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## Adjunct Professor Supports RMI Program

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## Adjunct Professor Supports RMI Program

Gift will help UM business school attract, retain world-class faculty

FEBRUARY 27, 2021 BY MARY STANTON KNIGHT

**FaTvLiErC&SMPrSt**



Ole Miss alumni Mary and Van Hedges, of Nashville, Tennessee, are establishing an endowment to support the UM School of Business Administration's Top 12-ranked risk management and insurance program. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – As a freshman, Van Hedges followed in his older brothers' footsteps by majoring in electrical engineering at the **University of Mississippi**, but the Water Valley native soon discovered that he should really be majoring in business.

After graduating in 1975 with an undergraduate degree in business administration, Hedges earned a Master of Insurance degree from Georgia State University and joined his father-in-law's independent insurance agency in Corinth.

Hedges ultimately acquired 13 additional agencies in Northeast Mississippi, which he merged and managed until he sold them and semi-retired in 2000. His love of the insurance field extended into the classroom when he joined the **School of Business Administration** faculty as an adjunct professor.

With a \$50,000 gift, Hedges and his wife, Mary, of Nashville, Tennessee, are establishing the Van E. Hedges Faculty Support Endowment benefiting the **risk management and insurance program** in the business school.

"The insurance industry has been so good to me, and there's nothing about Ole Miss that I don't love," said Hedges, president of

Southern Insurance Consulting in Nashville. "There is a great need for qualified young people in the insurance industry, and I want to help support the outstanding job the risk management and insurance program is doing at the university."

The gift will help with the retention and recruitment of faculty in the RMI field, said Ken Cyree, dean of the business school.

"It is very encouraging and rewarding to see endowment support from someone as involved as Van Hedges," Cyree said. "He has been on our RMI board, an adjunct professor in our insurance program, an insurance professional and a friend to our faculty and staff."

"Van has been dedicated to making our insurance program outstanding over many years, and his commitment to our faculty and programs is inspiring. He has mentored our students and added value to our vision of cultivating innovative and effective leaders through exceptional educational opportunities."

In 2017, the university's RMI program was recognized as a Global Center of Insurance Excellence by the International Insurance Society and is ranked as the 12th largest RMI program in the United States, said Andre Liebenberg, the Gwennette P. and Jack W. Robinson Chair of Insurance at the university.

"Van has been a tremendous blessing to me and to the RMI program," Liebenberg said. "The extent of his service to our program is unique. Van taught classes for us on our Tupelo campus and was a student favorite. He has also led, and continues to serve, the insurance advisory board."

"This latest gift will help us attract and retain outstanding faculty who are committed to preparing students for successful careers in risk management and insurance."

The Hedges have contributed more than \$300,000 in total giving to the business school.

"I believe that Ole Miss can build a world-class RMI program if given the resources needed, and faculty support is the key to that," Hedges said. "Look at the success the program is having with just two full-time faculty members."

"The professors have outstanding and broad background in the insurance industry and the program has a great reputation for producing quality graduates. There is a tremendous need for people in the field,

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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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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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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

which is a great opportunity for Ole Miss students.”

Hedges’ three brothers – Steve, Mike and Jim – all graduated in electrical engineering from the Ole Miss **School of Engineering**.

The Van E. Hedges Faculty Support Endowment is open to support from businesses and individuals. Gifts can be made by sending a check, with the fund’s name noted on the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655, or by giving online at <https://give.olemiss.edu>.

For more information about the School of Business Administration, contact Angela Brown, senior director of development, at [browna@olemiss.edu](mailto:browna@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-3181.



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