

DEPARTMENT OF ALUMNI AFFAIRS

Kirk Purdom, Executive Director

2017-18

Uniting the Ole Miss family through quality services and programs that strengthen the University of Mississippi and promote a sense of belonging is the foundation on which all activities and programs are planned. Successful engagement is the result of strategic planning and cultivation of alumni, friends and students.

The Alumni Association ended the fiscal year with 26,124 active members. Our Life Membership gained 500 members, ending the year at 10,328. We added more than 500 graduates from the Class of 2018 to our active roster and continued the personalized brick program in the Circle. In the 10th year of the Sustaining Life Membership Program, 616 Life Members donated \$108,000. For the fourth year in a row, the Alumni Association ended the fiscal year with more than \$1 million in membership revenue. We continued our Corporate Membership Program and completed our ninth year of “The Shirt” project to help enhance alumni scholarship endowments. To date, The Shirt has generated more than \$85,000.

Member Zone in Triplett Alumni Center on home football game days is a popular benefit with attendance averaging 864 visitors per game for the 2017 season. This benefit features giveaways, refreshments and a place to get out of the elements for Association members. Nonmembers are asked to join the Association or pay a \$15 entry fee.

The Association continued expanding alumni communications and engagement. Since launching our mobile app in August 2016, the number of users has grown to over 5,200. This effective engagement platform allows alumni to receive notifications on alumni events, news, discounts and other areas of interest. The Association's social media platforms have experienced steady growth, surpassing 26,800 Facebook followers and 16,000 Twitter followers this year. Our LinkedIn group passed 7,500 members, and our Instagram account has seen the most rapid growth, boasting over 5,900 followers.

The Alumni Association has 74 active clubs across the nation, including 25 clubs with scholarship endowments amounting to \$1,8884,002, and 23 clubs having restricted accounts amounting to \$54,193. Club leaders attended the annual Leadership Ole Miss conference in February and received updates from campus leaders and alumni staff.

The Association, in conjunction with the Athletics Department, sponsored the BancorpSouth Rebel Road Trip this year in April, June and July. The 12 stops were attended by more than 2,500 Ole Miss alumni and friends. Emceed by Executive Director Kirk Purdom, other speakers included Chancellor Jeffrey Vitter, Vice Chancellor for Intercollegiate Athletics Ross Bjork, Head Football Coach Matt Luke, Men's Head Basketball Coach Kermit Davis and Women's Head Basketball Coach Yolett McPhee-McCuin. Road Trip stops included Charlotte, N.C.; Pensacola, Fla.; New Orleans, La.; Gulfport, Vicksburg, Indianola, Tupelo, Corinth, Oxford and Jackson, Miss.; Birmingham, Ala.; New York, NY; and Memphis, Tenn.

The Association again sponsored the spring Ole Miss Luncheon Series featuring Chancellor Vitter. A combined 220 alumni and friends attended luncheons in Jackson and Laurel, Miss., and Jackson and Memphis, Tenn.

In September the Association hosted a social for recipients of scholarships awarded through the Department of Alumni Affairs. Association professional staff mentor the scholarship recipients, with students and mentors required to meet at least once per semester. The Association's scholarship committee awarded \$259,150 to 390 Herb Dewees Alumni Association and Grove Society scholarship students. The Timothy L. Walsh scholarship amount was increased to \$2,000 and was awarded to one student.

The M-Club Alumni Chapter continues to build meaningful relationships with its members. The chapter hosted its 32nd annual Athletic Hall of Fame Ceremony in September, with recipients that included Mahesh Bhupathi (Tennis 1994-95), Megan Breen (Golf 1996-99), Lauren Grill (Softball 2007-10), Ali Hamadeh (Tennis 1993-96), Antwon Hicks (Track 2002-05) and Terrence Metcalf (Football 1998-2001). The M-Club Alumni Chapter also recognized William Griffin (Football and Baseball 1976-77) with its Lotterhos Service Award. The chapter sponsored several student M-Club events and various sports and team reunions. The M-Club hosted more than 2,500 members and guests in the Starnes Center prior to home football games. More than 300 people attended the annual M-Club Summer Weekend in August.

The Student Alumni Council builds leadership skills and helps students make lifelong connections to alumni. This year's 100-plus students held the 15th annual Bridging the Gap program with more than 300 attendees. For the fourth year, they sponsored a tailgate and a community service project for young alumni and SAC alumni and continued a mentoring project with the Alumni Association Board of Directors for the ninth year. They attended the District 3 CASE-ASAP Conference in Knoxville, Tenn., in February and the CASE-ASAP Networking Convention in Louisville, Ky., in August.

Student Engagement remains a key focus, and the Association sponsored or hosted a Commencement day champagne toast, free cookies and T-shirts, and study space during exam week to support this effort. The Future Alumni Network, a student membership in the Alumni Association, added more than 350 members during 2018 New Student Orientation. FAN serves more than 650 students.

The Black Alumni Advisory Council hosted a record number of African-American alumni back to campus in the spring for the tri-annual Black Alumni Reunion and recognized 13 distinguished alumni at a sold-out gala for the honorees. The Dr. Jeanette Jennings "Trailblazer" Award recognized Ole Miss alumni who served a vital role in the progress of black faculty, staff, alumni and/or students on the Ole Miss campus. Donald Cole and Jacqueline Vinson were the 2018 recipients. The Rev. Wayne Johnson Community and Civic Award recognized exceptional service by Ole Miss alumni through commitment to their community in a civic, ministerial or volunteer capacity. Recipients were Dr. Rashad Ali, Barbara L. Howard and Reginald H. Turner.

The Alumni Achievement Award recognized Ole Miss alumni for exceptional achievement in their chosen professional field. Rose Jackson Flenorl and Markeeva Morgan were recipients. The Celebrated Athlete Award recognized former Ole Miss student-athletes or coaches for success in the field of athletics after their UM tenure. Recipients were Peggie Gillom-Granderson, Terrence Metcalf and Robert “Ben” Williams.

The BAAC participated in events including tailgates and receptions that brought alumni back to campus. The council released the Black Alumni Newsletter in the fall and a spring edition led up to the reunion. The council implemented a program called Success Looks Like Me so current students can network with minority alumni.

The professional chapter program provides graduates from every degree an opportunity to connect with their schools through meetings and numerous publications.

The Accountancy Alumni Chapter: Sponsored the annual Accountancy Awards Banquet and Accountancy Alumni Weekend in April with continuing education courses offered by alumni and faculty. The chapter also hosted luncheons and receptions for Dean Mark Wilder, the accountancy intern program and the Beta Alpha Psi Golf Tournament as well as a pregame tailgate prior to the Auburn game. The Accountancy Alumni Chapter Board hosted five events for current and graduating students both at the school and at The Inn at Ole Miss.

The Business Alumni Chapter: Sponsored the annual Banking and Finance Symposium and Career Day in October along with the Insurance and Risk Management Symposium and Career Day in March. The chapter assisted the school by hosting luncheons and receptions around the country for Dean Ken Cyree and his staff.

The Engineering Alumni Chapter: Hosted several off-campus alumni events for Dean Cheng and his staff and assisted in bringing alumni back to campus to speak to students in the classroom. The annual Engineering Awards Banquet held in April honored students, alumni and faculty for their accomplishments.

The Applied Sciences Alumni Chapter: Sponsored a tailgate in the fall for alumni and friends with more than 100 in attendance. Elise Smith was honored as the 2018 Alumnus of the Year at the annual networking reception.

The Education Alumni Chapter: Invited alumni, faculty, staff and students to the eighth annual Education Awards Reception in May. The 2018 Hall of Fame inductees include: Kathleen Grisby of Jackson, Thomas C. Meredith of Oxford, Ellen Shelton of Oxford, Pamela Smith of Jackson and the late Dorothy Henderson of Oxford. Tupelo residents Bob and Sylvia Ferguson, co-winners of the School's Outstanding Service Award, were also honored during the ceremony.

The Law Alumni Chapter: Fall and spring receptions in Jackson were held to celebrate

those being sworn in as members of the Mississippi Bar. The Law Alumni Chapter hosted alumni receptions in Jackson, Memphis, Meridian, Birmingham, Nashville, Greenwood, Hattiesburg, Gulfport, Houston, Dallas, New Orleans and Pascagoula featuring new Dean Susan Duncan. The Student Bar Association organized a tailgate for alumni and friends for the Ole Miss vs. UT-Martin game. Law Weekend 2018 celebrated the reunions of the classes of 1960, 1968, 1978, 1983, 1993, 2008, 2013 and 2017. The weekend started with the school's scholarship and awards reception followed by a special lecture featuring Dr. Jay Watson III. The weekend also included continuing legal education, the Bessie Young Council Mentoring Conference and the Legal Legacy Luncheon celebrating law alumni who graduated 50 or more years ago. The annual Law Alumni cookout was held at the Robert C. Khayat Law Center. The 2018 Law Alumni Hall of Fame class included John R. Bradley Jr., Aleita Sullivan Fitch, Harold D. "Hal" Miller Jr., Edwin Lloyd Pittman and N.S. "Soggy" Sweat Jr. A UM law alumni luncheon was held at the annual meeting of the Mississippi Bar in Destin, and the 2018 Law Alumnus of the Year award was presented to Guy W. Mitchell III.

The Pharmacy Alumni Chapter: Walgreens and CVS sponsored football tailgates for pharmacy alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends in front of Faser Hall. The chapter hosted receptions for alumni, faculty, staff and students at various professional conferences. In April, Pharmacy Weekend celebrated reunions for the classes of 1958, 1968, 1978, 1988 and 1998. A tour of the Marijuana Project and Medicinal Plant Garden was also available to weekend attendees.

The Meek School of Journalism Alumni Chapter: Newell Turner was selected as the Samuel S. Talbert Silver Em award recipient for 2017. The Silver Em is the highest award for journalism presented by the University of Mississippi. The school also held tailgates for alumni, faculty, staff and students prior to each home game.

Other events the Association either sponsored or participated in included the Grove Society Founders program, the 25-Year Faculty and Staff Awards Luncheon, Grad Fair in Oxford, along with graduation dinners on the Desoto, Tupelo and Grenada campuses. The Association also participated in and sponsored Mississippi on the Mall in Washington, D.C., and the Mississippi Picnic in Atlanta. The Alumni Travel program “Rebel Travelers” hosted 35 trips this year with 184 Alumni and friends participating.

Inductees into the 2017 Alumni Hall of Fame during Homecoming were: Don Frugé of Oxford; Walton Gresham III of Indianola; Dr. James E. Keeton of Jackson; Tom Papa of Jackson; and Mary Sharp Rayner of Oxford. William Winter of Jackson received the Alumni Service Award, and Candie L. Simmons of Ridgeland received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

Officers for the Alumni Association this year are President Bobby Bailess, President Elect Leon Collins, Vice President Matt Lusco and Athletic Committee members Deano Orr and Andy Kilpatrick. Immediate Past President is Hal Moore Jr.

Several improvements were made to The Inn at Ole Miss. The Inn brought in \$463,767

and earned \$107,476 in sales revenue in its first year overseeing food and beverage sales in-house. The Inn accepted applications from nine caterers/restaurants to be on its approved catering list, and My Michelle's catering took over breakfast for Inn guests. Meeting space rental revenue for the year was \$161,227. The Association and The Inn at Ole Miss were granted qualified resort status from Lafayette County supervisors in June and then applied to the state Alcohol Beverage Control for final approval.

A letter was sent to the The Inn tower suite sponsors on floors two through six asking for \$5,000 to update those rooms, including repainting and replacing furnishings. The ballroom was repainted in June. The Inn is pursuing plans to convert 28 rooms in the original section to 14 larger rooms and baths; build an in-house laundry service; and to convert McCormick Café into a bar and grill in addition to serving daily breakfast.

Jim Urbanek was promoted to Associate Director of Alumni Affairs in January, overseeing communications and marketing. The position of Associate Director of Alumni Affairs held by Clay Cavett was reclassified to Associate Director of Alumni Affairs for Campaigns and Special Projects. Scott Thompson was promoted to Associate Director of Alumni Affairs for Engagement in April, overseeing engagement with colleges, schools and campus departments. The position of Communications Specialist-Alumni Affairs, held by Annie Rhoades, was reclassified as Assistant Director for Alumni Communications and now includes the responsibility of liaison to the Meek School of Journalism and New Media.

The positions of Alumni Programs Assistant, held by Allie Little; Staff Assistant, held by Chasity Wilburn; and Special Events Assistant II, held by Elizabeth Tettleton, were reclassified as Alumni Special Events Assistant. The position of Senior Secretary, held by Shaquita Curry, was reclassified to Alumni Programs Assistant. These reclassifications more accurately reflect their responsibilities and duties within the department. New employees hired by the Association in the past year included Brian Maxcy, Assistant Director, and LaTosha Dunn, Alumni Records Assistant.

New employees hired by The Inn at Ole Miss in the past year included Sarah Burpo, Front Desk Supervisor; Angie Gentry, Custodian; Kenneth Griffith, Guest Service Agent; Isaiah Hickonbottom, Custodian; Pamela Holmes, Temporary Custodian; Sherry Hopson, Temporary Custodian; Jakeeta Joiner, Temporary Custodian; KC Kelley, Custodian; Brittney Massey, Special Events Assistant I; Melissa Moffett, Special Events Assistant II; Gena Ramsey, Custodian; Jeremy Stuckey, Guest Service Agent; Ernest Vassar, Night Auditor; Jenene Wilborn, Custodian; DeShawn Williams, Temporary Custodian; Lucy Mae Wilson, Custodian; and Alexis Worth, Special Events Assistant I.

All the programs and services listed for this fiscal year lend value to the total “Alumni Experience” and help strengthen the University of Mississippi by establishing and maintaining positive, supportive relationships among our alumni and friends.