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30th Annual PILF Auction to Benefit Public Interest Work

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30th Annual PILF Auction to Benefit Public Interest Work

Tickets for the Mardi Gras Masquerade benefit event available to the public

FEBRUARY 14, 2019 BY CHRISTINA STELBE



The Mardi Gras Masquerade black-tie event, set for Feb. 22 at the Jackson Avenue Center, benefits the Public Interest Law Foundation at the UM School of Law. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – The Public Interest Law Foundation at the University of Mississippi **School of Law** is bringing Mardi Gras to Oxford this month for the 2019 PILF silent and live auction.

The Mardi Gras Masquerade black-tie event is set for 7-9 p.m. Feb. 22 at the Jackson Avenue Center. Guests will enjoy food and fun while bidding on items and activities to support PILF.

The goal of PILF, a student-led organization, is to educate law students about the many areas of public interest law through volunteer opportunities and community involvement. Each summer, PILF also provides stipends to Ole Miss law students working in unpaid public interest jobs, making it possible for them to dedicate their time and service to others.

All proceeds from the auction, which is PILF's largest fundraiser of the year, will go toward funding students in their public interest work. Tickets are available to everyone.

"These funds enable students to get access to an area of work that is often highly competitive and rewarding but doesn't compensate at the same rate as other types of law practice," said Bri Warner, president of PILF and a third-year law student from Gulfport.

"Supporting students' public interest work creates a new generation of public interest lawyers, connects our law school to communities around the country and ensures that underserved clients receive the help they need."

Warner received a PILF stipend after her first year of law school, which allowed her to work in Atlanta with Lambda Legal, a nonprofit organization dedicated to working on behalf of LGBTQ people.

"This experience gave me incredible exposure to federal civil rights litigation at both the trial and appellate level in all types of law, from family law to employment discrimination to Title IX issues," she said.

Her work there helped her secure a position the following summer with Yale Law School's Veterans Legal Services Clinic, where she assisted veterans with benefit appeals and class action litigation.

These experiences shaped her career choice and helped her recognize the importance of public interest work.

"I plan on working in public interest after graduation and for the rest of my career," Warner said. "Public interest work is vital, and participating in PILF helped me access opportunities that would have been otherwise closed to me."

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Ole Miss In the News

Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

PILF's mission is "law for people, not for profit," and Warner said there are many areas encompassed by public interest law that can affect everyone's life.

"Public interest lawyers work on behalf of individuals and communities with the greatest need and the least resources," Warner said. "Lawyers owe it to our communities to work on behalf of those in need and help make the legal system accessible to everyone."

Grace Sullivan, a second-year law student from Madison, comes from a background of social work and continues to follow that passion at the Ole Miss law school.

"My observations through social work have led me to the belief that access to legal representation is a huge social justice issue that permeates other areas of people's lives," Sullivan said. "I view public interest law as a movement to provide holistic legal representation to more people, so of course I was drawn to it as soon as I came to law school."

PILF assisted Sullivan and fellow law student Jasmine Bogard with a stipend to cover their travel to the Equal Justice Works Conference & Career Fair in Washington, D.C., in October. Through that opportunity, Sullivan and Bogard were able to network with other public interest organizations from across the country.

"It gave me the chance to meet other students with similar passions and attorneys who were already working in areas of public interest, which broadened my understanding of how lawyers can further social and economic justice with their careers," Sullivan said.

Public interest work is noble and meaningful, but it is possible only through support. Not only are those jobs hard to find, but they are often underpaid because there is not enough funding for free and low-cost legal services, Sullivan said.

"By supporting the University of Mississippi chapter of PILF, you are helping to lighten the financial burden on students pursuing public interest careers and give them the freedom to get invaluable experience at unpaid summer positions," she said.

"Supporting public interest law in general, particularly at the academic level, instills the values of public service in future attorneys who, whether they pursue public interest careers or not, will be in the position to dedicate their time pro bono to promote access to justice."

All students, alumni and guests are invited. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased through the UM Foundation at <http://umfoundation.com/pilf>.

Those who cannot attend can support PILF's mission through a donation made at the UM Foundation site or by offering to mentor a student interested in public interest work.

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