for the rest of the class; we were not there simply to be fed information by the professor but to engage with one another and learn from each other's stories. After all, this class was not about learning facts and figures, but discussing questions like "Who am I?" and "What is human nature?"

We discussed topics such as the notion of the self, "otherness," empathy, forgiveness, poverty and inequality, race and gender, and family. For each topic, Dr. Nordstrom had picked out meaningful and culturally relevant articles, books, TED talks, podcasts or movies to

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"What a wild, wild man, and a wonderfully compassionate man. His students are his peers, and he grants them and their opinions, beliefs and experiences all the respect they deserve. With a soul for justice and humanity, he challenges his students to consider the sociopolitical realities of current events through literature, film and conversation — I am certain his Honors 101 course was foundational to my rise as a citizen scholar. **Thank you, Tim!**" — *Allen Coon (SMBHC 18)*

"I remember feeling nervous and a little intimidated walking into Honors 101 on the first day, but when **Dr. Nordstrom** walked into the room with a friendly smile and an upbeat attitude, my jitters faded. There are many positive things to say about the Honors 101/102 experience, but there was something special about this class in particular. Dr. Nordstrom created a relaxed and open atmosphere and always encouraged every thought you had, no matter how insignificant or random it may have been. Throughout the semester, I learned how to interpret text and its deeper meaning better than any English class I took in the past. The class itself was thought-provoking and tied in to current events, so I felt I could carry on intellectual conversations outside of the classroom as well.

"Additionally, around the middle of the semester, Dr. Nordstrom made a point to meet with everyone personally to let us know what we could improve upon for the rest of the semester and to figure out how he could help. His genuine interest in his students is a quality that does not go unnoticed. We all grew really close and have even arranged to catch up with each other on more than one occasion. Not every Honors 101/102 class bonds like we did, and I think we have Dr. Nordstrom to thank for that. Not only did he help us grow as individuals, but he helped us to form bonds with like-minded people that will last forever." — *Jennifer Lauriello (SMBHC 20)*



Professor Nordstrom meets up with his former HON 101/102 students at Square Books for reminiscing. A professor of political science, Nordstrom has taught honors courses for over 10 years. Front row, from left: Elly Welle, Nikki Sullivan, Tim Nordstrom, Jennifer Lauriello, Claire Gershon and Kameron Shook. Back row, from left: Caroline Bailey, Ann Kelly Patrick, Marli Bryant, Ridge Brohaugh and Josh Thweatt. (Photo courtesy Nikki Sullivan)

educate us on the subject, get us thinking and expose us to multiple perspectives.

Our assignments were creatively designed to force us to engage with the subject material in a unique way. For example, when we discussed poverty and inequality, Dr. Nordstrom had us construct a detailed budget for a family living below the poverty line in Mississippi. This assignment not only gave me the opportunity to read about the difficulties of those living in poverty in our state, but also to put myself in the shoes of a mother having to choose between health insurance and extracurricular activities for her children.

“

HE MIGHT NOT HAVE ALWAYS
VALIDATED OUR ARGUMENTS,
BUT HE ALWAYS VALIDATED
US AS PEOPLE.”

– Nikki Sullivan



THANK YOU, DR. NORDSTROM, FOR TEACHING ME TO THINK CRITICALLY WITHOUT BEING CRITICAL, TO ANALYZE MY OWN ACTIONS AND THOUGHTS TO THE SAME DEGREE OF SCRUTINY I APPLY TO OTHERS, AND TO BE BOTH CREATIVE AND DRIVEN IN THE PURSUIT OF MY PASSION.”

– David Nowicki

Along with creative assignments, Dr. Nordstrom provided an atmosphere for engaging discussion. Though he was faithful to point out underlying assumptions or biases, he never made students feel ashamed or embarrassed. He might not have always validated our arguments, but he always validated us as people. He truly created an environment in which students could feel safe to explore the most important questions in life. This environment fostered lasting relationships within the class. In the midst of discussing what human connection looks like, we found it.

Dr. Nordstrom truly cares about his students and makes a lasting impression on them. In the year following our Honors 101 experience, we have kept in contact and organized class reunions, including a recent bowling night in honor of our past discussions on Robert Putnam's paper “Bowling Alone” and the decline of community in America.

I was reading back through my notes from this class the other day and came across one of my favorite quotes from a reading assignment. Rebecca Solnit, who researches post-disaster societies, describes the emotion associated with these communities as “graver than happiness but deeply positive.”

In a different way, that emotion resonates with me when I think about this class. We discussed issues that were often tragic and could leave you with a sense of hopelessness. We always ended with more questions than answers. However, we experienced community and vulnerability in the development of these questions. Through Dr. Nordstrom's class, I experienced the beauty that accompanies confronting your ignorance and insecurities and learning from them. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Nordstrom for making my Honors 101 experience the ideal beginning to my four years in the Honors College. ■ HR

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

“**Dr. Nordstrom** is the kind of professor that I'd hoped to encounter in college. If students aren't so fortunate as to take his HON 101 class, those with a passion for learning should seek him out, regardless of their majors.” – *Eveanne Eason (SMBHC 20)*

“I had **Dr. Nordstrom** for HON 101 and 102 as well as for an Honors conversations course. As an educator, he is nothing short of top-notch — he challenges his students' abilities as well as constantly motivates them to be the best at doing and thinking. His abilities — empathizing with all students' feelings, encouraging the consideration and discussion of all viewpoints, remaining entirely impartial in every class situation — when taken together, make him an incredible educator whose genuine care for students' success and growth, both personal and academic, is evident to all whom he encounters.

“Though his expertise does not align with my postgraduation interests, Dr. Nordstrom sat down with me (during a time in which I was not even enrolled in one of his classes) to listen to my future academic plans, which, at the time, included applying for an extremely competitive internship. He then agreed to write a letter of recommendation for that internship — one of at least three such letters that he had agreed to write at that time for current or former students.

“I give Dr. Nordstrom much of the credit for my acceptance into that internship, which helped me finally discover the academic and career paths that I am passionate about. Thank you, Dr. Nordstrom, for teaching me to think critically without being critical, to analyze my own actions and thoughts to the same degree of scrutiny I apply to others, and to be both creative and driven in the pursuit of my passion.” – *David Nowicki (SMBHC 19)*

Katie Ford, founder of the anti-human trafficking foundation Freedom for All and former CEO of Ford Models, spoke at the **SMBHC Spring Convocation** on Feb. 20 at the Ford Center. **Shandra Woworuntu**, a survivor of human trafficking and now an international leader in the fight against human trafficking around the world, joined Ford for this incredible evening. Their powerful organizations and efforts help rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate survivors and combat national and international sex trafficking, debt bondage, forced labor and child labor.



Stephanie Poiroux (SMBHC 19) presented “Altruism vs. the Bystander Effect: How Doing Nothing Promotes Prejudice and Negative Behavior” at the symposium Bystanders and Complicity in Nazi Germany and the Jim Crow South, which was co-organized by the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Institute for Human Rights at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her presentation is a part of the honors thesis she is pursuing under the direction of Willa Johnson, associate professor of sociology.

Gabrielle Schust (SMBHC 20) and **Bethany Fitts** (SMBHC 19) were named the 2018 Barksdale Award winners. With her \$5,000 award, Schust will travel to England to collect oral histories of older women in religious orders whose charitable works in the 1960s and early 1970s (pre-National Health Service) focused on medical care for the poor, especially for women and children. She has already contacted three such orders and arranged interviews with eight sisters, the eldest of whom is 103! During an academic year in Lima, Peru, next year, Schust will conduct research into similar work being conducted in the Andes by women in religious orders. She will capture the videos on camera and create a mini-documentary. Fitts will spend time in Washington state and in Hawaii, gaining ground-level experience with several kindred topics: poetry publication, conservation and W.S. Merwin, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry and a founder of a conservancy housing more than 400 species of endangered palm trees. Fitts hopes to promote poetry and ecology work in all 50 states and to write her own collection of poems drawn from her Barksdale Award experiences.



Gabrielle Schust (left) and Bethany Fitts stand with DSG after being named the 2018 Barksdale Award winners. (Photo by Thomas Graning)



RebelTHON, the dance marathon benefiting Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital in Jackson, raised \$265,912.30. RebelTHON was founded in 2012 by **Martina Cotel** (SMBHC 14) and **Adam Stanford** (SMBHC 13). (Photo by Thomas Graning)

The REDWOODS of MISSISSIPPI

JOSHUA HORTON (SMBHC 15, JD 17)

I was fortunate enough to visit the Bay Area of California a few months ago with one of my own “redwoods.” While visiting San Francisco, my best friend, Angela, and I went for a hike through Muir Woods. The smell of the forest still lingers in my mind, and I can hear the sound of the streams as I pen this letter. The majestic scenery permeates my body as if I can feel the forest enveloping me now. The way the sun penetrated the foliage gave it a mystic glow. The most amazing sight throughout this forest was its individual members. The *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, or redwoods as they are more commonly referenced, towered hundreds of feet above us. I would have needed 20 sets of arms to reach around these geological marvels.

I stood there surrounded and isolated at the same time. I could not help but feel dwarfed and insignificant under the canopy of such mammoths. These trees had seen the discovery of America, the Gold Rush, and scores of lifetimes of men and women. The oldest among them dating back over 1,200 years, I suddenly realized that

none of these trees stood out in a field or by themselves away from the rest of the forest or, if you like, the Grove. It was explained to me that these trees needed their root systems to interlock with each other so they could reach such colossal heights and thrive for millennia. If the tree were to grow independently, it would indeed topple over on its own magnificence. The trees need one another. They rely on each other, and as a result of this dependence, they are able to reach heights they would never have been able to reach alienated from their fellow giants.

As I look back over my life, I can see the times and circumstances in which I have toppled over on my own magnificence. Anger, pride, substance use, ego and hundreds of other pitfalls awaited me as I tried to live a life separate and absorbed in terminal uniqueness. I tried to reach for the sky, continuing to collapse time and time again on my own self-sufficiency. It was only when I allowed my roots to intertwine with others that I began to stand upright and to grow, both as a man and as a member of society.

I want to tell you about some of my redwoods. The first redwood I would like to introduce you to is James. James was a former Mississippi State football player who now teaches at Itawamba Community College in Fulton, the institution that helped catapult me into the fourth dimension of my existence. He had lost his son in a tragic accident, and I had lost my father in a similar tragedy. We developed a strong bond. James reached out to this broken boy and gave him a chance. He gave him an opportunity despite his past mistakes, his unorthodox arrival to higher education and his stubborn mentality. James held me up, encouraged me to pursue my dreams and gave me employment with his department.

I had virtually nothing when I came to Mississippi. I used a space heater for warmth my first winter there because the home I was staying in had no heat. James would give me food and medicine when I was hungry or sick. More importantly, he gave me his time and helped me to begin to trust the human race one conversation at a time. I left Fulton and my other





Joshua Horton (Photo courtesy Joshua Horton)

redwoods at ICC to pursue my education at the University of Mississippi and the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, but I still felt James' roots. We are still connected, though we may be thousands of miles apart now. We spoke recently on the phone as if we hadn't missed a beat, and we shared our unique connection through love and loss.

My next redwood introduced me to myself. I met the man who was my mentor, confidant and spiritual adviser when I moved to Oxford. His name is Tim. Tim is an avant-garde angel, disguised in sleeve tattoos and a calm demeanor. He seeks no recognition and may be the humblest and wisest man I have ever met. Tim did not tell me how to be a good person. He showed me with one courageous, patient and loving act at a time. They say the best teachers are the ones who show you where to look but do not tell you what to see. Tim's insightful instructions assisted me to understand who and what I am, and also who and what I could be. He pushes me to try and

be better: a better student, a better worker, a better friend and a better human.

You see, I was seeking a father figure my whole life. While I may not have been given a father who was able to raise and guide me, I have been given something else. I have been given redwoods. Tim said something life-altering and profound to me one day when I was sullenly reminding him that I would have been much better off had I had my father in my life. He looked me square in my eyes and asked me a question that would forever change my trajectory. He said, "Josh, when are you gonna stop looking for that man, but instead start being that man you have always looked for?" The question was rhetorical, but it shifted my perception almost instantaneously, and I knew I could never approach my life in the same way ever again.

Tim and James were both at my Honors College commissioning. They are polar opposites, one from the Mississippi Delta and one from Detroit, Michigan, but

they share in the fact that they are both principled men of integrity and character. These torchbearers construct pillars of the community one altruistic act at a time. I wish I had the words to describe the gifts these men have given me, but it is only something that can be spoken through the language of the heart.

There are many in my Grove that have held me up and assisted me in my ascent. There is federal Judge Michael P. Mills who came and spoke for Constitution Day at ICC when I first started attending community college in 2012. He spoke of virtue in the law. Judge Mills is also an alumnus of ICC, and it was in that moment that I knew I could go to law school despite being a high school dropout with many convictions and a tumultuous past.

In the grand, universal web of destiny and irony, I found myself interning for Judge Mills after speaking to a group of federal officials and judges about re-entry and substance use disorder. The conversations of philosophy,



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THEY SAY THE BEST TEACHERS ARE THE ONES WHO SHOW YOU WHERE TO LOOK
BUT DO NOT TELL YOU WHAT TO SEE.”

– Joshua Horton

integrity, and his wealth of literary knowledge about Cormac McCarthy, William Faulkner and others will forever stay etched in my memory. He helped me grow as a lawyer and as a man by taking me back to where it all began in Itawamba County, where we tended to his beehives as he gave me something much more precious than his honey. He gave me his time.

Then there is Smiley, who lost her daughter to an overdose, returned home to Mississippi from West Palm Beach, where I have now relocated in a plot twist that could not have been written more poetically had it been composed by Robert Frost. She became involved with Southern Recovery Advocacy, a nonprofit we founded in Oxford, because we believe in the metaphorical humanity of the redwoods and their roots. She introduced me to Joe, a Marchman Act attorney

in Palm Beach County. He welcomed me to West Palm Beach with open arms while I studied for the Florida Bar at Christmas with nowhere and no one to spend the holidays with. Joe will be in attendance when I am officially sworn into the Florida Bar. The process of my admission has been a grueling and exhausting legal process that I have been tenaciously pursuing for years. The Florida Supreme Court recently issued an order stating I may practice law as a Florida attorney, a feat many believed was impossible, yet with the help of my redwoods, we pushed through barrier after barrier and obstacle after obstacle.

All of these accomplishments were made possible in my life not because of my own exertions but solely as a result of my roots being divinely intertwined with the redwoods that surrounded me. They prevented me from

toppling over on my darkest days and through my most trying storms. Even now they hold me steady as I reach for greater heights, spreading my roots for others to grasp as we grow together. The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College is a redwood factory, supporting and nurturing the souls of saplings so they may grow and sustain not just the wonderful town of Oxford, or even the state of Mississippi. This institution's roots run vast and deep across the United States of America, forever supporting the achievements of their alumni while fostering the nutrient-rich soil on the most beautiful campus in the country, the University of Mississippi. I am blessed beyond measure to be a member of their Grove, still being fortified by some of the strongest, most innovative and perpetually resilient redwoods in the nation. ■ HR



OFFICE OF NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ADVISEMENT: WINNING BIG

TIM DOLAN, ONSA DIRECTOR

Every year, remarkable students find their way into the Office of National Scholarship Advisement. I am always impressed and honored to learn about their lives, their academic accomplishments and their dreams for the future. Competition for national scholarships is intense, and the chance of receiving a prestigious award is often slim. But students usually find the process of reflection, introspection and writing to be a rewarding activity. It is a chance to take stock of all the accomplishments and accolades earned so far and to dream big about what they most want to accomplish in graduate school and then their careers.

Many Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College students were recognized for their accomplishments in the 2017-18 academic year. They are all students who embraced the SMBHC philosophy of being fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good and driven to find solutions. They all discovered their academic passions, connected with organizations and faculty, and discovered ways to lead or engage with issues that were both instructive and inspirational. Their success reveals the Honors College as the rich, challenging, diverse and active community that it truly is.

Four SMBHC students received Critical Language scholarships for intensive language study in summer 2018. **Paul Hunt**, a junior from Madison, Alabama, will study Urdu in Lucknow, India. **Isabel**



Jaz Brisack accepts Truman Scholar accolades as professor of journalism Joe Atkins (left) and ONSA director Tim Dolan look on. (Photo by Kevin Bain)



Andrew Hayes
(Photo by Kevin Bain)

Spafford, a freshman from Albuquerque, New Mexico, will study Arabic in Ibri, Oman. **Emily Wang**, a junior from Randolph, New Jersey, will study Arabic in Amman, Jordan, and **Olivia George**, a junior from Biloxi, will study Korean in Gwangju, South Korea. The Critical Language Scholarship provides college students with full funding for language study in languages critical to U.S. security. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural



Ainsley Ash
(Photo by Thomas Graning)

Affairs. Students live abroad with host families, receive intensive language instruction and participate in cultural-enrichment activities.

Andrew Hayes from Tupelo, a senior economics major in the SMBHC, received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant to be an English teaching assistant in Madrid, Spain, for the 2018-19 academic year. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program provides postgraduate opportunities for study, research and

English teaching around the world. Two University of Mississippi graduate students, **Eric Rexroat** and **Maria Mulrooney**, also received Fulbright grants.

The Fulbright Summer Institute offers summer seminars at eight universities in the United Kingdom that are only open to college freshmen and sophomores. **Ainsley Ash** from Meridian became the first Ole Miss student to be named a participant. She will spend her summer at Queen’s University Belfast, participating in a seminar called Education for Transformation.

Finally, we had three Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation finalists, with one of the finalists named as a Truman Scholar. It is the first time the University of

Mississippi has had more than one finalist. **Jarvis Benson** from Grenada, **Allen Coon** from Petal and **Jaz Brisack** from Oxford were each named finalists.

The Truman Scholarship provides \$30,000 for graduate school to students based on their academic success, civic engagement and leadership accomplishments. Fifty-nine students were named Truman Scholars, selected from 756 candidates nominated by 312 colleges and universities. Brisack was selected to represent Mississippi and becomes our 15th Truman Scholar. She studies journalism, public policy and

creative writing and is a labor and human rights advocate.

The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College is a special place that draws outstanding students from all across the country. They inspire and challenge each other and coexist in the crucible that is the HOCO. When I came to Ole Miss to direct the Office of National Scholarship Advisement, Dean Sullivan-González told me, “Better fasten your seat belt because it’s going to be a wild ride.” He was right. I am inspired daily by the faculty, staff and students here and count my blessings to be able to work with such amazing young people. ■ **HR**

For more information about these and other national scholarships, contact Tim Dolan at tadolan@olemiss.edu or call 662-915-1798.



‘A Grove Squirrel’s Life’
by Anna Hayward

DEBRA YOUNG

leaves indelible mark at Honors College

After 18 years with the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, Debra Young retired in July 2018. Her first stop post-Honors College is Big Bend National Park.

Debra Young earned her Ph.D. in English from Tulane University in 1986. Her M.A. in English is from the University of Alabama, and she is a graduate of Mississippi State (B.S. in English education). From 1986 to 1995, she was a member of the English department at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, serving as department chair from 1992 to 1995.

A native Oxonian, Young came home to Oxford in 1995, working first in the Office of Research and then joining the Honors College in 2000. Initially charged with facilitating the university's participation in national scholarship competitions, Young worked with students winning (and not winning) Fulbright, Gates, Goldwater, Mitchell, Marshall, Rhodes and Udall scholarships. For the past three years, she oversaw the SMBHC's evolving curricular and extracurricular interest in water security, as well as assisted in advising students and overseeing SMBHC efforts to explore 21st-century configurations for honors and 21st-century opportunities for honors students. Young cheers for Arsenal.

“I struggle to capture in words my appreciation and love for Dr. Young. Much of what I am most proud of about my career as an educator in some way traces its origins to her, and most of my best words are hers. Future SMBHC students will miss out on her wit and warmth, but her legacy will continue in her probing questions and demand for excellence. She's been a wonderful mentor for 15 years. I'm glad that we became colleagues and friends so that selfishly I don't have to say goodbye. Next round is on me, Debra. Congratulations!” – **Andrus Ashoo (SMBHC 08), former SMBHC staff member**



Debra Young (Photo by Robert Jordan)

“I am fortunate to have known Debra Young most of my life. We were best friends as children, and I have many, many fond memories playing on her family's farm just south of town. In fact, as I have told her, those experiences formed how I wanted to raise my children. She had everything a 'city girl' (I lived in 'downtown' Oxford) could want. We boated on the lake, chased the cows out of the cow pond, camped out in her playhouse. She and her two sisters had every toy imaginable — pogo sticks, a basketball hoop, an electric car! We roller-skated in the halls and shot at bats with slingshots. In short, we were free to be — I'm reluctant to use the term tomboys — is that

politically incorrect? But, at the time, that's what we were, and on her farm we reveled in it.

"Although we took different paths after we graduated from high school, with family in Oxford, those paths invariably crossed, although less frequently than I would have liked. Then a few years ago, I was in town, and we got together for drinks when we began to plan a collaboration. The result was 'America Selfie,' a large-scale painting installation designed for the Great Room of the Honors College, a first for the college. Debra, Doug and staff pulled it off like seasoned gallerists. They hosted an elegant opening, plus several artist talks with the general public as well as with students and faculty. And they arranged for copious press — every artist's dream.

"I am fortunate that the latest crossing of our paths happened while Debra was still at SMBHC. Through her innate grace, wisdom and foresight (not to mention wit), she gave me the opportunity to create a major, site-specific installation that addresses the complex (and often controversial) puzzle that is America — all sight unseen. I thank her for that and the opportunity to share the work with the brilliant students, faculty and staff of SMBHC."

— **Laura Elkins, artist**

“Thank you, Dr. Young, for always being a friendly, grounding and encouraging adviser during my time at the SMBHC.

From day one, you were so giving of your time to all of us. You helped me through my dental school application and were there with an encouraging smile at my thesis defense on a biology topic that was undoubtedly less interesting than ANYTHING else you had going on that day. Thank you for all the groundwork you laid so that I could enjoy the wonderful career in dentistry that I do today. I should have told you thank you long ago, but I am grateful for this opportunity now. Congratulations on your retirement — you deserve to enjoy every minute of it!” — **Patrice Jones Harmon (SMBHC 07)**

“Debra has been an inspiration to me while working with her for the past 15 years.

Her wealth of knowledge never ceases to amaze me, and she has the heart of a servant — always the first one offering help to those in need. I will miss her infectious laughter and the cute way she rolls her eyes.”

— **Penny Leeton, SMBHC program manager**

“Debra Young has been a deep and powerful source of inspiration to all who have had the privilege to work alongside her. She has consistently offered a clear, thoughtful vision and honest, forthright advice to our students, as well as wise counsel to our staff and faculty, all of which have helped to create a positive environment that has nurtured both scholarship and leadership.” — **Bruce Levingston, Chancellor's Honors College Artist in Residence, holder of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair**

“Debra had the vision and energy to create the Mississippi Water Security Institute. This was an enormous contribution to the educational program of the Honors College by being a unique interdisciplinary opportunity for students from around the state. I greatly appreciate the opportunity Debra provided me to work with her on WSI.”

— **Cliff Ochs, professor of biology, WSI director (2016-18)**

“Debra intimidated me for the first few years at the Honors College. In front of her, my words turned into mush. Her prowess and vision remains unmatched against anyone I've encountered, and much of the creativity evident in the Honors College today is because of her remarkable skill set and spirit. She's also funny, and I'll miss her entertaining quips and sharp observations during our staff meetings. Thanks for your mentorship and friendship, Debra!” — **Jennifer Parsons, SMBHC interim associate dean**

“I will always be indebted to Dr. Debra Young for her hard work and dedication to students in the SMBHC, particularly those of us who applied for national scholarships. After all the essay revisions, the mock interviews and the strategy sessions, she always encouraged us to be ourselves. This approach of meticulous preparation wedded to a confident sense of self — 'be prepared and be yourself' — proved to be more than just a part of a scholarship application. It was truly a part of my education and has always remained with me. For that I am thankful.” — **J.R. Rigby (SMBHC 03)**

“Debra’s commitment to the Honors College the past 18 years was outstanding. She created the Office of National Scholarship Advisement and ran that effectively for many years. A bigger contribution was her creative academic vision that led to our offering courses related to, among other things, the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, New York City and memorialization, and 20/20 in 2020. She also left her mark on the university by spearheading the creation of the 3+3 program with the law school. Much of what the Honors College has become is due to her leadership.”
– **John Samonds, SMBHC associate dean**

“Words count for Dr. Debra Young. Why? The ideas sustained in spoken, and more importantly, in written form, communicate the contours of our vision and mission. We chose the words ‘community action,’ not ‘community service,’ intentionally through Dr. Young’s insistence. The latter bowed to the lowest spirit of noblesse oblige that implicitly protects the status quo, while the former promised transformative change that threatens the privileged. We argued about the power of written words, particularly in Honors 101/102 where some professors shied away from rigorous writing and focused on the transformed global citizen as the key academic outcome. Debra also demanded that the deans spend quality time with students so that we could shape their questions daily to offset the nagging, comfortable academic settings that lulled our students into complacency. Debra preached that words, written words, launch powerful ideas. Watch out to those on top of the pyramid of power, she warned! Dr. Young set a fire in the SMBHC that will not be easily quenched!” – **Douglass Sullivan-González, SMBHC dean**

“I owe Dr. Young so much — she helped me develop my voice. Without her, I never would have been awarded the Truman Scholarship, which, in turn, opened so many doors for me. I still remember the mock interview sessions that she arranged, the hours spent writing and rewriting my application and her constant encouragement for me to be my true self in my writing. I will forever be grateful for all of the time and love she poured into me.”
– **Keyana R. Washington (SMBHC 02)**

“I’m forever grateful to Dr. Young. Her effect on my life was as much as anyone outside of immediate family. For whatever reason, she found me as a freshman at the Honors College, and, over the course of countless hours of conversations, pesky questions from me, writing and editing sessions, and book discussions, she molded my intellect. She made me a more rigorous thinker, a better writer and a more thoughtful person. I would not have won the Truman or Rhodes Scholarship without her, and those scholarships changed the trajectory of my life. Even after the scholarships, when she could have easily sent me on my way, she maintained our friendship, which I still treasure today. Dr. Young is proof of the kind of impact a person can have on students through a dogged interest in their intellectual and personal development. Her retirement is sad news for the university, as we lose a great talent, but it’s a happy reward for an academic and leader who shaped the lives of many.” – **Shadrack White (SMBHC 08)**

“Dr. Debra Young changed my life — quite literally I would not have moved to Mississippi if it had not been for her. In two years, she has demonstrated kindness, honesty and generosity — illuminating all that is good with Mississippi and the South. Her unflinching integrity and her maintenance of high standards inspire people at every level. I can only hope to one day fulfill 5 percent of the role she has for so many people.” – **Ashleen Williams, Senior Barksdale Fellow**

“Dr. Young knows how to speak to my heart. I remember in undergrad going to her office, conflicted about which step to take next, which way to turn. I knew what I felt and I knew my passions, but I was always uncertain about where to go. Dr. Young gave me the confidence to choose a step to take. In this case, it was that I wanted to live and study abroad in the U.K. She never sees a door as closed. She makes the impossible seem possible, in fact, very doable and very easy to achieve. That kind of unconditional support for students’ dreams is what true mentorship is all about. I’m forever grateful for her compassion for and commitment to students, dreamers and a life of learning.”
– **Emma Willoughby (SMBHC 14)**

Elizabeth “Liza” Boyer (SMBHC 20) was chosen as a Mount Vernon Leadership Fellow. The program is a fully funded, six-week summer institute for rising college juniors to cultivate leadership skills. Students meet with national leaders, engage with other fellows, and collaborate with their assigned mentor on their individual capstone projects while based in Washington, D.C. Applicants are evaluated on academic achievement, leadership ability and the proposed capstone projects. Each year, only 12-16 scholars are selected from universities across the U.S. From Houston, Mississippi, Boyer is majoring in economics and studies an array of subjects ranging from intelligence and security studies to Russian. She is involved with ASB, Delta Gamma, the Big Event, Oxford Park Commission and the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Her proposed capstone for the Mount Vernon Leadership Fellows program is to help students realize their academic and professional goals to help combat brain drain and the lack of academic aspirations that plague Mississippi.



Liza Boyer (Photo by Emma Rose Davis)



During the Big Event, a universitywide effort over one weekend to serve the Oxford-Lafayette community, **Stamps Foundation scholars** and the University of Mississippi Office of Sustainability sifted and bagged from more than 4,500 pounds of compost created from campus food waste. (Photo courtesy Lindsey Abernathy)

Jarvis Benson, Jaz Brisack and **Allen Coon** were named Truman Scholarship finalists. Read about Jaz Brisack’s win on page 38. UM’s last Truman Scholar was **Chelsea Caveny** (SMBHC 11) in 2010. Benson is from Grenada and is an international studies and Spanish major who plans to obtain a Master of Science in foreign affairs from Georgetown University and work as a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development working in Latin America. He has volunteered with Mississippi Votes, the Esperanza Project, Leap Frog and College Democrats. Brisack is from Oxford by way of Texas, Tennessee and North Carolina (where she was home-schooled). She is on the University of Mississippi debate team and has interned for the United Auto Workers, volunteered for the Sunflower Freedom Project and led the campaign of Morris Mock for Mississippi House District 60. Coon is from Petal and is a public policy leadership and African American studies major with a minor in sociology. He plans to earn a public policy/J.D. degree from the University of California at Berkeley and return to Mississippi to work on civil rights, voting rights, and education in Mississippi. He has worked with the NAACP, Black Lives Matter, Mississippi Vote Everywhere and Young Democrats of Mississippi.

Honors students **McKenzie Denton** (SMBHC 19), **Richard Easterling** (SMBHC 19), **Isaiah Edwards** (SMBHC 20), **Dasha Grace** (SMBHC 19), **Hannah Hoang** (SMBHC 20), **Gurshan Kaur** (SMBHC 19), **Karthik Kota** (SMBHC 19) and **Jessica Tran** (SMBHC 19) were selected to participate in the Clinical Shadowing Program during summer 2018 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. The students participated with rising M3 medical students in one or two two-week shadowing rotations in anesthesia, emergency medicine, family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, radiology, radiation oncology, or surgery. They also helped at the Jackson Free Clinic.



Bradford takes a shot while working as a professional guide within Yellowstone National Park in Montana.
(Photos by Sabrina Bradford)

HONORS ALUMNA WINS NSF FELLOWSHIP

Sabrina Bradford (SMBHC 13) is the recipient of a 2018 Graduate Research Fellowship, awarded by the National Science Foundation, which will fund fully her graduate research: evaluating human-wildlife conflict in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem within the context of ranches. Her research will include analyzing practices that may act as a driver of the spread of zoonotic diseases and anthropogenic landscape changes that heavily influence food-acquisition practices for various wildlife.

The NSF review panel elaborated on Bradford's extraordinary background that led to her winning the coveted fellowship:

Applicant has an excellent academic record, graduating from the University of Mississippi with a BA in Anthropology and minors in Biological Science and Spanish. She is uniquely situated to explore human-environment interactions, having experienced the effects of both Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill on her Mississippi hometown. Prior research in Ecuador focused on biocultural interactions and public health, while research on endangered species in Australia deepened her quest for wildlife conservation. Her proposed graduate research (currently a PhD student at the University of Colorado at Boulder) will use ethnographic methods and evolutionary



Bradford's view from atop a horse in Paradise Valley, which is south of Emigrant, Montana, and around 20 miles north of the entrance to Yellowstone National Park

biology to investigate how ranch management practices impact the patterns and frequency of human-wildlife conflict in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE), a complex socio-political landscape. Her research plan is very ambitious and crosscuts multiple disciplines (anthropology, environmental studies, ecology and evolutionary biology). The topic of the applicant's research is extremely important because it focuses on understanding human-environmental interactions along the boundaries of wild space and domesticated space and puts human agency as an evolutionary force.

The applicant is well situated to disseminate her research to a wide audience, as her research will clarify how socio-cultural factors may contribute to human-wildlife conflict and/or coexistence in the GYE. This may enable future researchers to advise stakeholders on which factors lead to co-existence of humans and wildlife in an anthropogenic landscape, not only in the GYE but in other areas where humans and animals come into contact. An ethnographic report of how her hometown was affected by Hurricane Katrina resulted in a peer-reviewed publication, and made environmental anthropology accessible to those in her hometown. Nearly a decade as a back-



Around 800 grizzly bears live in Montana.

country guide and Wilderness First Responder give the applicant skills in risk management and conflict resolution, granting her the ability to view issues from the perspective of the stakeholders she studies, perhaps informing policy related to conservation and human-wildlife management in national parks and other buffer zones.

This research study has far ranging potential to impact policy globally and address the biggest challenge of the 21(st) century — resilience in the face of natural disaster and rapidly changing climate. The broader impacts here are very



Riding across the creek in Taylor Fork and the basin area of the Gallatin Canyon, Bradford and her team push horses to top pasture. Saddling up at 3:30 a.m., she and her partner round up a herd of 120 horses and bring them down, which can include running into grizzly bears and having nasty encounters with wolves. Bradford has guided in Yellowstone National Park, the Lee Metcalf Wilderness and the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

clear. The applicant has an intimate knowledge of the landscape and community she will be working with. There will be a direct return for local stakeholders as well as the broader environmental anthropology community.

Launched in 1952, shortly after Congress established NSF, the Graduate Research Fellowship program represents the nation’s oldest continuous investment in the U.S. STEM

workforce. The 2,000 awardees in 2018 were selected from more than 12,000 applicants and come from all 50 U.S. states, as well as the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. Bradford defines citizen scholar, and we congratulate her on this remarkable accomplishment!

View more of Bradford’s gorgeous, scenic photographs via Instagram: @wanderinglegume.



Snowy April in Paradise Valley, Montana



HONORS FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

Through the generosity of several benefactors, particularly the Barksdale family, the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College proudly awarded \$67,000 in fellowships to the 34 students listed below. During the 2017-18 school year, we also awarded over \$13,000 to 26 students who presented posters or papers at conferences across the country. Among the meetings were the American Chemical Society conference in New Orleans, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association conference in Los Angeles and the Southeastern Psychological Association conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Another 37 students received almost \$27,000 in research funds to aid their thesis research. Supporting the endeavors of citizen scholars is one of the pillars of the Honors College.

FALL 2017

- **Elizabeth Brown**, international studies, study abroad at Université Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France
- **Mary Frances Holland**, international studies, study abroad at International University of Russia
- **Gwenafaye McCormick**, biology and international studies, study abroad at Waseda University in Tokyo, in fall and spring, 2017-18
- **Holly Prather**, international studies and accountancy, study abroad at Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador, in fall and spring, 2017-18

SPRING 2018

- **Caroline Bass**, international studies, Spanish, study abroad in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- **Mollie Bradford**, international studies, Spanish, study abroad at University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain
- **Lauren Burns**, international studies, Arabic, study abroad in Amman, Jordan
- **Jackson Colburn**, public policy leadership, economics, study abroad in Prague
- **Jacob Ferguson**, history, English, study abroad in Edinburgh
- **Wesley Gerard**, international studies, Arabic, study abroad in Amman, Jordan
- **Griffin Neal**, public policy leadership and economics, study abroad at Vesalius College in Brussels, Belgium
- **Caroline Rader**, biochemistry, study abroad in Granada, Spain
- **Leta Rowan**, international studies and Spanish, study abroad in Quito, Ecuador

SUMMER 2018

- **Reba Chamblee**, forensic chemistry, internship with Department of Forensic Sciences, Washington, D.C.
- **Catrina Curtis**, public policy leadership, study abroad through Lead Greece

- **Claire Dutreix**, forensic chemistry, internship with Free the Slaves
 - **Tia Floyd**, political science, study abroad at University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain
 - **Zachary Ty Gill**, classics, linguistics, Spanish, study abroad in Valencia, Spain
 - **Hagen Gurley**, public policy leadership, internship with LOFT, a nonprofit organization dedicated to community development
 - **Margaret Hay**, public policy leadership, internship with U.S. Rep. Trent Kelly
 - **Julia Ruth James**, public policy leadership, internship with the Prison to College Pipeline program in Oxford, Mississippi
 - **Sally Jordan**, public policy leadership, accounting, internship with U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell
 - **Arianna Kitchens**, anthropology, classics, archaeological field school in Starkville
 - **Ella Lawson**, international studies, Arabic, Arab-American Language Institute in Morocco
 - **Lauren Newman**, international studies, Arabic, internship with Carter Center in Atlanta
 - **Katherine Oglesby**, public policy leadership, accountancy, internship in Sen. John Boozman's office
 - **Christina Pendergrast**, international studies, Spanish, ISS internship in Washington, D.C.
 - **Annabella Sills**, marketing, study abroad at King's College
 - **Will Sistrunk**, biology, summer research internship at Georgetown University
 - **John Reynolds Spencer**, accountancy, internship in London, England
 - **Delaney Splawn**, political science, psychology, internship with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
 - **Eleanor Weller**, management, internship with Chatham Anglers in Cape Cod League
 - **Elizabeth (Jeannie) Williams**, international studies, Arabic, Arab-American Language Institute in Morocco
 - **Alexis Zosel**, communication sciences and disorders, study abroad in Bilbao, Spain
- 



'Well Armed'
by Elizabeth Atkinson

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

3/18

Jaz Brisack
(SMBHC 19), Tyler
Yarbrough (SMBHC
21) and Ainsley Ash
(SMBHC 21) traveled
to Washington, D.C.,
to participate in
March for Our Lives.
Yarbrough and Ash
were interviewed by
a local news station.
(Photo courtesy
Jaz Brisack)



2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

4/18



The 2017-18 Hall of Fame included seven SMBHC students. Congratulations to **Jake Thrasher**, **Elizabeth Taylor**, **Megan McLeod**, **Savannah Smith**, **Ingrid Valbuena**, **Christopher Feazell** and **Allen Coon**. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

The University of Mississippi hosted an exhibition of previously unseen material on the May '68 French student and labor protests featuring 40 images from photographer Philippe Gras and a two-part documentary by filmmaker Dominique Beaux. The exhibition, titled “Au cœur de Mai 68,” is a collaboration between the association des Amis de Philippe Gras and les Films des quatre Planètes. “**Au cœur de Mai 68**” was on display in the SMBHC Great Room April 5-30.

On April 12, the Honors Art Showcase culminated in an evening of performances by **Bruce Levingston**, the Chancellor’s Honors College Artist in Residence and Holder of the L.G. Fant Chair; **Nancy Welch**, collaborative pianist and music instructor; and **Nancy Maria Balach**, music professor and soprano. Honors students **Ava Street** (SMBHC 19), **John Michael Walker** (SMBHC 21), **Lawson Marchetti** (SMBHC 21) and **Madison Thornton** (SMBHC 21) also performed. A display of artwork, poetry and pottery — created by honors students and faculty — surrounded guests during the evening, which took place in the SMBHC Great Room. Special thanks to **John Michael Walker** (SMBHC 21) for orchestrating this fine event.



Will Tribble (SMBHC 19) and **Sam Harres** (SMBHC 19) won the 2018 Gillespie Business Plan Competition for Shortwork, an app that provides crowd-sourced, on-demand, problem-by-problem solutions designed to teach. Tribble and Harres received \$10,000 and free office space for a year at Insight Park. Congrats to them along with second-place winner **Bella Gonzalez** (SMBHC 18) of LaLa Letter and third-place winners **Liz Lanford** (SMBHC 20) and **Lindy Goodson** of Frazeshades. Follow their business ventures on Instagram: @shortworkapp, @lalaletter and @frazeshades. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



CITIZEN SCHOLARS IN THE WORLD

1958 — After graduating from the University Scholars program, **Guy Bryan Dewees III** earned his M.D. from Harvard Medical School in 1962. He then interned at the Medical College of Virginia. Afterwards, Dewees toured in the U.S. Army, including a stint at MASH hospital. He completed his medical residency at the Mayo Clinic. In 1969, Dewees moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and joined the Norwood Clinic, where he practiced internal medicine and rheumatology for 47 years. He retired in December 2015 and has since worked part time at a clinic for indigent and under-insured patients. He travels frequently to Oxford, where he has a condominium.

1963 — Kosciusko native **Raymond F. (Ray) Burk** graduated from the University Scholars program with a degree in mathematics. During his undergraduate tenure, the University Scholars program was led by professor Anita Hutcherson, who taught an excellent course on the History of Ideas. Burk also enjoyed a weekly one-on-one session on William Faulkner, reading one of his books each week. His experiences in the University Scholars program have proven valuable to him. His German professor, William Eickhorst, arranged for him to study for a year at Johannes Gutenberg Universität in Mainz, Germany.

When he returned to the U.S., Burk attended Vanderbilt medical school and graduated in 1968. While there, he met and married Enikoe (Eni), a graduate student in German who has been Burk's delight for over 50 years! After internal medicine training and military service, Burk trained in gastroenterology with an emphasis on liver disease. He then joined the faculty at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. In 1987, he moved back to Vanderbilt's as director of gastroenterology.

He retired as professor of medicine emeritus after 27 years at Vanderbilt, during which he was active in research as well as practicing and teaching hepatology. Most of his research was carried out in the laboratory. It enabled him to develop biomarkers that could be used to assess the human selenium status of that essential micronutrient. Because selenium deficiency does not occur in the U.S., his human research was carried out (1987-2011) in a remote mountainous area of western China that is deficient in the trace element. He and his team were able to determine the amount of it needed each day to maintain normal selenium status. In retirement, Burk has continued to consult younger investigators who are studying the effects of selenium status on health.



1990 — **Susan Bailey Gurley**, M.D., Ph.D., has moved to Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, where she is head of the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension in the Department of Medicine and associate professor in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology. She is a physician-scientist with a laboratory-based research program in kidney disease and hypertension.



1990 — **Wynn M. Shuford** has accepted a position with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration in Arlington, Virginia. Shuford practiced law at Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLC in Birmingham, Alabama, for nearly 25 years, where he recently completed a term as the firm's managing

partner. Shuford will work in the Civil Litigation Section in the Office of Chief Counsel at the DEA. He and his wife, Angela Akins Shuford (University Scholars 90), founded a charitable organization, Huruma International Ministries, which provides food, clothing, housing and education for orphans in Kenya: hiministries.net. While at UM, Shuford was named a Harry S. Truman Scholar.

1991 — The Rev. **Wade Cox** received his Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., on May 7, 2018.

2000 — Upon completing his fellowship in orthopaedic sports medicine in Birmingham, Alabama, at the Andrews Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center, Dr. **Chad Hosemann** returned home to Jackson to practice with Capital Ortho. He specializes in minimally invasive arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder and knee. On Friday nights in the fall, he can be found on the sidelines of the Germantown High School Mavericks football team, where he serves as team physician. Hosemann and his wife, Courtney Clayton Hosemann, of Yazoo City just celebrated their 13th year of marriage and have three children, Carson (8), Charlie (6) and Charlotte (1).

2001 — After 19 years of military (Navy) and federal civil service (NASA), **Markeeva Morgan** transitioned to the private sector. He is now a senior manager for Avionics, GN&C (Guidance, Navigation and Control) and Software at the Boeing Co.



2001 — This year, **Jeannie Mood Campbell** became fully certified in Theraplay, which entails a three-tiered certification: Foundational Theraplay Practitioner, Intermediate and Advanced. Certification is earned through the Theraplay Institute in Evanston, Illinois. In treatment, the Theraplay therapist guides

the parent and child through playful, fun games, developmentally challenging activities, and tender, nurturing activities. The act of engaging in this way helps the parent regulate the child's behavior and communicate love, joy and safety to him or her. It helps the child feel secure, cared for, connected and worthy. Campbell is the clinical services director at Changing Tides Family Services, a large nonprofit in Eureka, California.

2009 — **Ruth Ann King** recently opened her own private practice for speech-language pathology services in Corinth. King Speech-Language Therapy LLC offers evaluations and treatment for both children and adults with swallowing difficulty, speech-language deficits and cognitive communication disorders. King has been a practicing speech-language pathologist for seven years and is excited about starting this new chapter. She is thankful for her experience in the SMBHC and the doors it opened for her.

2009 — **Meghan Milloy** has accepted the Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship and moved to Germany for a year with the program. In addition to intensive German language classes, she is focusing her research and work on Brexit's effects on the European and international financial markets.

2010 — **Martha Mangum Holland** (UMMC 15) graduated with a Master of Science in dentistry and a specialty in pediatric dentistry from Virginia

Commonwealth University's School of Dentistry in 2017. She lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and practices pediatric dentistry in Durham.



2011 — **Anna Donnell** has been accepted to the School at Steppenwolf in Chicago. For the past five years in Chicago, she has worked as an actor, musician and storyteller as well as an advocate, activist, designer and coordinator for disability accessibility and inclusion in theatre programming. She is a founding member of Chimera Theatre Ensemble.



Honors coordinator Penny Leeton (BA 04), Caroline A. Walker, Marc Walker and DSG stand together after dining in New Haven, Connecticut, in June 2017. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

2011 — Marc E. Walker, who received his M.D. and MBA from Harvard University in 2011, was recently named chief financial officer of Hand Help Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides pediatric hand surgery and plastic surgery to children around the globe. Walker also just completed his seventh international medical mission trip — this year to the national children’s hospital in Lima, Peru (Instituto Nacional de Salud del Niño). After six years of surgical training, Walker graduated in June as chief resident in plastic and reconstructive surgery from Yale University; and his wife, Caroline A. Walker, who received her B.A. from Stanford University in 2008; her M.B.S. from Tufts University in 2010; and her M.D. from Yale University in 2014, graduated as chief resident in anesthesiology from Yale. They both matched into clinical fellowships following residency. He will be the hand and microsurgery fellow at Yale Plastic Surgery; she will be the cardiac anesthesia fellow at Yale Anesthesiology. In April, Christian Brothers High School in Memphis honored Marc Walker with the Lasallian Founder’s Day Award for Service to the Poor. Presenting the award was our own Douglass Sullivan-González. The Walkers are members of the Koi Society.



2011 — Jess Waltman (JD 2016) is an attorney with the law firm of Davis & Crump PC in Gulfport. Waltman is licensed to practice law in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, and he primarily works on complex pharmaceutical and medical device litigations. He serves as president of the Harrison County Young Lawyers Association and president of the Gulf Coast Ole Miss Club.



2013 — After earning a Master of Science in broadcast journalism (sports communication emphasis) from Syracuse University and taking his first job as weekend sports anchor at KBJR-TV in Duluth, Minnesota, **Norman Seawright III** has since been working at WOWK-TV in Charleston, West Virginia. Seawright has been named Best Sports Anchor of the Year by the Virginias’ Associated Press for two consecutive years. Additionally, Seawright has launched a feature series called “Train Like an Athlete,” which pairs him and a college-athlete in the weight room. Seawright credits the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College with the ability to think critically (and outside the lines) to come up with content that serves his audience exceptionally well.

2013 —After five years’ teaching at Success Academy Williamsburg, an elementary charter school in Brooklyn, New York, where he taught first, third and fourth grades, **Adam Stanford** has moved to Austin, Texas, where he is a founding teacher at the new elementary school for Achieve Public Schools.



2014 — Jonathan Cardwell

is owner/operator of a Chick-fil-A franchise in Jackson, Tennessee. An employee of Chick-fil-A since age 15, Cardwell began working for the food chain in Memphis, continued in Oxford during his undergraduate tenure and then moved to Olive Branch to work at that location briefly. He then moved into a corporate program called the Leadership Development Program, where he and his wife traveled across the country, assisting with grand opening restaurants and operating company-operated restaurants (temporarily nonfranchised locations). Cardwell and his wife have lived in 12 states and 13 cities over the course of 27 months. In November 2017, Cardwell was selected as a franchise owner of the Chick-fil-A location in Jackson. Every year, the company receives about 40,000 franchisee applications, and about 100-150 of those ultimately get selected.

2014 — Anish Sharma

graduated with a master's degree in accountancy in 2015, and this fall, he will be entering the Ph.D. program at the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, where his concentration will be in accounting, and he will be researching financial topics.

2014 — Courtney Gayle

Taylor recently graduated from both American University Washington College of Law and University of Ottawa Faculty of Law with two Juris Doctor degrees with honors. She is the newest associate at the Law Offices of Stewart and Stewart in Washington, D.C., specializing in international trade.



2014 — David Wilbanks

has completed his third year of medical school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and is looking forward to interviews for residency programs as well as completion of his medical degree in May 2019.

2014 — Alexandra Mae

Wood graduated from Saint Louis University School of Medicine on May 18, 2018 and will continue her medical training at the Medical College of Wisconsin for child neurology. During her time at Saint Louis University, Wood participated in numerous extracurricular activities including volunteering at the Health Resource Center (a free clinic dedicated to the underserved populations in St. Louis), research in Chiari II malformations and long bone fractures, and the Sun Protection Outreach Training Program for Students (SPOTS).

2015 — Victoria Jones

graduated this past May from the University of Mississippi School of Law magna cum laude.

2016 — Amber Malone

recently completed two years as a teaching assistant in Angers, France. She has returned to the states as a research fellow in political science with the University of California, Irvine.

2017 — Jesse Webb

was recently published in *Mississippi's Best Emerging Poets* (Z Publishing), and he will be published in the forthcoming *America's Best Emerging Poets*, as well.



2017 — Elizabeth Romary

Since October 2017, has been a Peace Corps volunteer in Namibia. She teaches English and natural science to sixth- and seventh-graders at a small school in the southern region of the country. Romary is also building a school library and computer lab, developing a national manual on learning disabilities and how to cater to underprivileged learners, as well as immersing herself in the cultures of the country by studying two of the native languages: Khoekhoegowab (clicking language) and Afrikaans. She documents her experiences with Peace Corps at roamingromary.com.

CITIZEN SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

James A. Peden Jr.

James A. Peden Jr., known to his friends and colleagues by the nickname of “Jeep,” has been practicing law as a member of the Mississippi Bar for more than 46 years. He has spent his entire professional career with the firm now known as Stennett, Wilkinson & Peden.

From Jackson, Peden entered the University of Mississippi as the recipient of a Carrier Scholarship in fall 1962. Graduating in 1966, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history, political science and Latin. He ranked first academically in his graduating class.

Peden was a member of the University Scholars* for four years and a Taylor Medal winner. He was elected to numerous honorary fraternities, including Omicron Delta Kappa (leadership). He served as president of Pi Sigma Alpha (political science) during his senior year.

During Peden’s undergraduate years, he became associated with two of Mississippi’s most outstanding statesmen. In summer 1963, he served as driver and campaign aide to future Gov. William F. Winter in Winter’s successful campaign for state treasurer. During the summers of 1964 and 1965, Peden worked on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., as an intern in the office of U.S. Sen. John C. Stennis.

The U.S. government awarded Peden a Fulbright Scholarship for postgraduate study in England. During the 1966-67 academic year, he studied British Government and Politics

at the University of Bristol, with an emphasis on the British Parliament. A scholar-athlete, Peden was a starting forward on the University of Bristol varsity basketball team, winning “Full Colours,” the British equivalent of an American athletic letter.

In fall 1967, Peden entered the UM School of Law as the recipient of a Ford Foundation Law Fellowship. He served as vice president of his class. He was a member of the editorial board of the *Mississippi Law Journal* and received the journal’s award for Best Comment.

After interrupting his legal education for military service, Peden received the Juris Doctor degree in 1970 and began practicing law with the firm now known as Stennett, Wilkinson & Peden. In addition to practicing law, Peden served on the staff of William F. Winter, who had been elected lieutenant governor in 1971, as parliamentarian, reading clerk and documents director for the Mississippi Senate during the legislative sessions of 1972-74.

From 1968 until 1999, Peden served the United States and the state of Mississippi as a member of the Mississippi Air National Guard. He served as staff judge advocate for the 172nd Airlift Wing, based at Thompson Field in Jackson, from 1974 until 1988 and as staff judge advocate at Mississippi State Air National Guard headquarters from 1988 until his military retirement in 1999. Upon his military retirement, he was promoted from colonel to brigadier general.



James A. Peden Jr.

By appointment of the adjutant general, Peden has served as a judge on the Mississippi Court of Military Appeals since 2004 and as chief judge of that court since 2010.

The National Guard Bureau awarded Peden its prestigious Minuteman Award for his contributions to military legal education. Peden’s military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal and Mississippi Magnolia Cross.

Of his numerous awards and recognitions, Peden most recently was presented with the 2018 Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who’s Who.

In honor of his law firm, Peden recently endowed the Stennett, Wilkinson & Peden Scholarship in Law at the UM School of Law.

**UM officials created University Scholars in 1952, and two decades later, it became the Honors Program. With the Barksdales’ gift, the program transformed into an honors college and worked with its first cohort of freshmen in 1997. When Jim Barksdale’s first wife, Sally, died in 2003, the program was renamed the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.*

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

5/18



DSG (center) stands with (left to right) Savannah Smith, Seth Dickinson, Meliah Grant and Christopher Cross. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College Commissioning took place at the Ford Center on May 11. Before a packed house, **Christopher Cross** welcomed everyone, **Seth Dickinson** delivered the address, and **Savannah Smith** provided the charge. **Meliah Grant** served as class marshal. **Paul Lee** was awarded the Dean's Prize for earning 70 honors hours — the highest number of hours in his class and the second-highest number in the Honors College's 21-year history.

6/18



Chancellor **Jeffrey** and First Lady **Sharon Vitter**, Dean **Douglass Sullivan-González** and other UM administrators joined honors alumni for brunch at The National in NYC on June 9. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

DSG and Associate Dean **John Samonds** met with honors alumni in Washington, D.C., on June 16.

7/18

Shad White (SMBHC 08) was appointed Mississippi state auditor by Gov. Phil Bryant. White graduated from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in economics and political science before earning a master's degree from the University of Oxford and a law degree from Harvard Law School. White is a Truman Scholar and UM's 25th Rhodes Scholar. Most recently, he served as director of the Mississippi Justice Institute and general counsel for the Mississippi Center for Public Policy.

FAKE NEWS:

a Reflection

SAVANNAH DAY (SMBHC 20)

“It’s like how when you wreck a car, you don’t blame the car for it happening. But you *can* blame the faulty airbags for not preventing injury.”

My classmate Daniel Payne said something along these lines during class one day when we were discussing Facebook’s potential responsibility for fake news. Clever tidbits like this one shifted my perspective almost every class session this semester in Honors 420. They were the hidden jewels amidst our lengthy analyses of the world and what goes on around us. This class was about so much more than fake news.

As a journalism and public policy student, of course I was intrigued to hear about the unique opportunity to take this class (taught by Greg Brock, instructional assistant professor of journalism). But I was even more intrigued on the first day when we went around the room and introduced ourselves (a whopping nine students). There was a variety of backgrounds, majors and interests. I was thinking, “Why in the heck does a Southern studies major want to take this class? And a pre-med student? And a computer science major?”

Discussions regarding the fake news phenomena probe many questions, such as “Why does anyone believe what they believe?” “Where does partisanship play into this?” “What about social media?” “Where do we draw the line?” and even, “What is journalism’s role in democracy?” News touches every aspect of our lives. If something that we need breaks, we figure out how to fix it, which perfectly reflects why I was so excited to take this course — to get answers.

However, in all honesty, I became disheartened with my peers at several points throughout the seven weeks in this class. Some days our conversations would end on

hopeless notes. These were the very people I thought I could rely on to be optimistic change agents when society gets gloomy, but it seemed they just wanted to let the tragedy ensue. Boy, was I wrong. ...

Our semester ended with my presentation on fake news and democracy. Every week, a classmate would present about the articles we read on a certain topic (i.e., fake news and artificial intelligence, fake news and Facebook, etc.) and led discussion, similar to the format of an “Honors Conversations” course. I was nervous about my topic, as it was something our professor had previewed several times, hyping it up for me. I knew the importance of this presentation.

This is where it was all going to come together.

The discussion pursued that day was riveting; I was finally encouraged by our conversation. A bunch of silly 20-somethings came up with



Greg Brock



Savannah Day

something so new, but so relevant and needed in today’s society. Drum roll, please ... we seem to need (and want!) another government agency.

You would think all us hippies would be done with more and more bureaucracy and all the red tape. Although we discussed many different ways to combat fake news, such as better media literacy and social media security,



‘Not a Boring Bowl of Fruit’
by Nakiyah Jordan

we came to a realization: Why don't we just treat fake news like any other phenomenon that demeans the life we know and deserve? Like a court is to crime, the Environmental Protection Agency is to pollution, and the *insert new government agency name here* will be to fake news.

No, we didn't necessarily come up with the answer for fake news. But we learned it was a multifaceted issue that reflects many of the other

issues in our nation today. We came up with many metaphors, many perspectives, and we might have even sparked a policy idea. Because of this course and its productive dialogue, I'll probably take this idea a few steps further. I might have even found my thesis topic!

Thank you, Greg, my wonderful classmates and the Honors College for the incredible experience and enlightening conversations this semester. I'm sure going to miss it. ■ **HR**

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Jenna Smiley and Shelby Knighten at SMBHC Commissioning 2017 (Photo courtesy Shelby Knighten)

HONORS COLLEGE INFLUENCES FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

SHELBY KNIGHTEN (SMBHC 17) AND JENNA SMILEY (SMBHC 17)

Last year, Jenna Smiley and Shelby Knighten completed their senior theses, floated across the stage of the Ford Center for the Performing Arts, and acquired diplomas as educational and literary champions. And champions they were as the only two English education majors to complete the senior thesis requirement in 2017, a feat when given the demands of full-time student teaching (an exacting enterprise), a full academic course load and the struggle to secure a teaching position. It is no wonder that prior to 2017, the number of theses in English education could be counted on a single hand. They were trailblazers, and their postgraduation photo holding hands captures the kaleidoscope of emotions encapsulated in a transcendent moment of celebration.

However, this joyous moment cloaked a distressing reality that both had been facing prior to and after honors graduation as they learned the harsh truth that the accomplishment of an honors college education meant little to many Mississippi public school administrators. Thankfully, both landed positions in the greater Jackson area and put their elite education to use. One year later, the scholars revisit their HoCo experience and the influence of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College on their first year of teaching.

Shelby Knighten’s First Year

To close out the school year, I gave my ninth-graders a choice in their final text, three bildungsromans that explore racism and coming of age in the South: Chris Crowe’s *Mississippi Trial*, 1955; Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*; and Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. As students moved through their individual novels, I taught whole-group lessons on how to do “close reading”: the importance of a novel’s opening lines, the steps of a hero’s quest, as well as patterns and symbols to look for when reading a literary text. My students are now writing research papers explaining their respective novel’s “aha moment,” the pivotal juncture in the text that shapes the protagonist’s moral and/or psychological development, and how this moment shapes the novel’s theme.

At this point in the term, my role as teacher has shifted from “sage on a stage” to “guide on the side”; I’m roaming around the classroom, fielding questions about the research paper and conferencing one-on-one with my students. I carry out this work under the watch of a colorful infographic posted on the back wall of my classroom bearing a peremptory mission statement: “The Honors College prepares citizen scholars who are fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good, driven to find solutions.” One year after my graduation from the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, it is this powerful statement I find myself reaffirming and adopting as the rule of life in my own classroom.

At its heart, the Honors College celebrates humanistic inquiry and engaging with the rich tradition of authors, concepts, ideas, texts and theories that comprise the liberal arts. Confronting challenging content, developing an ability to read thoughtfully and demonstrate analytical thinking through sustained discussion and intensive composition formed the focus of my HoCo course work, courses that harvested fertile ground for my newfound love of liberal learning, forged a reservoir of knowledge and skills that I now strive to teach my students, and erected the foundation from which I continually build and refine my pedagogy. What the Honors College wishes to foster in its students is exactly what I want to activate in mine, and if this high-minded mission statement was to become a reality in my classroom this year, it had to begin with the content I was planning to teach.

I thought back to my time with Dr. Melvin “Buddy” Arrington and one of the thematic questions that guided his Honors 102 course: “Where did we come from and where are we going?” We began with J.F. Bierlein’s *Parallel Myths*, a survey of mythologies across cultures (whose opening chapter I would go on to assign my own students in our study of Greek mythology), which melted into a study of religion and writings on faith and led to Bertrand Russell’s *Religion and Science*, bridging the first half of the course centered on religion, to the second half of the course, which focused on science. Each text, class discussion and paper built upon the previous text, class discussion and paper, establishing touchstones to track our humanistic exploration of perplexing thematic questions.

Dr. Arrington’s thoughtful, seamless course design provided a coherent framework from which to expand his students’ horizons, and I applied his principle as I began fashioning my own curricular scope and sequence. I began my freshman English course with an excerpt from Richard Wright’s *Black Boy*, at the moment when the protagonist, a hungry teenage boy, stands up to the neighborhood bullies on his quest to the grocery store. All – yes, all – of my students reveled in the street violence of this exciting yet mundane quest, a simple quest that became a touchstone for examining other more complicated quests (i.e., Homer’s *The Odyssey*).

Even in the last few days of the school year as my students completed research papers, I continued to refer them back to that excerpt, our touchstone text, about the little boy standing up to the neighborhood bullies. With each subsequent text, I incorporated thematic questions to guide my student’s inquiry: “Why does Odysseus want to return home to Ithaca?” “What is the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*?” “Is love really stronger than hate in *Romeo and Juliet*?” Most importantly and as I learned in Dr. Arrington’s class,

Jenna Smiley

I’ve always said that I’d love to sit in Shelby’s classroom and watch his magic!

Jenna Smiley

Complex and relevant texts have been a challenge to find in my experience, but Shelby doesn’t let what seems like a daunting text scare him away.

Jenna Smiley

This shows Shelby’s excellent planning AND his students’ successful learning. Noticing the parallels among texts is a great feat.

thematic questions are not open invitations for educators to impart their own dogmatic interpretations or worldviews. At their best, questions are the building blocks for learning, offering opportunities for students to develop and refine their own thinking.

My astute professors in the Honors College possessed an impressive command of the content knowledge they “professed.” If I wanted to be a strong teacher of Shakespeare, I needed to be as well-read as my honors Shakespeare professor, Karen Raber. With each core text on my syllabus, I strove to become an expert like my professors in the Honors College, teachers who, to quote my wise high school senior English teacher, “teach from the overflow of their own knowledge.” However, not only did disciplinary knowledge, i.e., that of English literature, analysis and composition, matter. A broad knowledge of the world painted in living color through Honors College convocations each semester, with illustrious academics, renowned artists and prolific change agents, assimilated me into a coterie of thinkers who helped develop my aesthetic preferences, expand my worldviews, and refine my understanding of what it meant to be a “citizen scholar.”

Nevertheless, my development as a scholar isn’t enough: My students must develop as well, discover their own questions, till their own fertile grounds for learning, forge their own reservoirs of knowledge, build upon the foundation of what little I can impart to them. Thirty hours of honors course work and cultural events are only discrete, petite pieces of the panorama. The senior thesis requirement necessitated that I (to reinterpret a phrase by Voltaire) “cultivate my own garden,” curating established expertise in the field of English education while planting my own seeds among a community of scholarly gardeners.

When my students lead their own Socratic seminars and as they craft their own papers, I see them thinking: asking their own questions, finding their own interpretations of literary works, grounding their thoughts with evidence from the text, mapping their thinking in written composition. And when the struggle to read, to write, to think, to cultivate their gardens confounds my students, I recall my own struggle as a student. I whip out copies of my own papers from past Honors College courses and my red-bound, gold-lettered honors thesis as an example that no one is born knowing how to write a five-page paper or a book. It comes with practice, it comes with guidance; it begins with a paragraph, which becomes two paragraphs, which becomes a page. And that page can become the first of a future honors thesis.

Without the SMBHC, its scholarly community and resources (free printing!), I absolutely would not be the teacher I am today. However, I hope that the teacher I am today isn’t the teacher that I’ll be tomorrow, next year, in five years or 30 years. A true education is a lifelong process. My Honors College education is only the foundation, a foundation on a foundation built by the K-12 teachers who prepared me for the rigors of the Honors College, a foundation that is carrying me through graduate work at the Bread Loaf School of English. I feel the reverberating influence of the HoCo in my classroom, and I hope my students do too and that they, too, will become “citizen scholars who are fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good, driven to find solutions.”

Jenna Smiley

These students are NOT just memorizing notes about a text; they are really taking their learning into their own hands with Shelby’s guidance.

Jenna Smiley

I have to supply my own paper now for my classroom!



Shelby Knighten is a graduate student at the Bread Loaf School of English and is in his second year of teaching at Ocean Springs High School. (Photo by Laura Boyd)

Jenna Smiley’s First Year

During my spring semester of senior year, I sat down to write my future plans bio for the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College graduation program. I proudly declared that I would be teaching the next SMBHC scholars, and I laugh to think about my clueless expectations at the time. Days awaited when I would be attempting to spark an interest for literature while grading stacks of mediocre essays, separating students during heated exchanges, and ending the day with a 35-minute commute home feeling utterly exhausted and defeated. At the end of a rough day, I longed for a “simpler” time when I enjoyed schooling under the SMBHC.

I say simpler because I only had to worry about me. The HoCo challenged me because my professors were not satisfied with “good enough,” an idea that sailed me through high school without demanding too much. During my freshman year, I remember struggling to write a two-page essay for my Honors 101 class because no particular guidelines were given. With no guideline for what was enough, I floundered and wished for a prompt. Dr. Arrington, the instructor of the course, gladly granted our wish with a question for the next essay: “What is the purpose of life?” I walked out of class that day with no more direction than before. Later, once the frustration subsided and I grew more comfortable with this method, I realized that my professor was giving me the opportunity to reach my full potential by exploring my ideas and not being restrained by a question. **These little essays were open doors for me to seek out my thoughts and beliefs as I not only learned more about the content but myself.**

With these first open doors, the SMBHC gave me the opportunity to discover and explore my passions. As I progressed in my studies, the temptation to settle back into my former behavior of executing little effort was real. Towards the end of junior year, I found myself at a crossroads where writing a senior thesis did not appeal to me, and I considered dropping out of the HoCo and solely completing my education degree. At the same time, I was feeling discontent with the dull repetition in my education classes that did not expand on topics that I considered important, like shared cultural literacy. **With these choices in hand, my partner-in-crime, Shelby Knighten, encouraged me to use the HoCo to fill in the gap between my dissatisfaction and laziness.** While writing a senior thesis was not a requirement for my degree, the process actually helped me to care about education again. Nothing felt better than holding a signed thesis at the end, and the endeavor inspired me to seek for the best and not settle for enough.

Please do not misunderstand me — I did care about my grades when everything is said and done, but being a student in the HoCo gave me more than that. My experience within the program instilled values for education in me that I would not have gained otherwise. I walked away with a high standard for myself and for an appreciation for learning that formed my philosophy of education. Like Dr. Arrington, I never want to tell my students what they should think about a piece of literature. I pressure them to arrive at their understandings on their own. Along the way, I encourage them to share their opinions while using appropriate and accurate information to support their thoughts. Lesson planning turned into challenging my students in the same way the HoCo did for me — to question, to discover and to discuss. **I will never forget participating in an American literature class as Dr. Kathryn McKee listened to our ideas and collected our thinking on the dry-erase board. I walked away from that lecture thinking, “I want to teach like that,” and I have used that technique countless times in my freshman English classes.**

This self-enlightenment came at a great cost. For roughly eight years of my life, most of my education has been surrounded by others who carried a joy for learning. Sometimes school was boring, frustrating or tiring, but most people that shared an honors classroom with me had a desire to be there. Even in my laziness and procrastination, I felt an urgency to do well because I strongly identified myself with my success. As a teacher in charge of her own classroom, I faced 100 students who honestly wished they were somewhere else every day. Many of my students and their families did not share these

she213
I’m planning to incorporate some of these “open-ended” essays (à la Dr. Arrington) in a traditional senior English course I’m on the books to teach this year.

she213
You’re too generous. The struggle was real for the both of us! (Remember: Ms. Jenna Smiley, not Ms. Smiley Jenna!)

she213
Yes! Love this! I learned so much about the teaching of literature and composition from my professors in the outstanding English department at Ole Miss. (P.S. I use a similar technique with chart paper!)

same values for education as I did. I had to put myself outside of my identity as a good student in order to understand these teenagers and try to figure out how to make learning desirable for them as well.

That is a teacher’s goal: for their students to become lifelong learners. My professors played a large part in the HoCo’s effectiveness, but we cannot find many like them in Mississippi high schools. Unfortunately, in the grander landscape of education, a teacher can easily surrender to the lack of appreciation and little value for the occupation, not only from the community but from peers as well. Teachers who sway to the motions without truly investing in students’ lives have a sad existence. When I reflect on my first year as a teacher, guilt rises in me as I believe that I have done the bare minimum to survive, but this realization also reignites the desire to aim for my full potential as I did in the HoCo. If it were not for my experience in the HoCo, I think that I would have been content with going in and out of work every day without an expectation of greatness in myself and my students.

By the time this article is held in readers’ hands, I will be wading into my second year of teaching. I will still assign essays, settle conflicts and drive the commute, but I know that my approach will be different. The HoCo was able to give me the additional push in my higher education to achieve more than I expected of myself, and now I have to figure out how to do the same for my students. They might not appreciate the effort in the moment, but I hope they will someday look back at their days in my class and call it a simpler time.



Jenna Smiley teaches at Yazoo County High School. (Photo by Bella Dukes)

she213
And what would public education in Mississippi look like if we did?

she213
I’m so inspired by your powerful reflection.



NEW RELEASE

Bruce Levingston’s latest album, “Citizen,” will be released on Jan. 26, 2019. The album features music of two Mississippi-born composers, Honors College alumnus C. Price Walden and William Grant Still, as well as works of Frederic Chopin, Nolan Gasser, Augusta Gross and David T. Little.



‘Coy Koi’
by Elizabeth Atkinson

“Thoughts of Earth upon Waking”

by Bethany Fitts

I.

Damp streets, bare
branches, dripping fences.
It rained while I slept,
I know, for the air
is thick with the scent
of it – of drenched dirt
and the leaves
which seemed to fall
earlier, duller
than last year.
Remember, I say.
The leaves will grow
again, will coat the earth
like a garment –
though it seems to shrink
with each cycle
it is worn.

II.

In a dream my father warned:
If a coat is fine,
you must be gentle.
Yet year by year the stitches
unravel
Year by year the buttons
fly loose.
Year by year the patches
the insufficient patches
are shredded
to nothing
by our own hands
and the garment
the fine garment
is traded for profit
though how we profit
from this
I cannot know.

III.

It is said the sea is rising
though none appear
to know it.
It is said the earth is burning.
We burn it year by year.
This downpour of madness
is maddening. It
pollutes the air
it must
it must
it must

IV.

It rained
while I slept,
I know.

For I hear water falling
from the forest’s
dead limbs. They hang
in this autumn,
in this quilted mist
which clings
to the dying world,
like the blanket of a child
tucked in
for the night.

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

8/18




From left: **Annabella Sills** (SMBHC 20), **Ainsley Ash** (SMBHC 21), Honors Senate student director **Jessica Tran** (SMBHC 19), **Dottie Reid** (SMBHC 20), Honors College program manager **Penny Leeton**, **Christin Gates Calloway** (SMBHC 11) and **Nakiyah Jordan** (SMBHC 21). Calloway addressed the SMBHC Class of 2022 during Honors Welcome Week, which consisted of various informational sessions and activities led by faculty, staff, honors students and members of the Oxford community. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



Fourteen honors freshmen have been awarded honors scholarships totaling \$434,000! From left: **Autumn Fortenberry**, **Britney Ngo**, **Ella Endorf**, **Ivy Li**, **deYampert Brame Garner II**, **Kayci Kimmons**, **Ajah Singleton**, **Emily Wright**, **Samuel Starr**, **Arabella Hamm**, **Kaden Spellmann**, **Hayden Williamson**, **Andrew Gardner** and SMBHC Dean **Douglass Sullivan-González**. Not pictured: **Mattie Ford**. These awards are funded by the McDonnell-Barksdale scholarships, Doris Raymond Honors scholarships, Harold Parker Memorial scholarships and the Annexstad Family Foundation Leaders for Tomorrow scholarships. (Photo by Thomas Graning)



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'Flowers'
by Nakiyah Jordan

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