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Aaron Shirley, M.D. posthumously receives Community Service Award

UMMC's professor named Diversity Educator of the Year

MARCH 2, 2015 BY CARON BLANTON, IHL COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

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Trustee Shane Hooper, Dr. Betty J. Crouther, Associate Professor of Art, Dr. Morris Stocks, Provost, and Trustee Aubrey Patterson, President of the Board of Trustees.

JACKSON, Miss. — The **Mississippi Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning** recently held its Diversity celebration by recognizing campus and community leaders for the impact they have made in advancing diversity and encouraging understanding and respect.

The late Aaron Shirley M.D., (1933-2014) received the Community Service Award for courage, commitment, persistence and humility in being a strong voice in working as an ambassador to end healthcare disparities for all citizens. Dr. Claude D. Brunson, Senior Advisor for External Affairs to the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine, at the **University of Mississippi**

Medical Center, was named the 2015 Diversity Educator of the Year.

"The Board of Trustees is honored to recognize Dr. Brunson and the late Dr. Shirley for their tremendous contributions as leaders, mentors and physicians, healing Mississippians through their medical expertise, tireless devotion and generous spirit," said Trustee Karen Cummins, Chair of the Board of Trustees' Diversity Committee. "Both trailblazers in the medical profession, their work to bridge health care disparities will have an impact on our state for generations to come."

Working through its Diversity Committee, chaired by Trustee Karen Cummins, the Board selects one individual as the Diversity Educator of the Year and one individual as the Community Honoree. Other Trustees serving on the committee include Trustee Shane Hooper, Trustee Bob Owens, Trustee Alan Perry, Trustee C.D. Smith, along with IHL Staff member Pearl Pennington. Ms. Clotee Lewis, IHL staff member, has been the coordinator of the recognition program several years.



Trustee Shane Hooper, Dr. James Keeton, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean, School of Medicine, honoree Claude D. Brunson, M.D., Senior Advisor for External Affairs to the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine, "2105 Diversity Educator of the Year," the University of Mississippi Medical Center, and Dr. Morris Stocks, Provost, The University of Mississippi, and Trustee Aubrey Patterson, President of the Board of Trustees.

years. From 1963 to 1967, he helped to organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and served as chairman for Warren County. Dr. Shirley also served as director of the Mississippi Action for Progress, an organization which provided health care and education to children.

In 1970, Dr. Shirley played an instrumental role in developing the largest community health center in the state of Mississippi, Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center, which is the largest provider of primary health care services to the uninsured and under-served in Central Mississippi and serves as a

The youngest of eight children, Dr. Shirley was born in Gluckstadt in 1933. He graduated from Lanier High School in 1951 and he received his Bachelor of Science degree from Tougaloo College in 1955. He received his Medical degree from Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee in 1959, and later interned at Hubbard Hospital before completing his residency in pediatrics in 1967 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) in Jackson. He was the first African American pediatric resident at UMMC and for many years the only Black pediatrician in the state.

Dr. Shirley began private practice in 1960 and practiced general medicine in Vicksburg for 15

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Campus Briefs

Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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Thank You To Our Donors

Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

model for federally funded community health centers nationwide. Dr. Shirley also served as Chairman of J-HCHC.

In 1993, Dr. Shirley received the MacArthur Fellowship, also known as the Genius Award, which recognizes devotion, dedication and strides' made in one's field. In 1995, Dr. Shirley pushed to transform the dilapidated Jackson Mall into the Jackson Medical Mall, a one-stop shop health care facility for the underserved, a plan now duplicated around the country. Dr. Shirley served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, as well as Director of Community Medical Services and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Dr. Shirley was honored with the endowment of Chair for the Study of Health Disparities at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in 2005. He was also elected to serve as a member of the Citizens Health Care Working Group, which was mandated by Congress to hold hearings and community meetings across the country on health care coverage and cost issues, and to produce a "Health Report to the American People."

In 2010, Dr. Shirley founded the HealthConnect program, an idea that originated in Iran, that sends doctors and nurses to poor homes to help prevent unnecessary emergency room visits. Dr. Shirley was recognized for his uncommon fortitude and commitment to working to enhance the quality health care for African Americans and all the citizens of Mississippi. Throughout his life, he touched the lives of all who knew him and earned him the respect and admiration of people in Mississippi and all over the world.

The 2015 Diversity Educator of the Year is Claude D. Brunson, M.D., who serves as Senior Advisor for External Affairs to the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine and Professor of Anesthesiology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. A member of the UMMC faculty since 1991, Dr. Brunson's contributions to diversity and to positive relations among all segments of the Medical Center and the broader community are numerous and varied. He has been described as "an outstanding and effective faculty member, mentor and role model who is deeply committed to diversity" and one who brings "voice and action to the concept of promoting cross cultural understanding at the Medical Center and within the campus community."

Dr. Brunson is a graduate of the University of Alabama and the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham. He completed a residency in anesthesiology at UMMC and later earned a Master's degree in clinical health sciences at UMMC. He is also a graduate of the leadership course for physician executives offered by Harvard Medical School.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Dr. Brunson became professor and chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology in 2002, the first African American chair of a department at the Medical Center. In 2009, he stepped down from this administrative role in anesthesiology to become senior advisor for External Affairs, but continues to practice one day per week.

Dr. Brunson has encouraged the advancement of diversity through his efforts to mentor rising young minority professionals at UMMC as well as Jackson State University. He is a true advocate of community involvement, as evidenced through patient building of trustful relationships with colleagues over many years. He serves as the first African American President in the 159-year history of the Mississippi State Medical Association, a post he was elected to August 2014.

In recommending him for the award, Dr. James E. Keeton, Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, wrote "Dr. Brunson is a person of considerable achievement. He is an individual who is arguably one of the most influential people in our state's health care industry, both in an official capacity and behind the scenes. He is a major force for building bridges between the white and black communities and especially within the physician community. He has also been one of the most effective people in Mississippi at building sustainable approaches to delivery of health services to the underserved. Dr. Brunson encourages in others the value of embracing diversity in thought, cultural background, experience and identity."

Dr. Brunson was instrumental in helping UMMC get legislation passed in 2012 that enabled providers to be reimbursed for services delivered via telemedicine. This achievement opened the floodgates for telehealth to be deployed in the state, with the potential to bring more services to rural areas.

He has received numerous honors and awards for his work and has continuously been included in the Best Doctors in America listing since 1998. Last year, he was named by *Ebony* magazine as being among the 100 Most Influential African-Americans in the United States.

Dr. Brunson has been a leader in UMMC's efforts to develop a Community Health Advocate Program (CHAP). This program trains lay people to be health advisors in their local communities. Many organizations, such as the United Methodist Church of Mississippi, have adopted UMMC's program to implement among their constituents.

He has been a member of the board of directors of the American Society of Anesthesiologists since 2002, leading several committees including finance. He has also served on several expert panels of the Food and Drug Administration.

"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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The Board honored faculty from each of Mississippi's public universities for advancing diversity at their institutions. These honorees include:

Dr. Dovi Alipoe, Director of Global Programs and Professor of Agricultural Economics

Alcorn State University

Dr. Noah Lelek, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Theatre Arts

Delta State University

Dr. Brandi L. Newkirk-Turner, Interim Department Chair and Graduate Program Director for the Department of Communicative Disorders in the College of Public Service

Jackson State University

Dr. Lakiesha N. Williams, Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering

Mississippi State University

Dr. Leslie Burger, Assistant Extension Professor in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture

Mississippi State University

Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine

Ms. Janie Shields, Life Enrichment Coordinator, Office of Outreach and Innovation

Mississippi University for Women

Dr. Xiaoquin Wu, Associate Professor of Mathematics, Department of Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences

Mississippi Valley State University

Dr. Betty J. Crouther, Associate Professor of Art

The University of Mississippi

2015 Diversity Educator of the Year

Dr. Claude D. Brunson, Senior Advisor for External Affairs to the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine

The University of Mississippi Medical Center

Dr. Tammy Greer, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Center for American Indian Research and Studies

The University of Southern Mississippi



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