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see inside for back to school edition

for updates on what you missed this summer and how to get the most out of your time on campus

MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2018 | VOLUME 107, NO. 1

THE DAILY **MISSISSIPPIAN** THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI | SERVING OLE MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911

City to vote on alcohol safety ordinance

Critics cite civil rights, racial bias, privacy concerns



Oxford's mounted police division patrols the Square on Friday night as crowds form around the bars.

TAYLOR VANCE

THEDMNEWS@GMAIL.COM

The Oxford Board of Aldermen plans to vote on the publicly scrutinized "alcohol and security" ordinance at Tuesday night's meeting, signaling a conclusion of the months-long series of public

hearings and proposed drafts since the ordinance's first introduction in June.

The vote comes at a time during which Oxford officials are trying to manage the city's and university's growth while maintaining Oxford's familiar level of public safety. The ordinance has been openly

criticized by groups claiming that the proposed laws could be wielded to enforce racial biases and promote a message of exclusivity on the Square. City officials have rejected such claims.

Bradley Bishop, owner of The Lyric Oxford, has been one of the most critical opponents of the ordinance. He said that some of the sections in the ordinance specifically

target his business. "We are the only (Alcohol Beverage Control) permitted business that would be required to give notice to law

SEE ORDINANCE PAGE 4

Community reacts to Tony the Landshark

JUSTIN DIAL JEANNE TORP THEDMSPORTS@GMAIL.COM



Landshark. Receiving 81 percent of student votes, the Landshark proved to be much more popular

ASB Attorney General resigns

TAYLOR VANCE THEDMNEWS@GMAIL.COM

Associated Student Body Attorney General Katherine Sistrunk has resigned from her position to instead help lead the newly established Elections Reform Task Force. Sistrunk was sworn into office in April after winning 68 percent of the vote in the ASB general election. Afterwards, Sistrunk said she partially attributed her win to her membership in a Greek organization.

The Daily Mississippian first reported on ASB candidates not being required to disclose campaign donors in April and reported that many of the candidates running received funding from Greek organizations to which they belonged.

"During this [election] process, I've found that Panhellenic and Interfraternity Council organizations on campus can provide certain advantages to their members running in student elections that non-Greek-affiliated candidates are not afforded," Sistrunk said in a statement. "As a member of our Greek community, I have benefited from these advantages."

Sistrunk's statement went on to say that she plans to use her new role to meet with the Panhellenic Council, the Interfraternity Council and other student organizations to explain campaign rules and host forums abou

As a new semester arrives, this time, so does a new mascot. Ole Miss Athletics introduced the newest member of its team, Landshark Tony, on Aug. 11.

The university first began its search for a new mascot in 2010, after retiring Colonel Reb from the sidelines in 2003. At that time, three options were in the running to become the new face of the university – the Landshark, the Black Bear and Hotty Toddy – which were the same three options in consideration during last year's election.

The 2010 vote proved a Black Bear victory after that mascot won 62 percent of the student vote. Rebel the Black Bear became the official mascot of Ole Miss and was PHOTO: CHRISTIAN JOHNSON

Fans crowd around the new official Ole Miss mascot, Tony, after his unveiling at Meet the Rebels Day. Tony will replace Rebel the Black Bear as the on-field mascot this year.

met with praise from some and protest from others.

The Black Bear never quite caught on with Ole Miss fans. This prompted the Associated Student Body and the university to conduct another student poll in fall 2017 to decide which mascot should represent the football team. The ASB held a vote over a four-day period beginning on Sept. 25 that pitted the Black Bear mascot against the

than its competitor.

After the decision was made, the university formed a committee consisting of members of student government, the spirit squad, leadership from both sports administration and marketing and a few production specialists, who oversaw the design aspects of the mascot

The Ole Miss mascot now has both historical significance and, for some, personal significance, for the the Landshark's namesake, Tony Fein, was a member of the U.S. armed forces who served in Iraq before coming to play football at the university.

Micah Ginn, associate athletics

SEE MASCOT PAGE 3

election reform.

"This decision was made on my own accord because I am passionate about the students at our University," Sistrunk said. "That being said, it is not the intention to punish others that have benefited similarly, but it is my hope that we can self-reflect and move forward."

Deputy Attorney General Austin Fiala will be sworn in as attorney general during the ASB's first formal Senate meeting later in August. Fiala, who initially ran against Sistrunk in the 2018 ASB general election, was appointed deputy attorney general in spring by Sistrunk.

SEE ASB PAGE 5

THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN EDITORIAL STAFF:

SLADE RAND

editor-in-chief dmeditor@gmail.com

DEVNA BOSE

managing editor dmmanaging@gmail.com

DAVID NOWICKI

copy chief thedmcopy@gmail.com

BLAKE ALSUP news editor TAYLOR VANCE

BRITTANY BROWN assistant news editors thedmnews@gmail.com

JUSTIN DIAL sports editor BEN MILLER assistant sports editor

thedmsports@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN JOHNSON photography editor thedmphotos@gmail.com

LIAM NIEMAN

lifestyles editor thedmfeatures@gmail.com

HAYDEN BENGE

design editor thedmdesign@gmail.com

ETHEL MWEDZIWENDIRA

opinion and design editor thedmopinion@gmail.com

SARAH HENDERSON

online editor thedmonlineeditor@gmail.com IVANA NGUYEN social media editor thedmsocialmedia@gmail.com

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Rebecca Brown dmads@olemiss.edu

SALES ACCOUNT

EXECUTIVES Sofi Ash Cameron Collins Sam Dethrow Isaiah Pugh Michael Rackers

S. GALE DENLEY STUDENT MEDIA CENTER

PATRICIA THOMPSON Assistant Dean/Student Media Daily Mississippian Faculty Adviser

We are not the enemy Time to stand up for freedom of the press

Enough already.

The last couple of years have been an unending barrage against the freedom of the press and the practitioners of this noble trade.

From being called "liars," "fake," and "sick" by irate politicians to enduring capricious and punitive tariffs that are an existential threat to newspapers, the landscape for journalists today may be as inhospitable as it has ever been in the 242-year history of this great union of ours.

All this while the public at large seems unable to break free of the social media echo chamber. We retreat there to endlessly bicker with those who don't agree, or to bolster the confidence of our own positions by seeking solace from those who do.

We've devolved into a nation of people who simply don't want to hear it.

And that's incredibly dangerous.

The bipartisan testimony of 20 members of congress last month before the International Trade Commission in opposition to tariffs on Canadian imported newsprint is a good indicator a lot of talk about journalists being "enemies of the people" is utter hogwash. These men and women know the importance of community newspapers and their imperiled status in modern culture where too many marketers prefer digital analytics and too many readers prefer daily affirmation.

They know the men and women who work at the local paper are most definitely not the enemy — nor the problem.

But in a society where talk of the wicked media is hurled relentlessly on Twitter or cable "news" channels, all of us who take part in the honorable, Constitutionally protected trade of reporting news and ferreting truth get amalgamated into a cynical act of political theater that's threatening to the very fabric of democracy.

And that's what this is really about.

We're arguing over political philosophies and cultural divides – not about whether news is biased. I bet you a week's pay and a dozen donuts the people who use the argument that news is "fake" don't any more believe that than they think the Space Force is coming soon to a quadrant near us.

But the damage is being done. We as a nation are beginning to give a collective shoulder shrug the fundamental freedoms in the Bill of Rights. And we've got to snap out of it.

We've got to accept that not all news is happy or affirming. We're not always going to get what we want. I vaguely remember being taught that as a preschooler.

Aaron Blake, a correspondent for The Washington Post, asked in a recent column if the media should go to war with the President.

"Trump seems to want a war with his 'enemy," Blake wrote. "But should the media oblige him? And if it doesn't, isn't it unilaterally disarming?"

No, we should not go to war with the President. But it's long past time to end the naval gazing and stand up for what we do. It's our job to provide the best obtainable version of the truth and to champion the freedoms of the First Amendment.

To that end, The Boston Globe is encouraging newspapers across the country to editorialize on the importance of journalism in democracy – and to the communities we all serve – in their editions on or around Aug. 16.

"This dirty war on the free press must end," Globe editors wrote in their call to action.

Thomas Jefferson – who had a notably tempestuous relationship with the press – was a president who still often rose to defend it.

He once wrote while serving in Paris as Minister to France:

"The people are the only censors of their governors: and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution...

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them."

If we're unwilling to accept news that upsets us, or if we're indifferent to differing views simply because we don't want to deal with them, we're essentially giving up on the notion we can ever truly be "one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Ironically, I don't believe we've given up because I don't want to believe it.

Layne Bruce is executive director of the Mississippi Press Association. His email address is lbruce@mspress.org. Follow the association on Twitter @mpanewspapers.

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Letters should include phone and email contact information so that editors can verify authenticity. Letters from students should include grade classification and major; letters from faculty and staff should include title and the college, school or department where the person is employed.





MEMBER NEWSPAPER

director for sports production and creative services at the university, said Fein's use of the Landshark symbol originated during his time in the military.

"Fein's patrol had nicknamed themselves the 'Landsharks,'" Ginn said. "When they were out on patrol and possibly engaging with the enemy, they took on this mantle of the Landsharks. He actually brought that Landshark mentality back with him."

During his time as an athlete at Ole Miss, Fein would frequently throw up a shark fin over his forehead in football practices during successful defensive plays, resulting in this "Fins Up!" gesture being adopted by his teammates and, later, by fans of the team. It became a symbol for the Ole Miss defense that is still prevalent today.

"The university announcing the new mascot is really cool," freshman mathematics major Richard Springer said. "It shows that they value the students enough to consider and adopt something that started with one person, even naming it after him."

Ginn said the design process was unique because the Landshark is a "mythical creature."

"The beginning of the design was not physical appearance; the beginning of the design was activity," Ginn said. "We thought, 'How is the Landshark going to act and move? What do we think would



HOTO: CHRISTIAN JOHNSON

The new official Ole Miss mascot, Tony, poses "fins up" with a young fan at Meet the Rebels Day after his official unveiling.

make fans excited and enrich game dav?'

Once these factors were clear, the design team got in contact with Rare Designs in Hattiesburg to further the look and branding of the Landshark. They then reached out to a film company in California called Nascent Perspective Studios, which created the costume and face of Landshark Tony.

Upon the reveal of the new mascot, fans across various social media

platforms and students on campus alike expressed mixed feelings.

"I love the concept of the Landshark and think it is a more appropriate representation of our university. However, I think the actual mascot could have been designed better," sophomore international studies major Susanna Cassisa said.

Taran Carrasco, a junior double-majoring in biology and public policy, said she thinks the mascot is a positive change for Ole Miss sports.

"We've been calling ourselves the Landsharks for several years now, and I feel like it was time to make the Landshark our official mascot," Carrasco said. "I know that it will take some people a little bit of time to adjust to the change and new look of our mascot, but I think by the end of this season, fans are going to grow to love Tony."

In an online poll that The Daily Mississippian conducted on Twitter last week, 61 percent of

respondents said they liked Tony, while 39 percent said they did not.

Fans both on campus and around the country can expect to see Landshark Tony at Ole Miss games throughout the 2018 football season, starting with the first home game on Sept. 8 versus Southern Illinois. The Fein family, which is eager to show its excitement and gratitude toward the new addition to the Ole Miss family, wil be making a special appearance at this game.

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ORDINANCE continued from page 1

enforcement of when we open," Bishop said. "Simultaneously, we will be required to pay a \$75 processing fee every time we have an event over 150 people. Prior drafts would have required The Lyric to seek a permit from law enforcement and have artists and renters subject to background checks."

Bishop said the ordinance has been improved since it was first introduced in May, but he claims that it still contains bias.

"We want the Lyric to be a place that is socially available to all people," Bishop said. "We've certainly had people tell us 'The Lyric is one of few places on the Square where minorities can gather.' I don't think this ordinance does anything to address what type of public space we, as a community, want the Square to be. That was a missed opportunity."

Oxford Mayor Robyn Tannehill denied the claims of racism and invasion of privacy and said numerous task forces that involved people from the university, city and county have taken place "over the past 15 or 20 years."

"I do not believe that any member of this Board, or any member of the numerous committees and task forces who have proposed these changes and more, did so for any "racist" reason, or with a racist result," Tannehill said. "I simply reject that. As it currently stands, many restaurant and bar owners have applauded the City and its thoughtful consideration of the ordinance, and support it in its current form."

Some citizens stand by the belief that the proposed ordinance has a racial bias and could lead to discrimination. Lifelong Oxonian Ruby Kelley said that she wants the Square to be safe but that she opposes the ordinance in its current form because some parts of the ordinance can be viewed as an invasion of privacy and as having a racial bias.

Kelley said a lot of issues in the safety ordinance debate stem from a lack of minority businesses on the Square and from the board of aldermen not listening to citizens when making decisions.

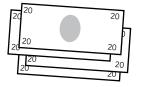
"The way I think it can be achieved is getting more minority businesses on the Square," Kelley said. "And in the past, there was (sic) more minority

WHAT THIS ORDINANCE MEANS FOR STUDENTS: low police officials who desire

Students will have to scan their IDs for verification in order to enter bars and purchase drinks from restaurants that serve alcohol.



Students could be recorded and monitored by security cameras inside of bars and restaurants.



businesses on the Square. But because the tax base got more expensive, minority businesses have left the Square."



Sororities and fraternities will have to rent out venues with security cameras on the inside, have adequate security guards and scan IDs at date parties and swaps.



University clubs and organizations will have to pay a \$75 fee to host events at The Lyric.

ILLUSTRATION: HAYDEN BENGE

Kelley said the ordinance violates citizens' privacy because business owners must, in the ordinance's current wording, alto review businesses' camera footage to do so.

City attorney Pope Mallette clarified the city's access to camera feeds in a letter regarding the legality of the ordinance to attorney Robert McDuff of Jackson.

"The city has no interest in the content of the venue's events, nor does it prefer some content over another," the letter said. "Related, I take issue with the suggestion that the 'government is monitoring or filming the proceedings' at The Lyric or would do so under the ordinance. These are not CCTV connections, nor can camera recordings be obtained without a lawful order, presumably a warrant or subpoena or similar vehicle."

Bishop's mother, Linda Bishop, compared Oxford's ordinance to a similar proposed ordinance in New Orleans. The latter would have required businesses that serve alcohol to install real-time cameras on their interiors.

In response, the Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans did a study of the top 50 largest cities in the country to examine their security camera laws and discovered that some cities require businesses to install cameras on their exteriors but that no other city in the country required businesses to install cameras on their interiors. After New Orleans officials reviewed the study, the ordinance was withdrawn.

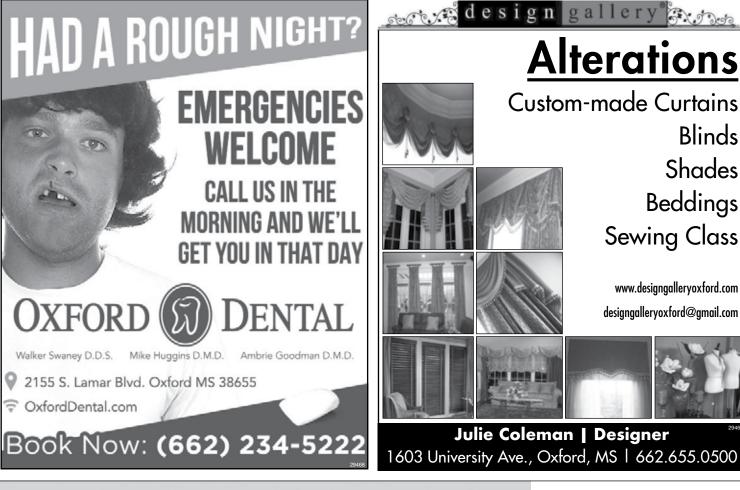
The city of Oxford is proposing a requirement similar to that of the proposed New Orleans ordinance by requiring the installation of cameras on the interiors of all restaurants that have a permit to serve alcohol.

Linda Bishop said "no one else in the country has security camera laws like this."

She also said she contacted the Mississippi Restaurant Association to see if there were any laws similar to the one being proposed in Oxford and found none.

"It's just so frustrating that the city is ignoring the fact that there will be legal solutions and costs to the city because they can't seem to back off," she said.

SEE ORDINANCE PAGE 5







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ASB

continued from page 1

Fiala called Sistrunk's decision

"honorable and courageous" and

"I think it should be a mes-

sage to all members of the student

body that you have to stand up for

what you believe in," Fiala said.

Fiala said he agreed with

Sistrunk about ASB needing to

work to explain election rules to

internal problem that needs to be

"I think it should be a mes-

sage to all members of the student

body that you have to stand up for

ASB President Elam Miller,

what you believe in," Fiala said.

and Judicial Chair Alex Crouch

- who, together, represent the

a joint statement in support of

calling it "courageous."

the statement said.

three branches of ASB - released

Sistrunk's decision to step down,

We must enact change in our student election process to ensure that all student voices are heard,"

Sistrunk will lead the task

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force alongside ASB Director of Inclusion and Cross-Cultural

Engagement Leah Davis.

"[Sistrunk's] message is clear:

Vice President Walker Abel

organizations and that "it's an

resolved.

said, "It took a lot of courage to

say something like that.

ORDINANCE continued from page 4

"No one is against safety. No one is against getting things right. What we're against is being demanded to do things when there's no research and no documentation to justify these laws."

Vice President of Finance for Rust College and Oxford resident Don Manning-Miller has also spoken out against the ordinance because "the Square is often seen as unwelcome territory for a lot of minority students," and the ordinance does not help with that.

He said the Mississippi chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Mississippi Center for Justice are planning to challenge the ordinance if it passes.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Brandi Hephner LaBanc issued a statement on Friday in support of the ordinance.

"The current proposed ordinance implements rules and requirement for restaurants,



A crowd forms outside of many of the bars on the Square on the Friday night before the fall semester begins.

"We applaud the community for providing input and perspective, and we support the Mayor and aldermen's response to constituents and business owners that led to the current proposed ordinance."

Brandi Hephner LaBanc Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs bars and similar businesses that will augment the university's

goals related to student safety," Hephner LeBanc said. "We applaud the community for providing input and perspective, and we support the Mayor and aldermen's response to constituents and business owners that led to the current proposed ordinance."



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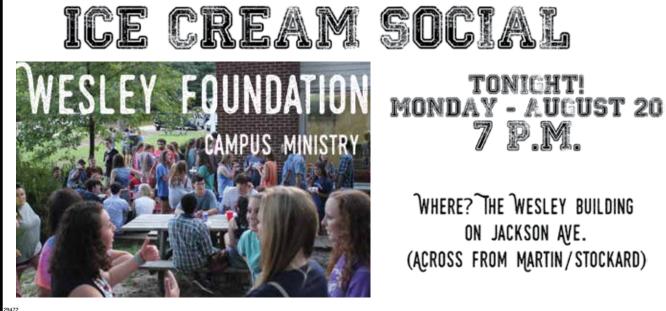
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Animal shelter contract set to expire in September

JORDAN HOLMAN TAYLOR VANCE

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The Oxford Board of Aldermen is exploring options for opening a spay and neuter shelter in town to replace the work done by the Oxford Lafayette Humane Society, which recently decided to end its contract with the city.

The Aldermen voted Aug. 14 to begin accepting applications from organizations seeking to pick up the city's animal control and shelter services once carried out by OLHS. The humane society's contract formally terminates on Sept. 30, at which point the animals currently housed there will be sent to different area shelters.

Alderman John Morgan said he feels that the main reason the contract ended was that OLHS accepted animals from surrounding counties, which led to overpopulation.

"That was basically the downfall of the shelter," Morgan said. "Other people may argue different things, but we just had too many animals."

Oxford Mayor Robyn Tannehill



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN JOHNSON

Oxford Lafayette Humane Society prepares to close its doors early in September. Its contract with the city of Oxford will not be resigned this year.

said that there has been a lot of confusion about the animal shelter's relationship with the city recently. According to Tannehill, the city has a contract with OLHS, but the

not the city, is responsible for the shelter's day-to-day operations.

"The day that we found out that Oxford Lafayette Humane Society would like to terminate that contract (on) Sept. 30 - that same day - we voted to have this (proposal) drawn

up to continue to utilize that building for the same use," Tannehill said.

Tannehill said that OLHS will continue to accept animals until its contract with the city ends, but it will now only accept animals it receives from Lafayette County residents.

According to OLHS board member and spokesperson Lee Habeeb, the population of animals at the shelter has increased over the years.

"The number of animals has continued to increase while the number of adoptees has, unfortunately, not,' Habeeb said. "We began to realize that there was no end in sight to achieving our initial goal - tackling the problem of homeless animals in the Oxford-Lafayette community."

Though the city and county provide 30 percent of the shelter's monetary resources, the other 70 percent is donated by the community. However, Habeeb said that the decision to close the shelter was not made because of any funding issues.

After the shelter closes, the board of aldermen will be looking into opening a spay and neuter clinic, according to Habeeb.

"Research around the country shows that communities that spay and neuter, rather than adopt, see a significant decrease in their wild animal populations," Habeeb said.

Meanwhile, the animals currently housed by OLHS will be divided and moved to other shelters in Tupelo and Yalobusha County if they are not adopted by Sept. 30. OLHS is currently looking for more partners to take animals. The board, Habeeb assured, is looking into other options, but the current animals cannot be released back into the wild.

"It is depressing, but euthanasia has been a fact of life since we've opened the shelter," Habeeb said. "It's actually one of the reasons we've decided to close the shelter. The number of euthanized animals has increased as more sick animals came in and other animals weren't adopted. Hopefully, opening a spay and neuter clinic will lessen the amount of euthanasia and wild animals in the community."

The Oxford Lafayette Humane Society is urging members of the community to adopt before Sept. 30

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HOW TO PLAY

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- Former Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- Practiced at his privately owned law firm for 45 consecutive years located at the same place, being the Oxford Square, Downtown, Oxford, Mississippi.
- Taught the Mississippi DUI Law and 5 different Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure courses each and every semester at the University of Mississippi for 29 consecutive years.
- A member of the Chancellor's Trust at the University of Mississippi since 1981.
- Former Municipal Prosecutor for the City of Oxford, Mississippi for over 6 years.
- Former Municipal Court Judge for the City of Oxford, Mississippi for 8 years.
- Former Vice President and President of the Lafayette County Bar Association; member of the Mississippi Bar Association, etc.
- Appointed by the Mississippi State Bar to the Mississippi Commission on Attorney Ethics and Attorney Violations of the Canon of Ethics and All Mandatory Rules concerning the Practice of Law. Occupied the positions of Vice Chairman and Chairman and served for 18 years.
- <u>A Founding Member of the National College for DUI Defense conducted at</u> <u>Harvard Law School.</u>
- <u>Selected as one of the Top 50 DUI Attorneys in Mississippi by the National</u> <u>Advocacy for DUI Defense.</u>
- <u>Selected as one of the Top 10 Best Attorneys of Mississippi in for Client</u> <u>Satisfaction Award by the American Institute of DUI/DWI Attorneys.</u>
- <u>Selected as one of the Top 100 Trial Lawyers by the National Trial Lawyers</u> <u>Organization.</u>
- Recipient of the <u>DISTINGUISHED AWARD OF MERIT</u> for 1989 from the Mississippi State Bar given to one Attorney in the State each year for outstanding contributions to the practice of law.
- Voted "Best Attorney in Oxford, Mississippi" in the Grove's Choice Awards.
- <u>Member of the American Association of Premier DUI Attorneys</u>
- Member of the National League of Renowned Attorneys Top 1%
- <u>Awarded the United States Congressional Medal of Distinction by RNCC.</u>
- <u>Member of the American Jurist Institute Top 10 DUI/DWI Attorney for</u> <u>Mississippi</u>
- <u>Member of the American Society of Legal Advocates Top 100 Criminal</u> <u>Defense Lawyers in the State of Mississippi</u>
- <u>Selected by the Attorney and Practice Magazine as one of Mississippi's Top</u> <u>10 Attorneys, et cetera.</u>

Listing of these previously mentioned areas of practice does not indicate any certification of expertise therein



AJ Brown, Greg Little named preseason All-Americans

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Heading into the 2018 football season, A.J. Brown and Greg Little were recognized as preseason All-Americans by Athlon Sports. Brown and Little, who made the first and second teams, respectively, highlight a talented Ole Miss offense that is expected to put up big numbers this fall.

A.J. Brown had a recordsetting sophomore season in Oxford. He broke numerous Ole Miss records, including the record for single-season receiving yards (1,252), which was set by Laquon Treadwell in 2015, and the record for most receiving yards in one game (233). He also led the SEC in receiving yards and touchdowns, caught the third-most passes in a single season in Ole Miss history and was only the third Rebel to obtain more than 1,000 receiving yards in a season.

"He goes out and works every day," wide receiver DaMarkus Lodge said. "His role on this team as a leader is very vocal. Seeing him come in and be that way from the start has been amazing to see."

In addition to earning preseason All-American honors, Brown was named to the Walter Camp

Award, Maxwell Award and



The crowd cheers as A.J. Brown scores a touchdown in the 57-35 win over Vanderbilt during the 2017 season.

Biletnikoff Award watch lists. Fellow receiver D.K. Metcalf hopes that Brown can continue to build on what he accomplished during the 2017 season.

"He doesn't talk about any of that," Metcalf said. "A.J. is a humble kid that works everyday like nobody is talking about him. He really pushes everybody around him and makes everybody around him better."

Greg Little is another

significant part of the Ole Miss offense. He ended the 2017 season ranked as the No. 31 player in college football, according to the NFL, and earned a spot on the 2017 All-SEC Second Team. Moreover, he was named to the 2018 Outland Trophy and the Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award watch lists.

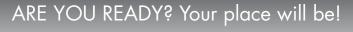
"I love respect from my peers and other people, but I (have to) take it one snap at a time," Little said. "If I don't take care of this season, then next season doesn't

really matter."

Little comes in at six-feet, six-inches tall and weighs 330 pounds but is fast and agile for his size. His quickness will be a key factor to protecting Jordan Ta'amu as well as for creating holes for the Rebels' running game. During the 2016 and 2017 seasons, Little played in every game, and he started every game of the latter.

Many other players also earned preseason distinctions. Sean Rawlings appeared on the Rimington Trophy watch list. Dawson Knox and Javon Patterson, respectively, were on the Mackey Award and Wuerffel Trophy watch lists. Finally, Ta'amu was named on the Polynesian Player of the Year and the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award watch lists.

"I'm really excited to get started with another season of football," head coach Matt Luke said. "I feel like we're coming in with a lot of positive momentum."



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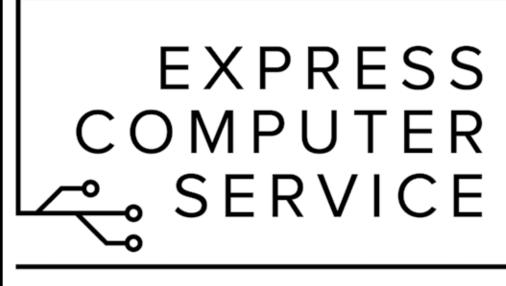
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Rebel Roll Call: Ta'amu ready to seize leadership

In preparation for the 2018 football season, The Daily Mississippian is introducing a series called "Rebel Roll Call" to take a deep look into each position group, familiarizing readers with this year's team. The two-week long series will lead up to the Rebels' first kickoff of the season against Texas Tech. During the first week, we will chronicle where each offensive group stands, starting with the quarterbacks.

ANNIE MAPP

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With fall camp coming to an end on Sunday, it is safe to say quarterback Jordan Ta'amu will have complete control over the Rebel offense.

Ta'amu exploded onto the field during the 2017 season, throwing for 365 yards or more in each of his first three starts. During the last month of the season, he led Ole Miss to a 3-1 record, helping him become the only Ole Miss quarterback ever to throw for 350 yards or more in back-to-back SEC games.

As a result, there are high expectations for him this year. Offensive coordinator Phil Longo said he wants Ta'amu to use all of his talents.

"We want Jordan to be a distributor of the ball, first and foremost," Longo said. "We have a lot of offensive weapons, and we want him to use them. If all our options are covered, which sometimes happens, or a defense is stacking up against everything but the (quarterback) run, he can use his feet for sure."

Ta'amu, a senior from Pearl City, Hawaii, said one of the most important things he wanted to work on during the off-season was building leadership.



Quarterback Jordan Ta'amu hands off the ball to running back Jordan Wilkins close to the goal line during the 38-37 loss to Arkansas during the 2017 season.

"I just (have) to keep going and be more vocal," Ta'amu said. "Being a leader and getting the offense back on track if they're losing it – that's my job, and I feel like I completed that."

A big part of being a leader has consisted of mentoring freshman quarterback Matt Corral.

Corral was named as Ta'amu's

backup in the spring, after arriving from his native California. Although Corral is a former Army All-American and four-star prospect, he is still transitioning from high school to college ball.

According to Longo, Ta'amu's humble attitude has helped Corral get a hold of things.

"Jordan has been his big

brother, so to speak," Longo said. "Matt knows the offense and can effectively run a lot of it. He just needs more experience, and that will come with time."

Because of a new redshirt rule for college football this season, true freshmen can play in up to four games without losing a year of eligibility.

Corral should be safe, for he is the second-string quarterback.

"If something changes and the season goes in a direction where he doesn't get on the field more than four times, obviously that would be a huge advantage," Longo said.

As of now, Ta'amu will continue mentoring Corral as they return to regular practices on Tuesday.

