

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
HONORS REPORT

FALL 2019





# From the DEAN

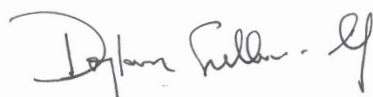
**W**hat a year to remember! Our students honored us by competing successfully for national scholarships. They engaged our university and state leaders with compelling ideas on difficult topics, and we continued to develop our Honors College and look to our future.

Jaz Brisack (SMBHC 19) became UM's first female undergraduate to win a Rhodes Scholarship, and she took the national stage with gutsy policy proposals to favor workers and protect the rights of women. Josh Law (SMBHC 17) garnered the Gates Cambridge Scholarship to pursue his dream of improving public health in his native state of Alabama. Addison Roush (SMBHC 21) was named a 2019 Goldwater Scholar for his research on new techniques for visualizing protein folding events. Additionally, a significant group of our students racked up Boren and critical language scholarships to the envy of the nation. We are beaming with pride!

What unites us? This question will dominate our 2019-20 school year as we grapple with the potential answers for our republic and academic community. Our SMBHC scholars led much of the student debate and action concerning the proposed relocation of the memorial to the Lost Cause. John Chappell (SMBHC 19) engaged the gerrymandered district of Senate District 22 in our state with a proposed solution that became the basis of a successful federal lawsuit.

Our students lead with ideas and conviction, and they propose solutions! What a great job we have at the SMBHC!

What will it take to work as citizen scholars in the year 2020? Our professors, staff and students will engage this question this coming academic year in the classrooms and debate halls. We await new leadership to emerge in the Lyceum (my fourth chancellor in my tenure as dean!) to direct this campus to provide economic and political opportunity to the people of Mississippi. With an entering class of 408 SMBHC freshmen and an overall SMBHC enrollment of 1,600, we have the ability to push the tough questions to the forefront to educate and to enhance the liberty envisioned by our republic's founders.



Douglass Sullivan-González



Douglass Sullivan-González

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'Mother & Daughter,' colored pencils  
by Saryiah Coleman

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## JOIN US!

### SMBHC Fall Convocation

Thursday, Sept. 12, Ford Center, 7:30 p.m.

Keynote speaker: Doris Kearns Goodwin,  
presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author

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**Nakiyah Jordan**  
**Swetha Manivannan**  
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**Jessica Tran**  
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A Year to Remember

# BRUCE LEVINGSTON

Bruce Levingston performing in Kenya, spring 2019. (Photo by Michael Poliza)

**T**his past year overflowed with exciting and inspirational moments at the Honors College. As always, our gifted students were deeply engaged in the many activities and opportunities the Honors College provides them.

In the honors course I teach in the fall, “Art and the Republic,” students engaged in lively and probing discussions about how events throughout history affect and influence art; they then studied how art, in turn, processes and reflects these important moments, turning them back into distinctive communicative works that influence our societies.

Students studied forms of creativity that span five centuries and developed papers and projects that expressed their own responses to seminal works. Some of our special guests who discussed their own creative processes with our class included renowned poet Beth Ann Fennelly, the distinguished painter Philip Jackson and acclaimed author and political cartoonist Marshall Ramsey. At the end of the semester, students created moving paintings, films, poetry and live performances that reflected their own journeys of growth and transformation.

For our fall convocation, Alessandra Ferri and Herman Cornejo, the internationally celebrated ballet stars, returned to our campus where they

performed a premiere of a magnificent new work by the esteemed British choreographer Wayne McGregor. Before the performance, Alessandra and Herman spent time with our honors students for an intimate discussion about their own work process, careers and dedication to their art. The students asked detailed and penetrating questions and were enthralled and inspired by the total commitment to excellence exhibited by these world-class artists.

A few months later, Alessandra, Herman and I traveled to London and performed 10 sold-out concerts at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. A number of our wonderful Ole Miss colleagues, supporters and friends (including Kathryn Black, Meredith Creekmore, Dolly Goings, Patty Lewis, Diane Scruggs and Linda Spargo) flew to England to attend; we were joined by a number of former honors students who are now studying and working successfully in London. It was a thrilling experience to perform in this magnificent and historic venue that first opened in 1738, especially with members of our Ole Miss family sitting in the audience!

Our troupe went from there to Pavia, Italy, to perform in another beautiful opera house, the Teatro Fraschini, which was also built in the 18th century.



During the late spring, a group of our university's most talented performers and honors student artists presented a magical Honors Art Showcase. The event was filled with exquisite exhibits and performances by Nancy Maria Balach, Corey Davis, Jesse Gibens, Emma Johnson, Nakiyah Jordan, Lawson Marchetti, Benjamin Rorabaugh, Michael Rowlett, Ava Street and John Michael Walker,

who deftly organized the showcase. I was even invited to perform a few works myself! It was an absolute joy to witness the amazing array of talent we have on our campus.

Earlier in the spring, the Honors College hosted an art exhibition by award-winning UM graduate Brooke Alexander. Her stunning work filled the Great Hall with beauty and inspiration. I am honored that one of Brooke's elegant



Bruce Levingston in the Teatro Fraschini di Pavia, Italy, winter 2019. (Photo by Herman Cornejo)





**Bruce Levingston, Alessandra Ferri and Herman Cornejo take bows at the Ford Center, fall 2018.**  
(Photo by Thomas Graning)

artworks is featured on the cover of my latest album, “Citizen,” which was released this past January. I am also elated that the album features the world premiere recording of two masterful works by one of our most brilliant former Honors College students, C. Price Walden.

And speaking of our former students, I am proud to report on three of our young honors graduates who have been doing extraordinarily well since leaving us. One of our finest students, Eleanor Anthony, recently graduated from the Stanford School of Law and has begun practicing with the powerhouse international law firm Morrison and Foerster.

Another recent graduate, Jake Thrasher, a multit talented visual artist and researcher who won the National Mark of Excellence Award from the Society of Professional Journalists for Editorial Cartooning in his final semester at UM, is now studying for his Ph.D. in molecular biophysics and biochemistry at Yale University. He has joined Ryan Jensen’s lab, where he studies DNA damage and repair in the context of breast cancer. Jake has also become an editor for the magazine *Science for the People*.

Finally, Shad White, a top graduate of the Honors College, Rhodes Scholar and graduate of Harvard Law School who is dedicated to public service, was named our state auditor this

year by Gov. Phil Bryant. He is the youngest person to hold a statewide office in Mississippi. Big congratulations to Eleanor, Jake and Shad!

The coming year also promises great things. The Honors College will host a major exhibition of artworks by Philip Jackson and present more of university students’ and graduates’ beautiful creations to the Ole Miss and Oxford communities. I will also be recording another album that will reflect on global environmental issues inspired by a recent performance I gave in Kenya.

We are blessed by so much creativity and talent in our wonderful SMBHC, at our university and in our state. Our students continue to give back to our community in so many inspiring ways. Thanks to them for all they do to make our world so special and take us into the future, and many, many thanks to all the university alumni and friends of the Honors College who generously support what we do.

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



# A TRIBUTE TO RUFF

A personal remembrance by  
BRUCE LEVINGSTON

**T**his past spring, the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and University of Mississippi lost one of its great friends and supporters.

Lester Glenn Fant III, known as “Ruff” to just about everyone who knew him, died after a brief and unexpected illness. He was 78.

Ruff was born into a distinguished, storied family from Holly Springs. His father, a former judge, taught law at Ole Miss for 30 years, so Ruff had deep ties to Ole Miss. Ruff, however, attended Vanderbilt, and went from there to Harvard Law School, graduating in 1966. He was on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966 to 1969, rising to the rank of captain and earning a Navy Achievement Medal for his service.

He moved to Washington, D.C., and became a respected tax attorney and civic leader. While practicing law, he served as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center for 18 years, teaching an advanced course in corporate taxation and ethics in the graduate program. He was awarded the American Bar Association Award for Professional Merit.

He later founded two investment companies that flourished. Using his knowledge of tax law, accounting and corporate finance, he became a highly successful, visionary leader

in the business community. This allowed him to focus on his great passion of advancing education and helping others.

He generously supported numerous educational institutions including the University of Mississippi, Vanderbilt, Georgetown, Harvard and the University of North Carolina. He was a trustee of Sidwell Friends School and chairman of the Fudan Foundation, which supports the Center for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, China.

Deeply patriotic and committed to preserving our country’s history, he served on the boards of the American Battlefield Trust and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He



**Ruff Fant and Bruce Levingston following the naming of the Lester Glenn Fant Chair, fall 2017. (Photo by Robert Jordan)**



became a major founder and benefactor of President Lincoln's Cottage, a home, and now a national monument, where Lincoln sought solace during his presidency.

Ruff was equally dedicated to protecting our environment and was a steadfast supporter of the Audubon Society. A voracious reader, he cherished the arts and gave his support to the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as to countless museums around the country.

Closer to home, Ruff gave repeatedly and generously to the University of Mississippi, establishing two major endowed chairs, one in the Department of English in honor of his old friend Hubert McAlexander, and the other, the Lester Glenn Fant Chair, in the SMBHC.

Ruff liked to fly under the radar and rarely sought or wanted credit for his many charitable works. However, his extraordinary gift to the Honors College was so impactful that he was finally talked into allowing his name to be used for the chair. He said it was really named in honor of his father and grandfather whose name he shared. Every time something wonderful happened with one of our honors students or faculty members, he would send enthusiastic and joyful notes to friends celebrating the successes of his Ole Miss Honors College family.

It should also come as no surprise that he cared deeply about civil rights. Once, when

traveling through the Delta, he stopped in Sumner to see the Emmett Till Interpretive Center. He went inside the famous courthouse and studied the heartbreaking exhibits of that tragic moment in our history. He was so moved by his experience there that he immediately began to support — and enlist others' support for — this historic place and project of remembrance and education.

When the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum opened in 2017, one of the musical works commissioned for the occasion, "Sacred Spaces" by former Honors College student C. Price Walden, was dedicated to Ruff and his wife, Susan. The work celebrates the freedom, safety and spiritual comfort that local churches provided for many during the civil rights era. Recollecting the concert and music, Ruff once exclaimed that he always referred to that concert as "the Freedom Concert." Nothing was more important to him than freedom for all people.

Kind, witty, urbane, brilliant and deep, he was unique. When Ruff died, his family suffered an immeasurable loss; his love for them was always evident, but his loss was also felt by many others, including his legion of loving friends, our own university community, beneficiaries of his generosity, and our country, which lost one of its noblest citizens. Thank you, and Godspeed dear Ruff Fant. ■ **HR**



*'For a Just and Holy Cause,' oil on museum board by Nakiyah Jordan*

ABOUT THE COVER:

‘Evergreen Loch Ness,’ 2019  
Monotype on BFK Rives  
by Kristen Vise

Meet our SMBHC  
FEATURED  
ARTISTS



**Kristen Vise** is an artist and designer in Seattle, Washington. A native Mississippian, Vise graduated from the Honors College in 2012 with a B.F.A. in studio art and graphic design. She was a Barksdale Scholar her senior year, as well as a Taylor Medalist.

Vise’s work in Seattle showcases six years of UX production, design and product marketing in one of the country’s most cutting-edge tech communities. She has enjoyed success as an experience lead/web producer of a Fortune 10 company, a UX/UI designer and researcher and, most recently, as the product marketing manager for iStreamPlanet, a technology subsidiary of Turner Broadcasting.

Outside of work, Vise loves to hike and explore the beautiful Pacific Northwest. This year, she is taking classes at Pratt Fine Arts Center and the Gage Academy, and printing at a large printmaking studio in the city. Her featured art in the *Honors Report* is some of this year’s latest work. Follow her on Instagram at @kristenvise.

**Sariyah Coleman** is an eighth-grader at Oxford Middle School. Her artistic nature emerged at a very early age, and she takes advantage of every opportunity to continue to improve and grow in her craft. Coleman would like to pursue a career as an artist or an animator for Walt Disney Studios. Already, she is scouting out colleges that could help her achieve her goals, but for now, we’ll consider her an SMBHC Class of 2028 member. Coleman also enjoys reading, writing and math. She is the daughter of Rachel Coleman (MEd 12), who is the SMBHC records coordinator and academic counselor, and Lucretius Coleman, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in physics at UM.



**Ellie Smith** (SMBHC 19) just graduated with a degree in biochemistry, but values art as a creative outlet and a means of deepening her interaction with the world. Smith is from Hudson, Wisconsin, and is attending medical school after a gap year in South America. She plans to continue pursuing art as a hobby throughout her life, and especially enjoys using exaggerated color and line to emphasize interesting aspects of the subject.

**Nakiyah Jordan** (SMBHC 21) is a junior art student hoping to graduate with a B.F.A. in painting. On campus, she works as a community assistant for student housing and cartoonist for *The Daily Mississippian*. She is also a member of the Black Student Union’s cabinet, serving as a public relations chair, and vice president of the Honors College Minority Engagement Club. Jordan’s hope is that people can find a bit of rest through her images, as well as reflect on the people and stories that we tend to forget. You can find her artwork on Instagram: @nakiart. For “Def,” Jordan collaborated with Arielle Wallace (SMBHC 17), who created “Mos.” (Photo by Ben Huff)





# MORE BISCUITS

Honors students conduct M Partner service project with New Albany farmers market

ASHLEEN WILLIAMS,  
SENIOR BARKSDALE FELLOW

**I**n spring 2019, three sections of Honors 102 worked with nearby New Albany on a collective community action challenge\* project as part of the university's M Partner program. Citizen scholars were tasked with brainstorming, researching and identifying opportunities for growth and expansion of the city's Biscuits and Jam Farmers Market.

Forty-five first-year honors students worked on the Biscuits and Jam project, with seven more students contributing to data collection. Collectively, students contributed more than 700 hours of research and contact time to the project.

New Albany officials and businesspeople, including representatives from Baileytown Farm, the Main Street Association and alderwoman Amy Livingston, visited the SMBHC three times during the semester to talk to students about the project.

In May, 15 reports were provided to the New Albany City Council, New Albany Main Street Association and the broader volunteer board of the Biscuits and Jam Farmers Market. This project is ongoing, with Bella St. Amant (SMBHC 20) securing an internship to continue the efforts of the Honors 102 class and several other upperclassmen visiting the market this summer for data collection and fieldwork.

*\*SMBHC students complete at least 10 hours of CAC each fall and spring semester. Many go beyond 10 hours when they use their CAC to outline the scope of their concerns and dreams, explore what it takes to have a lasting impact, and transform their communities and themselves. ■ HR*



Bella St. Amant (Photo by Camille Delaune, photography student at LSU)



# AND JAM, *Please*







JESSICA TRAN (SMBHC 19)

**M**y classmates and I walked into what many students coined the “window room,” or what seemed like the hottest, most humid room, of the Honors College. We set our belongings down, and a man dressed in thick-rimmed glasses and a “Star Wars” Sith Lord shirt walked to the podium and loaded the slideshow.

Early on, my classmates and I had created a group chat, which largely consisted of memes and ways to distract psychology professor John Young from the daily lecture, and I was usually the spokesperson to divert the conversation before we delved too deeply into textbook topics like Pavlovian conditioning or Freud’s psychosexual (I did everyone a favor on this one) personality theory. One day’s topic was personality tests like the Enneagram and Myers-Briggs — oh, and the existence of aliens, but that doesn’t fit into the *modus operandi* of this piece.

Dr. Young has an unconventional way of lecturing to his students in that he was aware of our diversions and actually used it to his advantage. He gracefully intertwined the concepts of the daily lecture with our rapid-fire questions about life and how it operated.

An important element to underscore is the manner in which he explained the intricacies of said life. After stumbling through four years of undergraduate classes, I have an uncanny method to sort professors into two distinct

groups: the ones who believe PowerPoint is the next best invention since sliced bread and the ones who believe that the jury is still out. My favorite ones tend to be active members of the latter.

Returning to the topic of personality tests, the class went into depth about people’s particular zodiac signs, Enneagram numbers, and combination of letters that supposedly determined what type of cheese pleased the palate.

Dr. Young entertained our banter and said that he knew of a better personality test, so he emailed us a link to a set of questions. Two days passed, and like clockwork, the class group message exploded with guesses of what each of us was and prediction of cheese preferences. Mine is provolone, by the way.

We sat down, and in front of us were our results. Dramatically, Dr. Young counted down from three, and we all read our papers. Across the room, “ahhs” and “oohs” filled the space, and the noises were oddly reminiscent of going to the zoo for the first time as a child.

“DR. YOUNG IS ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRING PROFESSORS I HAVE EVER HAD. HIS PASSION FOR HIS SUBJECT IS UNPARALLELED. HE CHALLENGES US TO THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY, THE NATURE OF OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND HOW CULTURAL NORMS INFLUENCE OUR PERCEPTION OF MENTAL DISORDERS. HE IS A TRULY KIND, INTERESTING AND HILARIOUS HUMAN BEING.”

– Meagan Mandabach (SMBHC 20)

“DR. YOUNG IS AN EXCEPTIONAL PROFESSOR WHO REDEFINES TEACHING. HIS UNIQUE TEACHING METHODS PROMOTE STUDENT PARTICIPATION, NOT OUT OF OBLIGATION, RATHER OUT OF GENUINE INTEREST AND INTRIGUE. HIS CLASS IS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE THAT WILL LEAVE YOU GRATEFUL TO BE AN HONORS STUDENT!”

– Aileen Jimenez (SMBHC 22)

Someone even gasped out loud and said, “Wow. That is SO me!” Another said, “This is crazy. This is 100 percent true.”

Dr. Young asked if anyone wanted to read his or hers out loud, and eagerly, I jumped up and began reading about what makes me so special and endearing and remarkable. I am around three sentences into my monologue, and suddenly, four people say, “Hold up. That’s exactly ...” Spoiler alert, all the results were the same. Metaphorically, we are all provolone cheese. In other words, we all have a desire to be loved and understood.

Feeling bamboozled, we demanded answers, and as always, Dr. Young was excited to share what he knew about the topic. He used concepts we were specifically interested in understanding and related them to the required topics of the class. These memorable lectures were not singular — they were every class.

Each Tuesday and Thursday was awash in new information and endless, profound moments that kept each of us on the tip of our toes and excited to return to learn. Not exaggerating — one of us had the flu, and we almost FaceTimed her into the class.

One of the most striking traits about Dr. Young is his ability to revive students’ natural curiosities about life. He cares not about whether we get the correct answers on

multiple-choice tests or if we perfect short-answer questions. He is focused on the students’ hunger for knowledge, so he removes the stress of these typical forms of aptitude measurements by simply not having them.

Through this method of teaching, Dr. Young creates an environment where students are free to question whatever their minds linger toward every second of class.

As I write this, the thought occurs to me that I came to know Dr. Young most intimately when he took a chance on me by agreeing to serve as my thesis adviser. He helped conjure up a topic that was highly applicable to my future career in the medical field and to my unnerving desire to gain a deeper understanding of how humans operate in a nonlinear and illogical world. I decided to compare two diffusion methods for a psychological screening tool in the medical field, or simply put, I wanted to figure out what factor made people drop what they were familiar with and adopt something new.

While I learned some of the most insightful bits of information during the research, where I truly grew the most was in our bimonthly meetings to check up on the progress of my writing. Like every meeting, I would plop down in an office chair and begin with, “I’m stressed out” or the classic, “I have no idea what I am doing.” Especially in these moments, I had been given the opportunity to know him better and to call him a friend.

Dr. Young would support and uplift me after I felt bogged down from the masses of articles. Like class, we talked about random questions that intrigued me, and most of the time, he had an answer. My favorite moments, however, were when he didn’t. Dr. Young is always the first to let someone know when he is not sure of a topic. His humbleness is evident when he leaves every class and most meetings with a charge to never stop questioning the world around us.

Lastly, I am convinced Dr. Young’s cerebral cortex is on the level of those he esteems, like Star Wars’ creator George Lucas or maybe Barney Stinson from “How I Met Your Mother.” There is no way Dr. Young is provolone cheese, and if you don’t know him, then you’re in Alderaan places. ■ HR



John Young, associate professor of psychology, and 2019’s Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award recipient (Photo by Kevin Bain)







## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

9/18



**Elena Bauer** (SMBHC 17), **Will Tribble** (SMBHC 19), **Sam Harres** (SMBHC 19), **John Chappell** (SMBHC 19) and **Brendan Ryan** (not pictured; SMBHC 19) presented at the third annual UM Tech Summit, where a variety of stakeholders discussed the intersection of technology and education. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

**Hallie Gillam** (SMBHC 19) was named the 2018 Homecoming queen. Gillam hails from Germantown, Tennessee, and graduated with a degree in public policy leadership with minors in economics and international studies and is attending Belmont Law School in Nashville. (Photo by Kevin Bain)

**Jessica Tran** (SMBHC 19) was named Miss Ole Miss. Among her many leadership roles, Tran served as student director of the Honors Senate and president of Active Minds, which inspired her platform of promoting better education on mental health issues and providing more accessibility for those needing mental health resources. Tran is attending medical school at UMMC. (Photo by Galina Ostrovsky)



Before being enchanted by **Bruce Levingston**, **Alessandra Ferri** and **Herman Cornejo** at the Honors Fall Convocation, students from Senior Barksdale Fellow Ashleen Williams' Hon 101 sections posed in front of the Ford Center. (Photo by Ashleen Williams)

The Honors Senate hosted **#RushHoCo** for students not going through Greek recruitment. The students enjoyed ice cream floats and camaraderie. (Photo courtesy Dottie Reid)



LEFT:  
'Reflections,' oil on canvas  
by Ellie Smith



# **SMBHC:** **THE LIGHT** **CONTINUES**

ROBERT C. KHAYAT, CHANCELLOR EMERITUS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

**“D**r. Khayat, what is your vision for the University of Mississippi?” That question was posed on March 5, 1995, as members of the state Institutions of Higher Learning board of trustees interviewed me as a candidate for the chancellorship of Ole Miss.

“To be — and to be perceived as — one of America’s great public universities.” That was my answer and my hope for the future.

The IHL trustees did choose me to become the 15th chancellor, and I began working with faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends to clearly identify the elements requisite to attaining respected academic status, internally and externally.

Crucial to this reach for excellence was the need to find our north star — a bright light that would help us navigate our academic journey and illuminate the path for other remarkable programs.



Chancellor Emeritus Robert Khayat and Jim Barksdale (right) react to former Secretary of State Colin Powell at the 2009 Spring Honors Convocation. (Photo by Robert Jordan)

On Nov. 3, 1995, I boarded a plane to fly to Palo Alto, California, to spend the weekend with Jim and (the now late) Sally Barksdale. Jim's brothers, Dr. Bryan Barksdale and (the now late) Tommy Barksdale, accompanied me. We devoted a great deal of time talking about gifts the Barksdales could make to strengthen Ole Miss. I went through a litany of ideas, including a new business school and an information technology center. I assumed that's where Jim's interest would be since he was leading Netscape, one of the world's best-known internet companies. I was mistaken; none of my thoughts seemed to excite the Barksdales.

As the visit progressed, the Barksdales again asked me what they could do to make the greatest impact at their alma mater. My response: "Create an honors college." Somewhat puzzled, they asked why this was important. (At the time, the university did have an honors program.)

"Extraordinary students need extraordinary opportunities," I said, and asked them if they would give our students and faculty the kind of academic experiences and resources that would make them nationally competitive. The Honors College would appeal to the brightest students and provide an alternative to the belief that only out-of-state private institutions could offer the rigorous preparation students need to meet expectations of excellence.

Mississippi had long suffered from losing its very best students to nonresident private colleges and universities. The loss was crudely described as the "brain drain," with research clearly demonstrating that high-performing students who left the state for college and professional training did not return to their native state. They ended up spending their lives and careers making tremendous contributions to other states.

When it came time to give my inauguration speech, I had the remarkable privilege of announcing a \$5.4 million gift from the Barksdales — at that time the largest single private gift in the university's history — to create the McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College

(later named the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College in memory of Sally). I talked about this Honors College being able to provide opportunities for honors students and faculty unsurpassed in American higher education.

The Honors College became our north star.

Thanks to the long-term major investments by Jim Barksdale and his wife, Donna, and the much respected, energetic and creative leadership of Dr. Douglass Sullivan-González, the dean of the Honors College, this significant program has earned national and international respect. It also ignited a movement across campus, helping the university gain many more brilliant academic stars supported by other deeply committed and generous alumni and friends. With the Honors College as such a significant foundation, other donors were inspired to invest in our academic community.

The Honors College opened its doors in 1997, and now, more than 20 years later, its student body numbers in excess of 1,600 scholars who routinely are recognized on the national stage and in global work. In addition to extraordinary academic preparation, service projects have become a significant part of students' lives.

We've been able to achieve all the goals I outlined in my inauguration address, although many more opportunities and needs have been added to the list; our work is never done. The Honors College redefined the University of Mississippi in the annals of higher education, but even more importantly, in the minds and souls of all stakeholders in our great American public university.

I am delighted when I read about or hear about the achievements of Honors College students and alumni. When I drive by the building housing the Honors College, I am overcome with a mixture of gratitude and pride. I thank the Barksdale family and the faculty, staff, students and numerous other donors for believing in the vision of what the University of Mississippi could be.

Now, we all believe. And our north star continues to propel us forward in the constant pursuit of excellence. ■ HR

**“ IF YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING NEW YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A VISION. YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A PERSPECTIVE. YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME NORTH STAR YOU'RE AIMING FOR, AND YOU JUST BELIEVE SOMEHOW YOU'LL GET THERE, WHICH KIND OF GETS TO THE PASSION POINT.”**

— Steve Case, *American entrepreneur*



# FIELDS OF OPPORTUNITY: A PRODUCTIVE YEAR IN THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ADVISEMENT

TIM DOLAN, ONSA DIRECTOR

Jean-François Millet’s 1850 painting “The Sower” depicts a peasant’s act of faith, planting seeds in hopes of harvests that are beyond his control. There is a power and a presence to his depiction of the figure, alone in a freshly turned field, casting handfuls of seeds and striding with confidence toward the unknown.

Each time a student in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College applies for a competitive national scholarship, he or she embarks on a similar quest. This year, students have collected a bountiful harvest of prestigious awards — reaping what they’ve sown throughout their undergraduate years: investments in time, energy and civic engagement.

Recognition by national scholarship foundations shines a light on what those who work with SMBHC students already know. Our students represent some of the most intelligent, committed, hardworking and civically active students in the entire country.

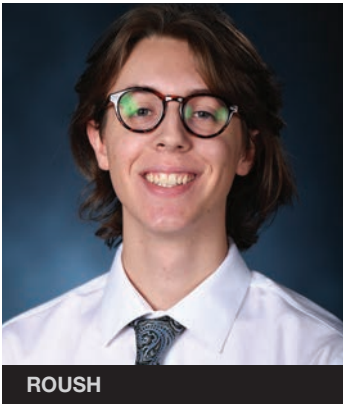


**Jaz Brisack** (SMBHC 19) became the University of Mississippi’s 26th overall and first female Rhodes Scholar, following her designation as a Truman Scholar in 2018. The Rhodes Scholarship provides full funding for graduate study at the University of Oxford and recognizes students with outstanding intellectual distinction who plan to have lives dedicated to service.

A general studies major, Brisack worked as a teacher with the Sunflower County Freedom Project, as a labor organizer with the United Auto Workers, and as a defender of reproductive rights for the

Jackson Women’s Health Organization, known as the Pink House. She is a writer and social activist who plans to return to Mississippi after her studies at the University of Oxford and be a labor organizer.

SMBHC alumnus **Josh Law** (17) received a Gates Cambridge Scholarship from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to pursue a master’s degree in health, medicine and society at the University of Cambridge. Law earned his bachelor’s degree in philosophy and religion and teaches middle school science in Colorado. He plans to eventually pursue a medical or doctoral degree and return to practice medicine in his home state of Alabama. He becomes the third student from UM to receive this scholarship, which recognizes outstanding intellectual ability, leadership potential and a commitment to improving the lives of others.



In May, SMBHC junior **Addison Roush** became UM’s 14th Goldwater Scholar, which is the oldest and most prestigious science scholarship available to undergraduates and recognizes students who show exceptional promise to become the next generation of research leaders.

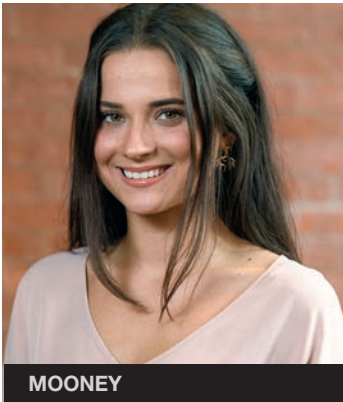
Roush studies biochemistry and mathematics and mentors Lafayette County High School students. He conducts research on protein structures and their interactions in UM associate professor of pharmacology Joshua Sharp’s laboratory

and hopes to apply his work to help combat Alzheimer’s disease and prion diseases such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

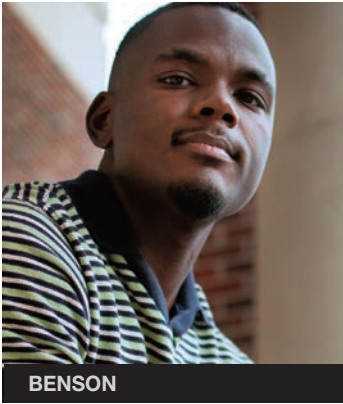
The Fulbright U.S. Student Program provides grants for one-year, postgraduate study abroad experiences, and four UM students were named Fulbright finalists for this award. Two of them are 2019 SMBHC graduates **Ty Gill** and **Bethany Fitts**.



Gill, a linguistics, Spanish and classics major from Saucier, will be an English teaching assistant in Spain. Fitts, an English major from Tupelo, will be an English teaching assistant in the Czech Republic. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and has a long history of providing grants to scholars to promote citizen diplomacy abroad.



**Brooklyn Mooney** (SMBHC 20) received an Honorable Mention for the Udall Scholarship, a program that recognizes future environmental leaders and leaders in tribal policy or Native American health care. Nationally, the Udall recognizes 55 scholars and 55 honorable mentions. Mooney is from Collins and plans to focus her career on water law to improve water quality and usage in the Mississippi Delta region.



**Jarvis Benson** (SMBHC 19) was selected to participate in the Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program, a social justice program that trains and inspires national leaders to fight hunger and poverty across the United States. Benson is an international studies and Spanish major from Grenada and

was named a Truman Scholarship finalist and a Rhodes Scholarship finalist in 2018. Each year, 16-20 Emerson Hunger Fellows are selected from around the country for a yearlong placement with community-based organizations to find innovative solutions to hunger, poverty and social inequality.

**Mitchell Palmertree** (SMBHC 21) was named a Mount Vernon Leadership Fellow. Palmertree is a public policy leadership major from Winona, and after participating in the Sunflower County Freedom Project in summer 2018, he was inspired to work on creating a similar program in his hometown. The fellowship provides a \$3,000 stipend, housing and transportation during a six-week summer institute, where students gain leadership skills and connections to mentors in Washington, D.C. It also helps students build a professional network across the nation.

Finally, seven SMBHC students from the Arabic, Chinese and Swahili programs were selected as recipients of the David L. Boren Scholarship, which is part of the National Security Exchange Program. The Boren provides up to \$20,000 to support two semesters of study abroad.

**Tyler Caple** of Huntsville, Alabama; **Jesse Paxton** of Springfield, Missouri; and **Matthew Travers**, a Stamps Scholar from St. Louis, Missouri, will use their Boren scholarships to support their 2019 fall



Chinese Language Flagship capstone program in China.

**Lauren Burns** of Gulfport; **John Chappell** of Albuquerque, New Mexico; and **Lauren Newman** of

Ocean Springs will use their Boren scholarships to support their 2019 fall Arabic Language Flagship capstone program in Morocco. **Claire Sullivan**, of Tampa, Florida, will use her Boren to support

her study in the 2019 African Flagship Languages Initiative Program in Tanzania. This is the largest-ever number of Boren scholarships awarded to UM students in one grant cycle.

The Office of National Scholarship Advisement commends all these students on their well-deserved honors. A record number of students applied for nationally competitive scholarships in 2018-19, and all deserve credit for their tremendous effort and accomplishment.

It takes an act of faith and courage to write a personal statement, ask for letters of recommendation and submit an application to a highly competitive scholarship, knowing all along that the chances for success are slim. Most students appreciate how the process allows them time to reflect on their accomplishments and think about how that has prepared them for their future.

No one can “look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow and which will not,” as Banquo says in *Macbeth*, but the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College certainly provides fertile ground for such seeds to take root. ■ HR



‘Growth,’ 2019, monotype on BFK Rives  
by Kristen Vise

## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

10/18



**Markeeva Morgan** (MBHC 01) (center, in suit and tie), who graduated with a degree in electrical engineering and is a member of the UM Hall of Fame, enjoyed breakfast with honors students and discussed issues related to diversity and inclusion. Morgan is avionics, GN&C (guidance, navigation and control) and software senior manager for Boeing Co. Previously, he worked in various leadership roles at NASA at the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama.  
(Photo by Douglass Sullivan-González)



Members of the **Black Student Union**, **Active Minds** and **Honors College Minority Engagement Club** gathered in the SMBHC Great Room to connect during an evening of painting. (Photo courtesy Jessica Tran)

**DSG** dined with **John Ratliff** (SMBHC 14), **Virginia Burke** (SMBHC 11) and **Buddy Apple** (SMBHC 04) in Dallas.

11/18

May 2019 graduates **Noah Kippenbrock** and **Mary Grace Bass** presented their research at the South Central Branch of the American Society for Microbiology 2018 Meeting held at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Their posters featured portions of their honors thesis research, directed by professor Colin Jackson.  
(Photos by Thomas Graning)



ONSA director **Tim Dolan**, Senior Barksdale Fellow **Ashleen Williams**, **Jessica Tran** (SMBHC 19), **Rachel Winstead** (SMBHC 20), **Galina Ostrovsky** (SMBHC 19), **Alexis Miller** (SMBHC 19), DSG, professor **Bob Brown** and Associate Dean **Jennifer Parsons** attended the 53rd National Collegiate Honors Council Conference, which took place in Boston.

The **Honors Senate** raised over \$1,000 in 30 minutes during the Five Dollar Feast, benefiting The Pantry of Oxford and Lafayette County. The delicious meal was catered by Taylor Grocery.



# GIVE ME SCOTLAND BEFORE I DIE\*

EVEANNE EASON (SMBHC 20)  
PHOTOS BY JESSICA DIMENTO

In the life of a college career, a graduation ceremony is a funeral. The wiser upperclassmen among us will savor their twilight years, so much so that it would seem cavalier for a junior to decide to spend one away. There are many good reasons to forgo a year abroad; for the Honors College student, this publication is full of them.

But remember that completing your studies means certain death, where crossing over is finding a job, maybe starting a family, and taking on practical obligations that extend beyond yourself, perhaps for the first time. What makes college worth sticking around for is what makes it worth spending time abroad.

Never again will I be 21. Never again will I wake up in a studio flat in Scotland's capital, available for a last-minute trip to Luxembourg and find

\* "GIVE ME SCOTLAND, OR I DIE!"  
— John Knox, died 1572 in Edinburgh

The Highlands



myself there the next day, paying my respects at the visitation of the late grand duke.

Likely never again will I follow my favorite band on their European tour, or study *The Importance of Being Earnest* in English class before taking the train to see it on the West End. Or give an art history presentation on a certain porphyry vase only to stumble upon it in Paris. (I got into the museum that morning for free with my student ID and ran up to the top floor when it first opened. Probably never again will I be alone in the Louvre.)

And that's the catch, by the way; I did a lot of these things alone. This might be a good enough reason not to study abroad — at the beginning there were times where I thought, "Wow, this is incredible, although I wish I could share it with someone" — but again, on the other hand, it might be a reason to go. I've learned a lot more about beauty on my own.

I went to Edinburgh to study the Scottish Enlightenment with a keen interest in philosophical aesthetics. As a discipline, aesthetics is something I find difficult to explain, but it almost always has to do with ideas like beauty, perception and taste. Whatever beauty is, there's nowhere as beautiful as Scotland.

We're encouraged to spend a full year abroad, rather than a semester or summer, so that we can feel like we've really lived somewhere. I've seen four seasons of Scotland. I was very fortunate to be able to travel to the Continent, checking off the bucket list, but I needn't have ever left this place to have made it worthwhile. On my trips, I was aware that I



“  
WHATEVER  
BEAUTY IS,  
THERE'S NOWHERE  
AS BEAUTIFUL  
AS SCOTLAND.”

– Eveanne Eason





might never see these places again, and I had to make peace with that; if I had visited Edinburgh from somewhere else for a weekend and seen the highlights, I probably could've gotten over leaving it too. But now I know it, and I'm so grateful to have had a year to be its tourist.

Acknowledging the ephemerality of a moment, that you just have one day in Haarlem or Vienna, makes it odd to return to a place you never necessarily thought you'd see again. This happened to me in the Highlands of Scotland.

North of Edinburgh, the Highlands are best described as something distinct from beautiful; when I saw them for the first time in September, I knew I

was experiencing the sublime. In Immanuel Kant's aesthetics, "sublime" refers to what is "absolutely great." There's a boundlessness to the Highlands when you're standing there on a single-track road, shooing sheep, taking a moment to breathe in your surroundings, eyes wide and mouth agape.

The Highlands inspire fear in the Kantian, dynamical sense, as if the hills were a natural force rolling toward you (or perhaps you just feel regular fear because you're an American driving on the left side of the road).

How strange it was, then, to return in wintertime, recognizing a feeling that no picture or memory could recall completely — it's a property of the sublime that we can't fully comprehend it — and even stranger that this place I instantly recognized was different from how I'd left it, now covered in dripping ice and snow. Up here, I feel that the veil between here and heaven is thinned, and I couldn't care less about the metaphorical sepulchering of my youth upon graduation. If I'm going to die, at least I'll have been free in Scotland. ■ HR



'The Planetary Selfie'  
Acrylic on wood  
by Nakiyah Jordan



'Feather Forest Friends,' 2019, monotype on BFK Rives  
by Kristen Vise



# FACULTY SUMMER STIPEND COMPETITION WINNERS

**B**elow are the course titles selected for the 2019 summer stipend course development awards of \$5,000 each. These courses will be offered to honors students at some point over the next four semesters. Congratulations to these four forward-thinking University of Mississippi faculty members!

## Human Mobility: Studies in Ancient and Modern Migration

**Carolyn Freiwald, assistant professor  
of anthropology**

Migration is one of the most important political, social and economic issues in the world today, in one sense an urgent modern dilemma, and in another, one of the defining aspects of humanity. Anthropology provides a unique view of human mobility, both past and present. Cultural anthropology gives people a voice to tell their own stories: who moved and why, and how being a migrant affects them, their new communities, and the people and places they left behind.

In archaeology, population movement has recently re-emerged as a major focus, in part because partnerships with geneticists and chemists have revealed the migration histories of Roman gladiators, Maya kings and even historic Mississippi plantation owners. Biological and linguistic anthropology also contributes to our understanding of migration and modern debates about identity, ethnicity, borders and citizenship.

The course would engage students through both traditional and experiential learning. Reading ethnographic case studies will be a starting point for understanding modern migration. I am reviewing new publications that discuss migration from Africa to Europe, Central American asylum seekers, and general debates on modern human mobility, e.g., *Lives in Transit* by Wendy Vogt; *Humanitarianism and Mass Migration*, edited by Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco; and *Illegality, Inc.* by Ruben Andersson. Historic (and prehistoric) case studies will present migration in distinct cultural contexts in the ancient world, including in Latin America where I have worked to reconstruct past patterns of population movement since 2005.

Our department has additional research expertise in migration histories that extend back thousands of years through Tony Boudreaux's collaboration with the Chickasaw Nation, Center for Archaeological Research projects

near Clinton, Mississippi, and on campus, and Simone Delorme's work with modern migration in the region.

## Freedom Farm Revisited

**R.J. Morgan, director of the Mississippi  
Scholastic Press Association**

Call it Mississippi's version of Wakanda. Fifty years ago, Sunflower County was home to a place where African Americans could eat, work and live with economic independence from the all-white power structure.

In 1969, sharecropper-turned-activist Fannie Lou Hamer — who was once beaten nearly to the point of death by police officers in Winona, who was fired and evicted from her home for attempting to register to vote, who frightened Lyndon Johnson so badly he tried to have her testimony pulled from national television — embarked on what might have been her boldest initiative in a life that was full of them.

Hamer secured a \$10,000 donation from a charity in Wisconsin to purchase 40 acres of farmland in her home county of Sunflower. Her goal was to create a black-owned agricultural cooperative that would afford local African Americans the ability to eat, work and live in a way that was economically independent from the all-white hegemony of Delta society. Hamer believed that if blacks could achieve a beachhead of autonomy and independence, they would be safer, happier and better able to divine their own upwardly mobile future. She called the operation Freedom Farm. The plan worked, and soon her 40-acre farm grew into a 680-acre cooperative that offered housing, food, employment, health care, a Head Start program, adult re-education and other services for former sharecroppers who had recently been kicked off similar white-owned farms for registering to vote.

The cooperative even featured a "pig bank," where members were loaned a pregnant pig to care for, then allowed to keep the resulting piglets

*continued on page 28*

'Disparate Unity,' oil on canvas  
by Ellie Smith





to raise and slaughter. From five starter pigs, the pig bank produced thousands of pigs for poor families over the next three years. Despite its initial success, the farm was unable to secure longer-term sustainable funding and folded in 1975. But while it existed, it built community and agency among people who had long had neither. The National Park Service is considering the original 40-acre site for historic preservation.

This class will explore the rise and fall of the Freedom Farm cooperative and what has and hasn't changed in the state in the last 50 years. This 3-hour depth reporting class will immerse students in Mississippi's history, issues of race, inequality, food economics, public policy and systemic power struggles.

## The Ethical Vision(s) of Utopias

**Deborah Mower, associate professor of philosophy and Bryant Chair of Ethics**

*Why* is our society the way it is? *Must* it be this way? If it could be altered, *what* should be altered? As we move into the middle of this century and think about the state of Mississippi, we can consider what we would like to construct Mississippi to be in the future. If we could create a *perfect* — or at least, an *improved* — Mississippi, what would it look like? What factors should we consider and why? Most importantly, are there any models that we might make use of in thinking about these questions?

Fortunately, questions about the improvement of society and explicit models for idealized societies have been common in philosophy and literature for centuries. We begin with portions of Plato's *Republic* by examining the role of the state and the ideal of justice as the impetus for a new society, followed by Thomas More's *Utopia*, which introduces additional questions about the role of religion. With Charlotte Perkins Gilman, we examine the role of women (and men) in the production of scientific knowledge and the construction of family life and child rearing. With Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, we examine a cooperative, socialist society, and with Sutton Griggs' *Imperium*, we consider what an ideal society would be like from a black perspective. We end our study of primary texts with B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* as the politico-economic re-vision of society dedicated to happiness.

Each of the primary texts presents an ethical vision of what society should value and pursue, emphasizing the egalitarian distribution of goods and economic work, the political vision

of harmony and peace, the religious goal of the absence of restriction and devotion to faith, and the scientific vision of maximizing health and long life through the use of technology and the eradication of sickness and disease.

With all these factors and models in mind, we visit a modern intentional community that incorporates the economic, political, religious and scientific visions found within our primary texts. Our questions in visiting the modern intentional community and applying these historic models to examine it will be to ask: (1) What vision and models could be applied to Mississippi, and (2) Which models should we pursue — and why — for a better Mississippi?

## Global Citizenship in the 21st Century

**Timothy Nordstrom, professor of political science**

Since 1816, the year that marks the onset of the modern Westphalian system, the concept of sovereignty has attached to the nation-state. Consequently, it is at this level of political aggregation that we anchor our citizenship; individuals are expected to carry out their civic responsibilities with an eye toward betterment of the nation-state. But, what if the development of global issues is such that the nation-state itself is an inhibitor to the successful resolution of the world's most pressing problems?

Indeed, the rise of globalization and the general increase in interconnectedness through technology has caused speculation about the nation-state's future. Consistent with the "erosion of the state" arguments, the notion of citizenship has been called into question. Rather than drawing the lines around citizenship at national borders, what if people saw themselves as citizens of the world? If there are truly global problems that require truly global solutions, can we understand and build constructively toward those solutions from the concept of global citizenship?

This course will examine the concept of global citizenship and how we think about global problems. How do we think about global citizenship? How does a global identity translate into decision making and behavior that is consistent with global citizenship? How do we think about solving problems across borders? Students will be engaged to think about the substantive connections between global problems and the issues we face in Mississippi: poverty, inequality, gender, water, environment and health care. ■ HR



'Lovely'  
Gouache on Bristol board  
by Nakiyah Jordan





What should we remember? We asked applicants to the SMBHC Class of 2023 this question. Some of them wanted the admissions committee to remember certain attributes of themselves. Others asked us to remember the Holocaust, to remember our manners, to remember life before the internet.

We made it our 2018-19 Freshman Ventures question. What should we remember about the American dream? What should we remember about teenagers in the foster care system? What should we remember about those who commit suicide?

Sociology and Southern studies professor Brian Foster (SMBHC 11) asked the question of himself and of those he addressed at the 2019 Honors Spring Convocation.

“Always remember how things are now,” Foster encouraged. “Never forget how they used to be.” What should we remember? Following are answers from some more of our citizen scholars.



Brittany Brown (Photo by Devna Bose)

“What should we remember? When I sat down with Dr. Brian Foster to answer this question, there were so many people, things, places and events that went through my mind. Some of the memories were happy. Some were sad. Some I hadn’t thought about in a long time, and others were thoughts that cross my mind daily.

“At the core of this, though, were people: my family,

my friends, my peers, my mentors, the people who have molded me into the person I am today. For me, it’s important to remember our people — to remember what they said to us, did for us, shared with us — because our people don’t last forever, but maybe our memories will.

“My journey in college, especially in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors



# WHAT SHOULD WE REMEMBER?

Photo by Kevin Bain; photos on-screen by Devna Bose (SMBHC 19)

College, has been extremely formative. I came in as a freshman journalism major, not knowing how much I would grow to love and adore the ability to tell other people's stories — to keep other people's memories alive — as a profession. For me, storytelling and journalism is more than a job. It's a calling, and whenever I am writing or producing a story, I always think about how to tell the story with justice, clarity and truth. That is how people deserve to be remembered.

"So, what should we remember? We should remember the people who spent the long nights with us studying in the library for exams and writing papers. We should remember the professors who took the time out of their busy schedules to

help us as we were struggling through class. We should remember the parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and siblings who called and texted to check on us daily, even when we didn't feel like talking.

"We should remember our friends who made us feel at home, even while we were away from home. We should remember our mentors who told us truth, even when we didn't want to hear it. We should remember the people whose jokes made us laugh until we would cry and our bellies would ache. We should remember each kind and encouraging word shared with us.

"We should remember the times when we were at our lowest because it shows us our resilience.

We should remember the times when we were at our highest because it shows that triumph always wins. Most importantly, we should always remember who we are, even as people, environments and circumstances change, because not only are we a reflection of ourselves — but we are a reflection of those who helped us become who we are."

— *Brittany Brown (SMBHC 19)*

“‘What should we remember?’ is a funny question. It's funny in that when I first answered it, I was answering it for other people. What should we remember? What should you and I remember? — except I'm really just talking about you because I already



know to remember it. It's a personal question with a plural pronoun. It's personal because how can we know what we should remember without thinking about what and who we forget — stop answering for other people — what and who I forget?

“So who have I forgotten? I think that's pretty important to ask yourself. Who am I set up to forget? What kind of folk am I never around? What kinds of topics do I dance around in my own home? It would have been so easy for

me to answer for others and say, 'Remember to laugh.' I laugh a lot. I even call myself a comedian most of the time — only days that end in 'y.' I remember to laugh because I'm constantly trying to forget the things that are painful. So I can tell people that. Remember to laugh, and laugh loudly. But maybe what I really want to say is take care of yourself. Remember to take your medicine. I forget that. In fact, sometimes I remember to forget it.”

— Nakiyah Jordan (SMBHC 21)



Nakiyah Jordan  
(Photo by Devna Bose)



Ashleen Williams and Jarvis Benson (Photo courtesy Ashleen Williams)

**Dear HoCo students,**

Contributing to this year's *Honors Report* seems like a good time to reflect on what I've learned from you in and outside of the classroom over the last three years.

**Lesson No. 1 — Kindness comes in many forms.** This is what I am reminded of most often as I wander around the building during the week and, let's be honest, most weekends. Kindness exists in the form of you saying hello to each other, holding the door open and making most of us laugh. It also comes in the form of reasonable (and unreasonable) complaints.

**Lesson No. 2 — You are a formidable force when you work together.** Whether that is in the form of combating social stigmas around wellness, advocating for greater access to resources, fundraising more than \$250,000 for Blair E. Batson or collectively volunteering

30,000 hours last year just for your CAC requirement, it is impressive to see what you can pull off together.

**Lesson No. 3 — Community matters.** Let's just say we know how much it matters, thanks to the enthusiastic reception of the Farmers shirt and the DSG mugs.

**Lesson No. 4 — Say yes to opportunity.** Saying yes is how Jarvis Benson and I ended up in Mexico trying to climb a mountain. It is also how we forge friendships, create possibilities and learn how to push past our limits.

**Lesson No. 5 — The risk is worth it.** Usually, this is the one lesson I learn in your reluctance and refusal to do it.

Thank you for being heroes in small and big ways.

— Ashleen Williams, Senior Barksdale Fellow



“Whatever you want to do, you can’t do it on your own. Slowly, the more isolated you become, the less of a positive effect you can have on the outside world. Also, you might go a little crazy. Of course, you can try to go it alone for a while. Eventually, you’ll hit a wall. So, what I think we should remember are the people we have met along the way, the effect they have on us, the effect we may have on them and the lessons that go with both.”

— Yasmeen Abdo (SMBHC 19)

**Yasmeen Abdo**  
(Photo by Devna Bose)

“Honors College Class of 2019, I want you to think about the first time you met DSG or heard him speak. I remember listening to him talk at freshman orientation just a few days after I graduated high school. He was talking about a Ken Burns documentary, and I didn’t know who Ken Burns was or what exactly he’d documented, but I did know that DSG seemed wildly interested and engaged in what Ken Burns had to say. I remember thinking that I might not be smart enough to have a conversation with

DSG, or even to thrive in the Honors College.

“I remember listening to DSG freshman year during welcome week and at the first convocation we attended. He spoke with such passion and urgency about the issues of the day, the challenges of tomorrow, and things that felt so far over my head and out of my reach. And it wasn’t just DSG — Dr. Samonds and Dr. Young and all of the older students I met had big questions. They wanted to have big conversations. They made big plans and then executed them.

“Our freshman year as the state flag came down in front of the Lyceum and we approached the 2016 election, DSG spoke about the state of the republic and our responsibilities and roles within it. He said it was our job to make the republic as good and as just as possible. Politics got more complicated on and off campus. Local, national and international discourse seemed to be approaching a series of inflection points. And as those conversations and events unfolded, I began to truly understand what DSG meant when he said that

we were both citizens and scholars in a difficult world. I began to understand what we were doing here at the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

“Class of 2019, I can think of no better charge than this: Remember what it means to engage with people and issues and the world at large. Remember to investigate everything, to vocalize your beliefs, and to pursue your passions with diligence and creativity. Remember to ask big questions. Remember to have big conversations. Remember to make big plans, and then follow through with them — and be patient and persistent if the plans don’t work the first go-round. Remember to be kind. Remember to be compassionate when you’re making decisions that will effect great change. And lastly, remember to love — your friends, strangers, people just like you, people nothing like you and especially yourself. Thank you.”

— Jacob Ferguson (SMBHC 19)

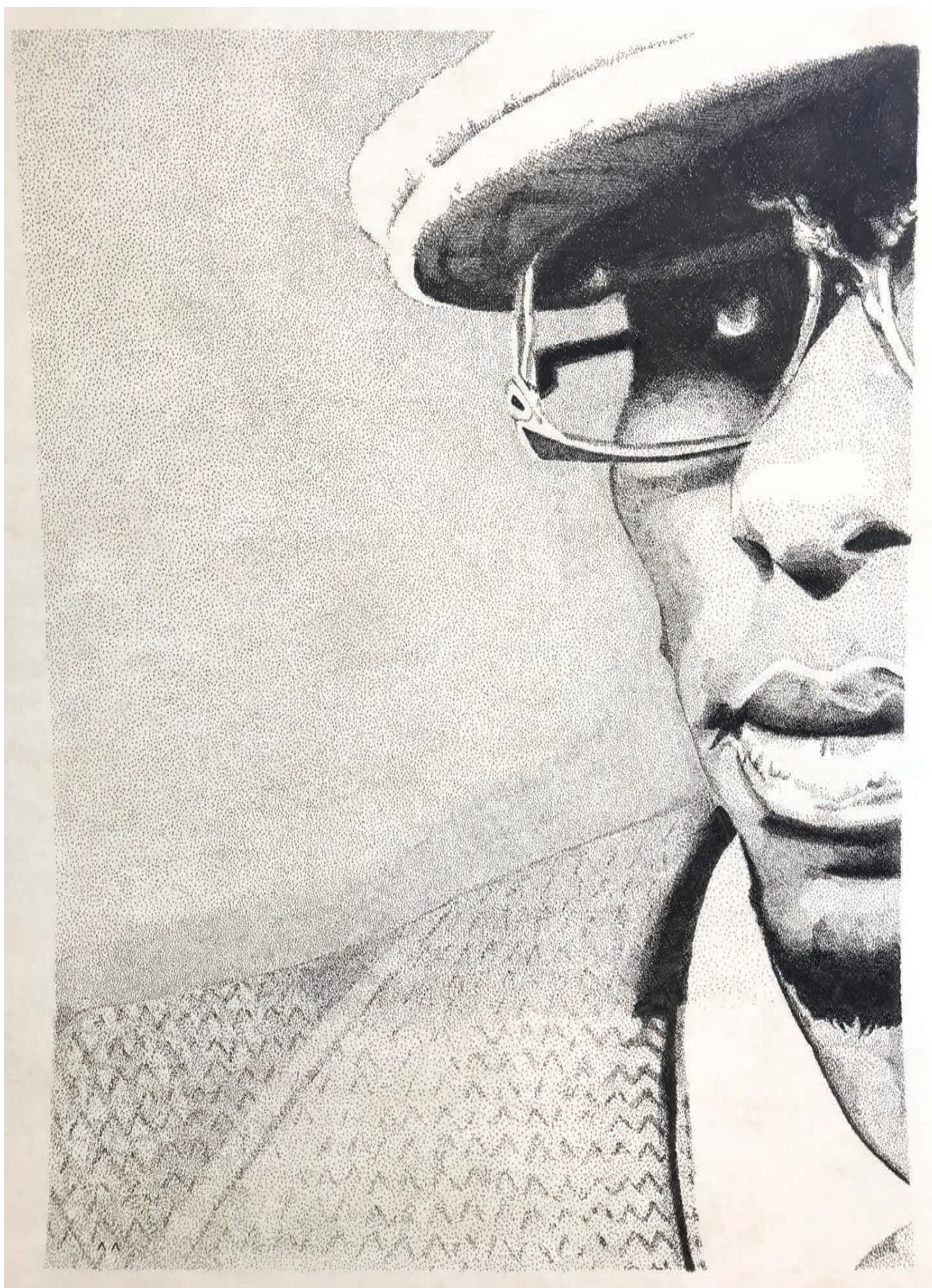
■ HR

*(Ferguson led the charge with these words at the 2019 Honors Commissioning Ceremony.)*



**Jacob Ferguson**  
(Photo by Devna Bose)





'Mos,' pen and ink  
by Arielle Wallace





'Def,' acrylic  
by Nakiyah Jordan





The Honors Art Showcase features music, artwork and poetry by honors students, including John Michael Walker (center), who organized this year's event for the second consecutive year. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

## PLANNING HONORS ART SHOWCASE HELPS STUDENT FEEL AT HOME

JOHN MICHAEL WALKER (SMBHC 21)

**T**he University of Mississippi has almost 19,000 undergraduate students. In pursuing an undergraduate degree at Ole Miss, you become one of **19,000**. I can't even picture 19,000 of anything in my mind. What would 19,000 students look like packed into a stadium? Would one of those 19,000 students, not even a ten-thousandth of a percent, be discernable at a distance? How can I ever stand out in an environment so full of motivated people? It was an ever-present concern of mine as a freshman.

In my first fall semester, I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of activities to do in a place full of people with already-stacked resumes. I thought if I didn't get involved in something I'd be left with nothing. But I never made a dent, it felt, by signing up to participate in a forum here or volunteer for a program there.

However, when I successfully ran for a seat on the Honors Senate, I was given an opportunity I had yet to find. In that body, I was one of 16 — much better math happening there! And as projects arose for the Senate to tackle, I was lucky to snag the Honors Art Showcase, a project that even incorporated my vocal performance major.

The Honors Art Showcase is essentially a pop-up art gallery. Honors students submit art

— paintings, poems, ceramics, sculptures — to be displayed for a week around the Honors College, and a reception is held in the Great Room with live performances by students and faculty one evening.

It's a collaboration that crosses departments and celebrates the work put in by all honors artists. Moreover, it's an opportunity to learn event planning: the communication, organization, advertising, booking, funding, follow-up; I learned a lot in the months it took to plan.

Of course, I didn't do it alone. With the help of program manager Penny Leeton, I actually pulled something together after searching my whole freshman year for that something. The Honors College gave me a foothold when I needed a boost, and my fear of drowning in a crowd of 19,000 dissipated.

Since putting on the showcase freshman year, I've worked two summers coordinating Honors Welcome Week and assembled my second art showcase. I've found the support in the Honors College to succeed, and the staff has cultivated my strengths while encouraging me to think big. I wouldn't be the student (or the event coordinator!) I am today without the Honors College bolstering me, assuring me and letting me stand out. ■ **HR**

## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

12/18

The **Honors Senate** hosted a holiday cookie decorating party in the SMBHC kitchen. (Photo courtesy Alexis Miller)



Thanks to honors alumna **Katie O'Brien** (MBHC 02) and her husband, **Matt Hobbs**, for hosting a reception for honors alumni in their lovely home in Raleigh, North Carolina. They were joined by **DSG** and **Penny Leeton**. (Photo courtesy Douglass Sullivan-González)



Over 50 honors juniors, including **Simmy Vig** (left), **Jayde Taylor** and **Aliyah Gardner**, traveled to Boston where they embarked on Junior Quest: the opportunity to engage with professionals on topics related to the students' honors theses and/or fields of study. (Photo courtesy Simmy Vig)



# KATHRYN MCKEE

## Enlightens Literature, Makes History

LIAM NIEMAN (SMBHC 20)

When I heard, first, the murmurs, then, the official announcement that Kathryn McKee would be the University of Mississippi Center for the Study of Southern Culture's new director, I wasn't surprised.

Dr. McKee, McMullan Associate Professor of Southern Studies, associate professor of English and director of the CSSC's graduate program, is a brilliant scholar and a caring teacher who believes in and wants the best for her students.

When I took Dr. McKee's section of Southern Studies 401, I saw this firsthand. Our class was carefully and thoughtfully planned. We discussed Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* in the parlor at Rowan Oak, learned about archaeology and Bobbie Gentry from guest lecturers, and even made use of our textbook, *Keywords in Southern Studies*, by writing essays about words such as football, church and mama.

Sometime during the following winter break, well after, I imagine, most professors had shredded and burned final papers, I got a manila envelope via the USPS. Inside was my graded final essay, complete with comments, suggestions and a short note thanking me for taking the class.

It's those sort of things, which happen after the conference room in Barnard Observatory has cleared out, that distinguish Dr. McKee as a professor. Things like emails with good news and answers to questions that arrive close to midnight on school nights or the words of advice she gave me a few minutes before I gave my first public academic presentation. I took Dr. McKee's class as a sophomore, and I'm thankful that she's been willing to work with me as I've grown and continue to grow as a scholar.

Along with being well deserved, Dr. McKee's appointment is historic. She will be the first

woman to lead the CSSC, which was founded in the mid-1970s to interpret the American South through a range of interdisciplinary approaches, documentary projects and public events.

Before becoming director of the center, Dr. McKee has spent over two decades as a scholar, teacher and adviser. She arrived at the University of Mississippi in 1997 after completing her graduate work at the University of North Carolina and receiving her bachelor's degree from Centre College.

As a literary scholar, Dr. McKee has written about 19th-century American, Southern and women's literature, as well as humor and film studies. In 2011, along with UM English professor Dr. Deborah Barker, Dr. McKee co-edited *American Cinema and the Southern Imaginary*.

Dr. Ted Ownby, the outgoing center director and William Winter Professor of History, also said that Dr. McKee helped expand the center's academic concerns by being a truly interdisciplinary scholar and frequently engaging with the idea of a global South.

"As scholars should and not all of us do, she continues to learn in different ways," Dr. Ownby said. "She's part of the Global South Studies group, which means that she reads and thinks about theory, on one hand, and sociology, history, literature, religious studies and language, and then uses that in her own work."

Most recently, Dr. McKee's research has focused on the life and work of Sherwood Bonner, a Holly Springs writer who wrote darkly humorous fiction that, in Dr. McKee's interpretation, reveals the complexities of gender, race and Southern identity in the Reconstruction era. Her book *Reading Reconstruction: Sherwood Bonner and the Literature of the Post-Civil War South* was published by LSU Press earlier this year.

Along with Drs. Ownby and Jessie Wilkerson, both fellow Southern studies professors, Dr.



Kathryn McKee, Liam Nieman and Ted Ownby (Photo by Andrea Morales, Southern Documentary Project)

McKee spoke about her book at a release party at Off Square Books in January. She said the decision to write an entire book about Bonner was a long one, beginning in the 1990s when she wrote a chapter of her dissertation about the Mississippi author.

“Since then, I have been haunted by Sherwood Bonner, which is something you don’t say lightly in Barnard Observatory,” Dr. McKee said, as quoted in *The Daily Mississippian*. “I have come back to her, picked her up, put her back down, and come back and finally decided to stick with her for a while.”

In all of her classes, Dr. McKee brings a genuine care for her students and facilitates thoughtful discussions about the material.

“

**SHE’S REALLY EFFECTIVE AT ASKING A QUESTION THAT HAS MULTIPLE ANSWERS AND GOING TO THE BOARD TO WRITE DOWN THOSE ANSWERS. (SHE HAS) THE PATIENCE TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SAY, ‘OH, I HAVE PART OF AN ANSWER TO THAT.’”**

– Ted Ownby



She did that in the small roundtable seminar that I took with her, using in-class writing assignments (a rare thing, it seems, in college) to give us time to collect our thoughts about the challenging texts we were reading.

Dr. Ownby, who has co-taught Intro to Southern Studies classes with Dr. McKee, said, even in these 70-person lectures, Dr. McKee expects thoughtfulness from her students. And she's willing to wait for it.

"In a class that large, many people don't plan to, expect to or want to (talk), so she's really effective at asking a question that has multiple answers and going to the board to write down those answers," Dr. Ownby said. "(She has) the patience to encourage people to say, 'Oh, I have part of an answer to that.'"

Dr. McKee's teaching has earned her three university awards: Humanities Teacher of the Year in 2001, the Cora Lee Graham Award for Teaching Freshmen in 2004 and, most recently, Outstanding Teacher of the Year from the College of Liberal Arts in 2015.

Other students also testify to Dr. McKee's attentive teaching, including Flint Christian (SMBHC 21). Christian took Dr. McKee's English 340: Studies in Antebellum American Literature course this past semester. It was co-taught with history professor Dr. John Neff and focused on the American Civil War in history and literature.

"Dr. McKee is one of the best professors I've had and one of the sweetest people I've ever met," Christian said. "She is kind, patient and always willing to help, all in the name of having us as students grow and learn."

Outside her classes, Dr. McKee still serves a crucial role in many students' academic lives, advising master's and undergraduate honors theses each year.

One of those students is Hailey Cooper (SMBHC 18). As a junior, Cooper had a love of ghost stories and a vague research idea on that topic, but it wasn't until she met with Dr. McKee that Cooper was guided to her actual thesis: "Haunted Mississippi: Ghosts, Identity, and Collective Identity," an exploration of the cultural meaning of Mississippi's ghost stories.

"(Dr. McKee) peers into the core of what you're trying to convey, finds the truth in it, and then helps you communicate that to a world outside her two overstuffed armchairs," Cooper said. "It was something incredible to experience, and I'll cherish that forever."

On May 11, students, their families, and faculty and staff came together for the center's annual graduation luncheon. Dr. Ownby led the program, congratulating the new M.A. and M.F.A. graduates and handing out awards. But, before Dr. Ownby could dismiss everyone for dessert, Dr. McKee stepped into the lecture hall with a gift and a thank you to the outgoing director.

She also had one more point to make.

"And the last thing I want to remind you of is that you have this job until the first of July," Dr. McKee said to laughter from the crowd.

But, by the time you're reading this, Dr. McKee, you'll be director. For what it's worth from someone who's only been around for three years, I look forward to finishing my career at UM with such a talented and kind leader in charge of my favorite building on campus. ■ **HR**

## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

1/19

**Adryanna Tucker**  
(SMBHC 19 (right),  
**Madlyn Lawrence**  
(SMBHC 19) and  
**Gabe LaBonia**  
(SMBHC 13) joined **DSG**  
for fun conversation and  
dinner in Chicago. (Photo  
by Jennifer Parsons)







'Popsicle Flavors,' 2019  
Monotype on BFK Rives  
by Kristen Vise





James M. Thomas (Photo courtesy Afton Thomas)



Ainsley Ash (Photo by Devna Bose)

# The **NECESSITY** of SOCIAL NETWORKS

AINSLEY ASH (SMBHC 21)

**I**n spring 2019, I enrolled in Dr. James (JT) M. Thomas' Honors 420: Affordable Housing class. The intent of the class was for students to become more knowledgeable about the literature on housing insecurity and housing inequality while gaining experience in social scientific research, specifically in conducting qualitative interviews. Findings from the class are to inform housing stakeholders in the Lafayette-Oxford-University (LOU) communities including county supervisors, real estate developers and residents.

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, my interview partner and I found ourselves standing under the tattered awning of an apartment unit, navigating our second interview of the semester.

"A lot of people don't want to say it, but the way that it is built — the rich get rich, and the poor stay right where they are. To get out is such a struggle," voiced an African American single mother pursuing her master's degree.

Despite concerted efforts toward upward mobility through investment in her education, the use of assistance programs, and help from friends and family, each month was a question as to whether rent or groceries would come first.

In 2017, 56.7% of renters and 18.2% of homeowners in Oxford spent 30% or more of their monthly income on housing costs, making them housing cost burdened. I was not surprised when our interviews with housing-insecure Oxford residents revealed nearly all of the

factors associated with housing insecurity: food insecurity, job instability, poor health and mental health outcomes, and threats to educational success.

These interviews confirmed the association of the housing insecurity factors that were first introduced to me through the literature Dr. Thomas assigned for reading. With six people in our housing class, this allowed for honest discussion on the dynamics of housing in regards to the abstract and the concrete. Dr. Thomas facilitated these discussions with grace, asking us to challenge what we know about housing and to stay grounded in the literature.

What are the underlying causes of housing instability? How can the lived experiences of those facing housing insecurity be used

to inform research and future policy? As students living in the LOU community, how can we access and advocate for affordable housing?

As I combed through our interviews searching for themes, it became incredibly apparent that social networks were critical for housing-insecure individuals. Hours spent analyzing these interviews prompted me to reflect on just how heavily I relied on my own social networks as a newly upwardly mobile student.

It is no small coincidence that Dr. Thomas' class encouraged me to evaluate my social networks; as a first-generation college student, I have found that he has become a key part of mine. As a freshman, office hours, email etiquette and financial aid were lost on me when I did not know who to ask about these seemingly small concerns.

Dr. Thomas was recommended to me by honors faculty and staff as

a person who would likely understand the challenges I felt as a first-gen student. When I first met him, he spoke to me of social capital, social networks and the differences that "cultural guides" can make for students unfamiliar with the nuances of higher education. Although the terms he used were more formalized than I had encountered before, I felt a deep resonance with what he was saying. I felt validated and reassured that any discomfort I felt was not all in my head. Quickly, I realized that this was an individual whom I wanted as a cultural guide to the university.

Since taking Dr. Thomas' class, he is now my mentor for the Ronald E. McNair Program, a program that helps underrepresented students make progress toward graduate degrees. Last week, I sat down in his office again, not as a timid college freshman but as a rising junior navigating

social scientific research. We spoke of conducting interviews with the same grounded theory approach that we had employed in his housing class. Again, we were discussing social capital and social networks and the challenges that first-generation students face, but this time it was not from a place of concern but rather research for my future thesis.

Undoubtedly, Dr. Thomas' housing class has been my favorite class offered by the Honors College and the university thus far; I have been able to directly engage members of the LOU community and confront the difficult questions of the day. It is this social network of honors faculty and staff that consistently fosters intellectual and personal growth in not just me but so many honors students. Without it, my undergraduate experience would not be complete. ■ HR

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"Dr. Thomas, or simply, JT, as his students call him, is an exceptional professor here at the University of Mississippi in that he has voluntarily extended his duties outside the classroom to serve the Oxford community.

"He has worked the past several years on researching ways to combat unaffordable housing in our community. In doing so, he has drawn on the help of his students, which not only gives them the opportunity to do hands-on research but opens their eyes to the ways this issue affects the lives of people in many aspects such as job security, health and food availability.

"While the above is remarkable in its own right, I was first struck by his exceptionalism on the first day of his class. His syllabus included a section in which he told his students if they ever faced problems with food, housing or anything of a similar nature, he would do his best to personally help. He also included several contacts of his who could also help in such a situation.

"I was struck by this because I have heard many professors mention this offhand, but he was the first to take the time to explain and to assure us that he would find us help if we came to him. He was the first professor I truly believed would go out of his way to help. As someone who had struggled the previous year to consistently have food in the house, this meant a lot to me.

"JT truly cares about the well-being and success of his students. He extends this caring nature to his community as well. He is a professor who uses his work to actively improve the world, starting with those around him." — *Claire Sullivan (SMBHC 19)*



UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

## FALL CONVOCATION

# Leadership in Turbulent Times

### Doris Kearns Goodwin

World-renowned presidential historian, public speaker and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Goodwin received critical acclaim for her seventh book, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, published last year. *The New York Times* best-seller is a culmination of Goodwin's five-decade career of studying the American presidents. She also has played herself as a teacher on "The Simpsons" and a historian on "American Horror Story." She was the first woman to enter the Boston Red Sox locker room in 1979, and is a devoted fan of the World Series-winning team.



**Thursday,  
Sept. 12, 2019  
7:30 p.m.**

Gertrude C. Ford  
Center for the  
Performing Arts

Free and open to the public.  
Tickets are not required.  
*Reception following.*  
For accommodations  
related to a disability,  
call 662-915-7294.



## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS



Thirty-nine teams comprising 172 honors freshmen traveled throughout the United States for Freshman Ventures, asking the question: What should we remember? **Ava Cooper, Kaylee Goff, Amy Rhodes** and **Kai Newman** traveled to Washington, D.C., to ask, “What should we remember about legal immigration?” **Haakon Colwell, Richard Springer, Joshua Alinsub, Francena Sekul** and **Wilson Stacy** took a road trip throughout 48 states in 15 days to ask, “What should we remember about our nation?” Both teams won trips to New York City and tickets to a show. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

“Always Already There,” an exhibit of paintings by **Brooke P. Alexander** (UM MFA 18) and curated by **Bruce Levingston**, Chancellor’s Honors College Artist in Residence, was displayed in the SMBHC Great Room and captivated art aficionados during its run from Feb. 12 to March 17.



The fourth annual **Honors College Formal** took place at The Lyric, where over 1,000 students enjoyed an evening of music and the Sally Awards. Leading up to the popular event, the Honors Senate (pictured) invested many hours in planning and decorating for their peers. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



Students mailed Valentine cards to show love to some of our **SMBHC donors**. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



**Maureen Maher** (SMBHC 20) is the 2019 Barksdale Award winner. A psychology major, Maher took a 42-day road trip through 12 national parks this past summer. Her \$5,000 award allowed her to conduct a multilayer study on national park seasonal workers, and her research will culminate in her honors thesis. Maher’s thesis adviser is psychology professor **Laura Johnson**. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)



## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

3/19

The SMBHC hosted this year's **SEC Honors Deans Meeting**, where honors deans, directors and administrators from 12 SEC schools discussed honors in higher education issues ranging from mental health initiatives to minority and diversity engagement. During a break from meetings, SMBHC representatives accompanied guests on a double-decker bus for a tour of Oxford as well as a walk through Rowan Oak.



Last spring semester, **Greg Brock**, senior fellow at the Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics and journalism instructor, taught Fake News: How to Live with It and Fight It. He and his class welcomed **Margaret Sullivan** (center), media consultant for *The Washington Post* and former public editor — the first woman to hold that position — of *The New York Times*, for a lively and enlightening conversation. Brock's class examined the clash between journalism and misinformation in an era of social media and entrenched political partisanship. Honors students surveyed the origins of fake news and the spread and life span of such articles online. (Photo courtesy Blair Wortsmit)

**William Teer**, SMBHC recruiting and admissions coordinator, and the Honors Senate hosted the inaugural **HoCo Trivia Night**, where winners received DSG's mug on a mug! (Photo courtesy Dottie Reid)







'Simplicity,' 2019  
Monotype on BFK Rives  
by Kristen Vise



# Honors College MINORITY ENGAGEMENT Club

SWETHA MANIVANNAN (SMBHC 21)

**HoCoMEC** — The seven-letter acronym embodies a new and growing mission of promoting minority empowerment and engagement in the honors system of our beloved Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

We owe our gratitude to none other than our charismatic Associate Dean Jennifer Parsons, as the creation of a group for minority students

in the Honors College was her brainchild, and I wanted to make it a reality alongside other passionate minority students who came together last year to officially create what we now know as the Honors College Minority Engagement Club.

Our mission as members of the Honors College Minority Engagement Club is to foster



an environment that promotes interconnectivity, cultivates greatness in academia, and generates a respectful community that opens dialogue for minority students within the SMBHC.

This was our mission statement this past year, but I envision us expanding our efforts and connections even beyond our honors community to the University of Mississippi campus, Lafayette County-Oxford community, our great state of Mississippi, and even other honors programs and colleges around the country. I also am excited about the increasing potential for interconnectivity within our SMBHC as we will be collaborating with the Honors Senate and trying to reach more students.

This past year, our Honors College comprised about 230 students of color. Of those, we welcomed 40 active members into the inaugural year of the HoCoMEC. After two introductory meetings, we elected a 14-member executive board, which helped

get us off the ground. Our social media chair, Monalisa Heng (SMBHC 22), created our Instagram account (@umhoco\_mec), where we share empowering pictures of our lovely members, promote minority events around campus and keep students apprised of activities hosted by the HoCoMEC.

For our first event, we hosted an ice cream social in the Honors College kitchen. That event transitioned beautifully into a painting session in the honors Great Room, where members of Active Minds and the Black Student Union congregated.

Last October, Parsons, Jarvis Benson (SMBHC 19), Nakiyah Jordan (SMBHC 21), Ajah Singleton (SMBHC 22) and I traveled to Conway, Arkansas, where we engaged with students and professors from various colleges at the National Society for Minorities in Honors Third Annual Conference at the University of Central Arkansas. While there, I led a discussion on “Bridging the Racial and Cultural Gap” that was well attended and produced a rich collaboration of ideas with our new friends.

In December, we hosted our first annual #DiversiTREE in the Great Room to bring together and showcase different cultures during the holiday season.

We invited various members of the university faculty and staff to engage with us in conversation at our monthly meetings. Among our guests were Brian Foster (SMBHC 11), assistant professor of sociology and Southern studies; Anthony Heaven, SMBHC associate director of development; and Rachel Coleman, SMBHC records coordinator and academic counselor.

Members of HoCoMEC welcomed Robyn Hadley for breakfast and rich conversation around issues of equity and access. Hadley, vice chancellor and dean of the Ervin Scholars Program at Washington University, was a first-generation college student who went on to win the Rhodes Scholarship and has spent her career helping minority students access higher education.

We also hosted the first junior-entry information session and enjoyed meeting 25



**Members of the Honors College Minority Engagement Club (Photo by Megan Wolfe)**





Nakiyah Jordan (left), Jarvis Benson, Swetha Manivannan and Ajah Singleton attend the third annual National Society for Minorities in Honors conference at the University of Central Arkansas. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

students from all backgrounds who expressed interest in joining the SMBHC. For another recruiting effort, we wrote postcards to minority students who had been admitted to the SMBHC Class of 2023.

Last, but not least, the Honors College has been moving toward being more effective in

to all students and will feature songs from different cultures.

We look forward to collaborating with different minority and cultural student organizations on campus to host joint events, and we will be launching a test trial of a mentorship program within the HoCoMEC,

proposed by Joshua Mannery (SMBHC 21), one of our cohort ambassadors. We thank DSG for providing the HoCoMEC with a generous budget. If you are an honors alumnus/alumna or stakeholder enthusiastic about our club and its mission, then please reach

out to us! We would love to hear from you and work with you.

I'm a big believer that humanity is stronger together, and that is what I see HoCoMEC as being able to provide: a platform to connect minority students and foster the growth of a community that uplifts one another and meaningfully engages with overarching communities, carrying the tradition of being citizen scholars.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in any way and who will be involved because this club and this movement toward embracing diversity and inclusion is all about the people who comprise it, and I could not be more thankful for those I've met along the way. ■ HR

**“ I’M A BIG BELIEVER THAT HUMANITY IS STRONGER TOGETHER, AND THAT IS WHAT I SEE HOCOMECE AS BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE: A PLATFORM TO CONNECT MINORITY STUDENTS AND FOSTER THE GROWTH OF A COMMUNITY THAT UPLIFTS ONE ANOTHER AND MEANINGFULLY ENGAGES WITH OVERARCHING COMMUNITIES, CARRYING THE TRADITION OF BEING CITIZEN SCHOLARS.”**

– Swetha Manivannan

minority student outreach, and HoCoMEC members have been able to attend browse fairs, speak at recruiting events and interact with potential Honors College applicants. We thank William Teer, SMBHC coordinator of recruitment and admissions, for being supportive and proactive about recruiting minority students in a meaningful and sustaining way.

We are excited about the year ahead and anticipate many fun activities and informative events. During Welcome Week, we will host sessions for those interested in joining the HoCoMEC. We plan on partnering with the Honors Senate for the first annual HoCoMEC Date Party, a social event that will be open



'Golden Lady'  
Colored pencils  
by Sariah Coleman



'Let's Figure Out,' 2019, shellac plate monoprint with chine-collé on BFK Rives, by Kristen Vise





# HONORS FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

Through the generosity of several benefactors, particularly the Barksdale family; Lynda Mead Shea and her husband, Dr. John Shea; and the Dorothy Lowe Cole Endowment begun by Christy Cole, the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College proudly awarded \$73,000 in fellowships to the 40 students listed below. During the 2018-19 school year, we also awarded over \$10,000 to 20 students who presented posters or papers at conferences across the country. Among the meetings were the American Chemical Society conference in Boston, the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society in Richmond, Virginia, and the Cultural Studies Association conference in New Orleans. Another 43 students received over \$29,000 in research funds to aid their thesis research. Supporting the endeavors of citizen scholars is one of the pillars of the Honors College.

## FALL 2018

- **Katherine Ann Davis**, public policy leadership, international studies, study abroad at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile
- **Maureen Maher**, psychology, study abroad in Granada, Spain
- **Olivia Melvin**, international studies, Chinese, study abroad in Harbin, China

## SPRING 2019

- **AnnaCat Bouthillier**, nursing, study abroad in Chiang Mai, Thailand
- **Brady Cole**, economics, study abroad in Angers, France
- **Erin Geist**, international studies, study abroad at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile
- **Anna Herman**, marketing & corporate relations, study abroad at Florence University of the Arts
- **Caetlind Moudy**, Arabic, study abroad in Amman, Jordan

## SUMMER 2019

- **Charlotte Armistead**, international studies, Arabic, study abroad at the Modern Arabic Language International Center, or MALIC, in Amman, Jordan
- **Caroline Bailey**, accountancy, study abroad in Florence, Italy, through CET program
- **Margaret Baldwin**, chemistry, mathematics, biology, Spanish, study abroad at La Universidad Antonio de Nebrija in Madrid, Spain
- **Bridget Betts**, pharmaceutical sciences, internship with Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston
- **Savannah Day**, public policy leadership, journalism, internship with Richard Burke in New York City and study abroad at Hebrew University in Jerusalem
- **Connor Donlen**, computer science, study abroad at International University of Moscow
- **Anna Kate Ferrell**, international studies, Spanish, study abroad at the London School of Economics
- **Callie Claire Gammill**, communication sciences and disorders, study abroad in London
- **Miller Greene**, international studies, Arabic, study abroad at MALIC in Amman, Jordan
- **Benjamin Hager**, international studies, Spanish, study abroad through Social Science Field School in La Paz, Bolivia

- **Catherine Hausman**, history, English, New York Internship Experience
- **Claire Haxton**, international studies, Spanish, study abroad through Social Science Field School in La Paz, Bolivia
- **Nakiyah Jordan**, art, internship with artist Ben Watkins in Rhode Island
- **Sally Jordan**, public policy leadership, internship with U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer
- **Paul Markos**, public policy leadership, study abroad through Israel Study Abroad Program
- **Molly Maroney**, accountancy, internship with congressman in Washington, D.C.
- **Skyler McCoy**, forensic chemistry, internship with Tennessee Bureau of Investigations in Memphis
- **Glennis McWilliams**, public policy leadership, study abroad in Prague through Global Leadership Exchange
- **Mildred Morse**, international studies, French, study abroad in Angers, France
- **Caetlind Moudy**, Arabic, study abroad in Amman, Jordan
- **Joy Morgan Myers**, biochemistry, internship with Bellevue Hospital Healthcare
- **Benjamin Payne**, public policy leadership, study abroad in Prague through Global Leadership Exchange
- **Christina Pendergrast**, international studies, Spanish, internship with Department of State
- **Caitlyn Perkins**, Arabic, study abroad at MALIC in Amman, Jordan
- **Carl David Pfaehler**, international studies, French, study abroad in Angers, France
- **Caleb Ray**, international studies, Arabic, study abroad in Amman, Jordan
- **Kaitlyn Rigby**, Chinese, linguistics, study abroad through International Chinese Language Program at National Taiwan University
- **Samantha Stershic**, banking and finance, managerial finance, study abroad in Seville, Spain
- **Megan Stubbs**, biology, study abroad in Santiago, Chile
- **Megan Wadsworth**, international studies, French, study abroad in Angers, France
- **Eleanor Weller**, management, internship with Wareham Gatemen in Cape Cod Baseball League
- **Samuel Wright**, public policy leadership, internship with National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.

2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

4/19



Eight honors seniors were inducted into the University of Mississippi's Hall of Fame. Congratulations to **Jarvis Benson** (left), **Skylyn Irby**, **Jaz Brisack**, **Mallie Embler**, **Blair Wortsmith**, **Jacob Ferguson**, **Levi Bevis** and **Elam Miller**. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

In April alone, over 250 students successfully defended their honors theses! (Montage by Jennifer Parsons)



DSG dined with a few **honors alumni** and **SMBHC students' parents** at Big Bad Breakfast in Birmingham, Alabama. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)







# CITIZEN SCHOLARS IN THE WORLD

**1958 — Will Lewis Jr.** (BA 58, LLB 62) continues enjoying Ole Miss and living in Oxford and is proud of the Honors College.



**1961 —** Two years ago, **Kay Mounger Jones** and her husband, **Bill**, moved to Shenandoah Valley Westminster-Canterbury, a wonderful continuing care community in Winchester, Virginia. Although her husband died a year ago, Jones is thoroughly enjoying her life in her new home and stays busy with church, volunteering at the state arboretum, traveling, and taking on new responsibilities at the SVWC.



**1962 — Nancy Neill** graduated as a University Scholar with a degree in English literature and afterward spent time in New Zealand as a Fulbright Scholar. During 2016-17, she served as president of the Fulbright Association.

**1964 — Betty Mabry Turner** took the Grand Prize at the 61st Annual Delta on May 8, 2019, a juried art exhibition held at the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock. The Delta is open to natives of or residents in Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Missouri

and Louisiana. A prestigious show and real honor!



'AMERICAN MADE: Greed, Lust, and Lost Love' by Betty Mabry Turner

Life-size cutout, mixed media: oil on board, wasp nest, oak bark mosaic, beans, poker chip, \$100 bill, oak gall and carved snake



**1993 — Allyson McCollum Algeo** has been a Foreign Service officer and diplomat since 2005. In July 2019, Algeo, her husband, Matthew, and their daughter, Zaya, moved to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Algeo will be a public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy. They expect to reside there for two to three years.

**Kate Otis Farabaugh** graduated from UM with a degree in pharmacy and is a founding board member of the Mississippi Public Education PAC, which works diligently to find lawmakers for Mississippi who are passionate about public education in our great state. Farabaugh is proud to support all of our Mississippi children in this incredible way!



**2001 — Jeannie Mood Campbell** is a certified therapy practitioner, which is an evidence-based therapy model centered on attachment. Her specialty is ages 0-5, and she recently moved to Bend, Oregon, where she'll be launching a behavioral health branch at Treehouse Therapies, which provides speech, physical and occupational therapy.



**2007 — Chris Tatum** continues to work for the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service officer and has been posted with his family to the U.S. Embassy in London since May 2018. Tatum's career with the department has taken him to places as varied as Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Sudan, Italy and Austria. Prior to London, he was posted to the U.S. Consulate in Mumbai, India, for two years, and lived in Washington, D.C., for nine years before that. His two kids, ages 4 and 2, keep him very busy outside of the office and love traveling on airplanes.



**2008 —** In April 2019, **Russell Rutherford** moved to the law firm Burr & Forman. He is a partner in the firm and advises his clients on many different types of business disputes, ranging from general commercial litigation to government contracting to bankruptcy to health care, all over the country.



**Kully L. Woodruff** earned her Doctor of Medicine from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in 2013 and completed her combined internal medicine and pediatrics residency program at Duke University Medical Center in 2017. Since then, she has worked with Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders in Sudan, caring for patients with kala azar (a neglected tropical disease) and most recently in refugee health in west Tanzania. Currently, Woodruff is working on a Navajo reservation in the remote southwest U.S. and is looking forward to her next mission with MSF this fall.



**2009 — Alecia (Waite) Cassidy** is an assistant professor of economics at the University of Alabama.



In August 2019, **Matt Hopper** graduated from the Master of Science in Nursing program at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and also completed the LGBTQ+ Public Health Certificate Program at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. Hopper recently served as a research assistant on a multisite study measuring LGBTQ Awareness Training for Nurse Residency Programs and will soon publish the findings with the study's principal investigator, Suzanne Dutton, DNP, GNP-BC. In September, Hopper was hired as a registered nurse in the emergency department at Johns Hopkins Health Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he will continue his research and advocacy in LGBTQ+ health care.



**Lee Taylor-Penn** was selected to join the board of directors for the National Alliance for Safe Housing, which provides greater access to safe housing for victims of domestic and sexual violence. Taylor-Penn is a health policy analyst for the National Governors Association and resides in Washington, D.C., with her husband.



**2012 — Sumner Abraham** recently completed his internal medicine residency and will be serving as University of Virginia's chief resident in the Department of Medicine for the 2019-20 academic year. He was awarded the Mulholland Society Teaching Award and Anne L. Brodie Resident Clinician Award. The Mulholland Award is given by the UVA School of Medicine to a resident or fellow at the university to recognize his or her excellence and dedication in teaching and educating medical students. The Brodie Award recognizes a resident physician at UVA who demonstrates clinical excellence in primary care and serves as a role model for peers for their artful, compassionate, patient-centered care and willingness to take primary responsibility for the care of the whole person. Abraham mentions these awards because he

believes that "my education and training at the Honors College was the most pivotal point in my education prior to my graduate medical education. I am continually thankful for my experience at the SMBHC and hope to be able to give back one day with my time and energy."

**2013 — Ashley Johnson** graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2016 and soon after joined the law firm of McGehee, McGehee & Torrey in Meadville as an associate attorney. Johnson is a member of the Mississippi and Louisiana Bar associations.

**Brooklee Lightsey Tynes** earned her doctorate in clinical psychology and has begun working at Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk, Nebraska. She conducts assessment and behavioral intervention with children, adolescents and their families and is developing a program of intervention to be used in the adult inpatient psychiatric unit.



**Jess Waltman** (BAccy 13, JD 16) is an attorney with the law firm of Davis & Crump P.C. in Gulfport. Waltman is licensed to practice law in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, and he primarily works on complex pharmaceutical and medical device cases. He serves as

president of the Harrison County Young Lawyers Association and on the board of directors of the Young Lawyers Division of the Mississippi Bar and the Ole Miss Alumni Association.



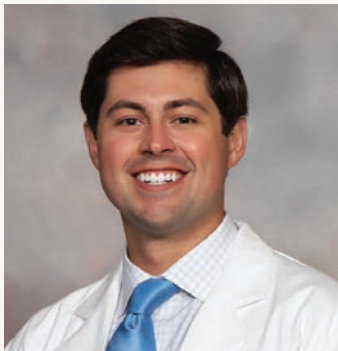
**2014 — J. Andrew Carter Jr.** graduated with a master's in international relations from the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals and is working on doctoral research at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.



**John Ratliff** graduated from Texas A&M College of Dentistry in May 2019 with a D.D.S., and later that day, he asked Haley Cox (UM 16) to marry him. (She said yes!) They will be moving to Shreveport, Louisiana, where Ratliff will pursue a residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Shreveport.



After graduating summa cum laude from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine in Memphis, **Eric Villarreal** has married **Tessa McKinney**, completed the first year of his orthopedic surgery residency in the UT-Campbell Clinic Department of Orthopedic Surgery, and become the father to Olivia, a future SMBHC scholar!



**David K. Wilbanks** graduated from the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Medicine and has begun his internal medicine residency at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis.



**2015 — Alex Brown** is a vice president at Commerce Street Capital in Dallas, Texas. He works in private equity, where he has overseen more than \$150 million in capital transactions on both the buy side and sell side. In addition to working for the private equity team, Brown manages more than \$200 million in sponsored retirement accounts and separately managed accounts for the firm's clients. Most recently, he was honored by the National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts' "Forty Under 40" recognition program for demonstrating superior industry knowledge and expertise.

**Madeline Campbell** and **Jack Fitzpatrick** married this past April and both graduated from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson in May. Fitzpatrick graduated magna cum laude and was in the top 3 of the class. The newlyweds are moving to Nashville for Fitzpatrick to complete an ophthalmology residency at Vanderbilt and for Campbell to complete an internal medicine residency at the University of Tennessee campus there. They attribute much of their success in medical school to the preparation and individual attention they received at the Honors College!

**Christine Dickason** graduated with a master's in public policy from George Washington University and is beginning her Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy studies at Vanderbilt University this fall.



**Molly Edmondson Kwasigroh** earned her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in May and has been accepted into the Advanced Education in General Dentistry residency program at UMMC. She also married in June.



**2016 —** After teaching abroad for two years, **Amber Malone** moved back to the U.S. in 2018 to pursue a research fellowship with the University of California, Irvine. Since presenting research on integration policy in the European Union at the UCI Research Symposium, Malone has worked in public policy with the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi and Mississippi First. She has been accepted into the 2021 class at Johns Hopkins'



School of Advanced International Studies and will be pursuing the two-year Master of Arts in International Affairs at SAIS Europe in Bologna, Italy.



**Bryce Warden** conducts policy research and analysis for an education and civil rights advocacy organization, Conexión Américas, in Tennessee. He has the opportunity to share space with brilliant, diverse minds and works with his team to research and advocate for policies that ensure every student, no matter his or her social background, has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education.

**2017 — Amy Hall** has completed her second year at the University of Texas School of Law, where she is serving as chief articles editor for the *Texas Law Review* and managing editor for the *Texas Review of Law and Politics*. In fall 2020, she will be heading back to Mississippi to clerk for Judge Leslie Southwick on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.



**Victoria Miller** is pursuing her Pharm.D. at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and will graduate in May 2020 and thereafter pursue a pharmacy residency. She serves as chair of the National Student Advisory Committee of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy.



Following her December 2017 graduation with a degree in biological sciences, **Kayla (nee Newton) Ladner married Blake Ladner**, and they moved to Kentucky. She is enrolled in the combined D.M.D. (Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry and Master of Science in Oral Biology) program at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry. She believes graduating from the SMBHC prepared her with the skill set to excel in professional school and in her career.



**Elizabeth Romary** completed two years of Peace Corps service in Namibia, where she was a teacher of English and natural science and worked on literacy training, youth camps and inclusive education workshops. She has enjoyed learning Khoekhoegowab, a click language native to the southern part of Namibia with the Nama tribe. In addition to her volunteer service, Romary is completing a Master of Science degree in global health from Northeastern University.



**Grace Marie Sullivan and John Cooper Lawton** were married on June 1 in Oxford, two years and four months after their first date at the 2017 Honors College Formal. Sullivan will graduate from the UM School of Law in 2020, and Lawton works as an information systems specialist for the City of Oxford while earning a master's degree in cybersecurity from the Georgia Institute of Technology. (Photo by Andrew Welch Photography)



**2018 — Sangeet Adhikari** is a second-year Ph.D. student studying environmental engineering at Arizona State University, where he is a research assistant for the Biodesign Center for Environmental Health Engineering. He looks into various organic chemicals in the wastewater and correlates them with human health.



**Suhwan Paul Lee** has completed his first year as a postbaccalaureate Intramural Research Training Award research fellow at the National Institutes of Health, where he is working to better understand neurological diseases at a molecular level and improving clinical patient care with better diagnosis and prognosis tools.



**Maša Mišcevic** moved to Salt Lake City last year and joined the Rothenfluh Lab in the Department of Psychiatry and Molecular Medicine Program at the University of Utah. Rothenfluh Lab is interested in genes, molecular pathways and neural circuits that underlie methamphetamine on sleep patterns of flies with modified dopamine active transporter.

**Caleb Pracht** has finished his first year of law school at Ole Miss and worked for the Mississippi Secretary of State and Attorney General's offices this summer. Recently in Savannah, Georgia, Pracht became engaged to **Mikayla Johnson** (SMBHC 19), whom he met through the Ole Miss Women's Council Scholarship as well as the SMBHC. Johnson will begin medical school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson this fall.



**Jacob Thrasher** completed his first year of the Ph.D. program in molecular biophysics and biochemistry at Yale University. He joined Ryan Jensen's lab, where he studies DNA damage and repair in the context of breast cancer. Thrasher has continued publishing editorial cartoons with the *Yale Daily News* and the *Yale Record* magazine. He has enjoyed exploring the Northeast but misses the University of Mississippi and the Magnolia State and hopes to visit soon.





The SMBHC is grateful for the Barksdales' continued support. Development officer Anthony Heaven (left) stands with DSG and Donna and Jim Barksdale in their Jackson, Mississippi, home. (Photo by Jennifer Parsons)

Dear SMBHC Friends and Family,

What should we remember? Without hesitation, I can say we should remember that OUR philanthropy matters.

At the start of my tenure with the SMBHC, I was gleaming with excitement as I learned about how the Honors College equips and challenges our students to be critical scholars who are civic-minded. I met students who are doing amazing and complex work, and faculty members who are excited to engage our students methodically and creatively.

I began to reflect on how the SMBHC has experienced tremendous growth — now at 1,600 students! — in spite of dwindling federal and state educational budgets. This reality of outstanding growth coupled with the country's divestment in education reaffirmed my role in building relationships and connecting our supporters to their passions within the Honors College.

During my meetings with alumni, it became clear that the SMBHC education has implications across the nation and the world. My first meeting, with Catherine Servati (SMBHC 09), was filled with insight, perspective and appreciation for honors education. That meeting was just the beginning of many fascinating alumni encounters that reiterated the impact of the Honors College.

So how do we continue to fuel our Honors College and produce citizen scholars who are engaging the substantial issues of today's society? We do this by recognizing that OUR philanthropy matters.

As alumni, friends, faculty and staff of the SMBHC, we must remember that every philanthropic investment is not simply an investment in the Honors College, it is an investment in the thought leaders and change agents of tomorrow. We must continue to pride ourselves on dedicating a combination of our time, talent and treasure to ensure that the SMBHC will serve as a catalyst for years to come.

Whether it is making a monthly gift, mentoring a student, establishing a scholarship endowment or funding experiential learning opportunities, your investment in the SMBHC matters. Our scholars may be the future, but the future would not be possible without your continued support. OUR philanthropy matters.

Anthony Heaven, Ph.D.  
Associate Director of Development



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## 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS



**Stamps Scholars** recapped the last year at **Provost Noel and Suzanne Wilkins'** home. The SMBHC will welcome our largest class of Stamps Scholars in fall 2019 with 13 scholars. (Photo courtesy Douglass Sullivan-González)



**DSG** (middle of back row); **Anthony Heaven** (fourth from right, back row), development officer; and **John Samonds** (second from right), associate dean, enjoyed mingling with honors alumni at a reception held at The Manship in Jackson. (Photo courtesy Douglass Sullivan-González)



**Professor Ethel Scurlock** (back row, right) and her students ended Hon 392: Conversations on Race with a Taylor Grocery meal and a discussion with **Dr. Watt Bishop** (back row, third from right), a retired Oxford orthodontist. A former student of Scurlock's, **Jacob Ferguson** (SMBHC 19) took five of her classes during his undergraduate career and reflected, "Dr. Scurlock is a remarkable human being and intellect who cares deeply for her students, listens to their concerns, raises their voices in discussion and challenges them to engage deeply with the material she presents them. I'd gladly take five more classes with Dr. Scurlock. Her work ethic, compassion and kindness have made my Ole Miss experience better from Hon 101 freshman year all the way to Honors Conversations senior year." (Photo courtesy Ethel Scurlock)

Ten honors students participated in the Clinical Shadowing Program over the summer at UMMC. **Eli Bettiga, Lenora Davis, Christopher Dorroh, Nathan Foxworth, Mary Beth Gillespie, Anna Hayward, Islam Orabi, Karina Rodriguez, Madison Thornton** and **James Travis Jr.** were selected to shadow rotations in one or two of the following specialties: anesthesia, emergency medicine, family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, radiology, radiation oncology, and surgery. They also volunteered at the Jackson Free Clinic.

**Morgan Ann Pollard** (SMBHC 16) co-authored an article published in the *Journal of American College Health*. The data presented came from a collaboration between the University of Mississippi Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Office, the Dean of Students Office and the SMBHC via an Hon 420 experiential learning course on survey research design that studied prescription drug abuse on campus and that was taught by another co-author, UM psychology assistant professor Carrie Smith.



**John Samonds** (left), associate dean, and **Anthony Heaven** (right), associate director of development, brunching with **SMBHC alumni** in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy Anthony Heaven)



**Blair Wortsmit** (Photo by Matt Boyd Photography)

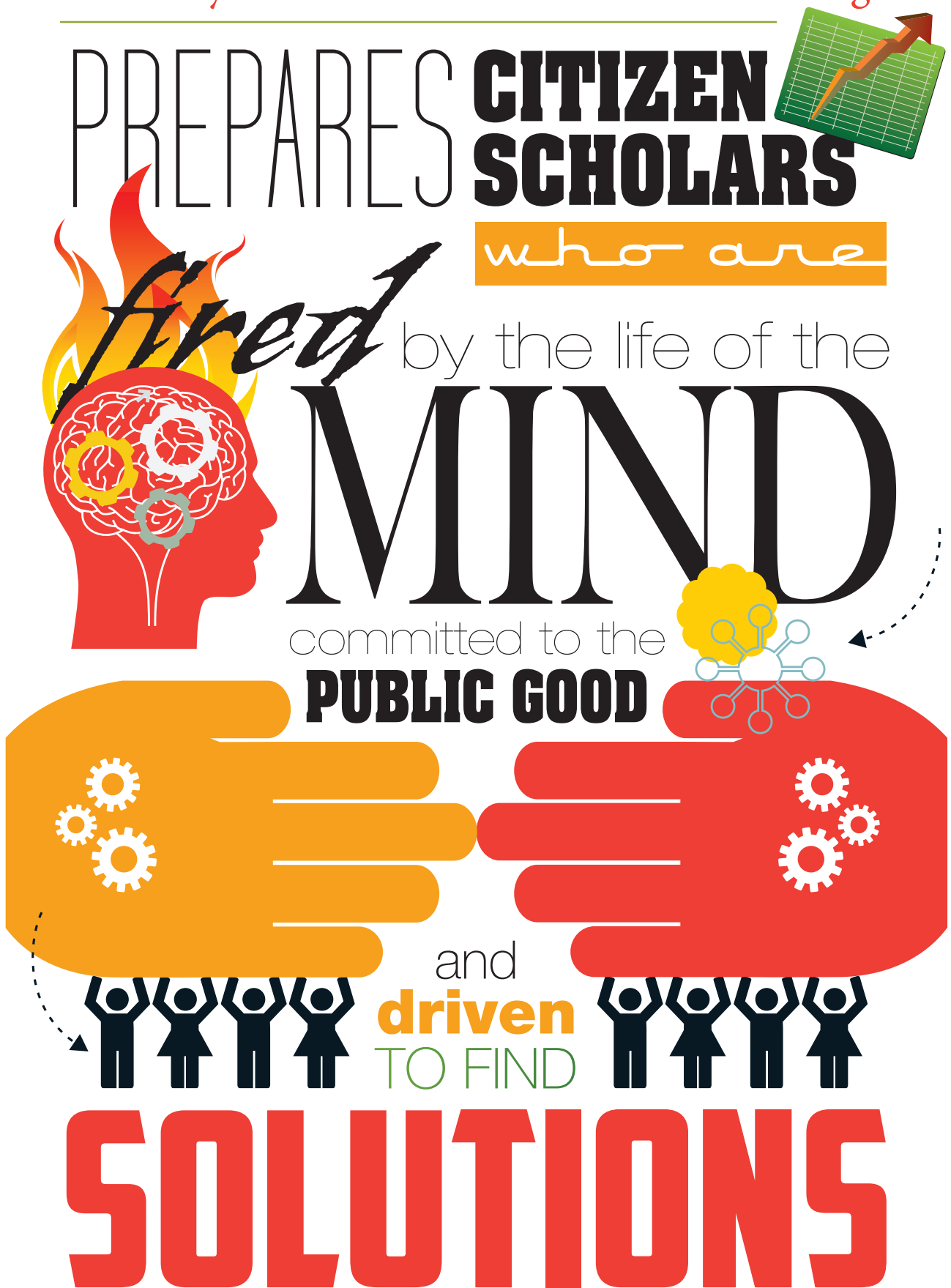
**Blair Wortsmit** (SMBHC 19) and **Kelly Bates** (SMBHC 21) competed in the 2019 Miss Mississippi Pageant in Vicksburg, and on June 22, Wortsmit was named to the top five of the competition. Little Rock, Arkansas, native Wortsmit earned her degree in managerial finance with minors in journalism and marketing and has spent countless hours advocating for financial literacy in schools across the state of Mississippi. During the finals competition, she mentioned her honors thesis research on stage: "There She Evolves: The Financial, Marketing and Journalistic Sustainability of the Miss America Organization." Meridian native Bates is majoring in engineering with an emphasis in law and plans to become a prosecutor who specifically works with abuse and assault cases.



**Kelly Bates** (Photo by Joey Brent)




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