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A Legacy of Learning: Retired Education Professor Creates \$25,000 Dilley Museum Endowment

 AUGUST 16, 2012 BY [ANDREW MARK ABERNATHY](#)

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Lynton Dilley (Education 1961) and her three sons (left to right) James (Accountancy 78), Larry (Liberal Arts 72) and John (Engineering 80) all graduated from the University of Mississippi. During a reception to celebrate the Dilley Endowment at the University Museum, the family honored the memory of the late Edward Norman Dilley, who served as an education professor at UM until his death in 1958. UM photo by Nathan Latil.

OXFORD, Miss. – Retired University of Mississippi education professor Lynton Dilley fondly remembers toting around heavy, military-style footlockers in 1981 when she helped establish one of the campus museum's first educational outreach programs – what was then called "Dilley Boxes."

Dilley, with help from education professors Cindy Leigh and Peggy Emerson, acquired trunks stocked with hands-on learning materials to create activities for third-graders who toured exhibits at the museum.

"It started as a modest project we did in our free time," Dilley said. "I was in charge of placing our elementary education students as teacher aides

in the local school systems. This was a way for the university to collaborate with those schools."

But what started as a small program grew quickly. Today, the Traveling Trunk Program at the University Museum sends six similar boxes with learning materials and lesson plans to classrooms throughout the state and beyond. A \$25,000 donation from Dilley will help ensure it continues to reach future generations.

During a small ceremony recently at the museum, Dilley was honored by friends, family and university leaders for her gift, which created the Dilley Museum Education Endowment to fund educational outreach programs.

"This has been an exceptional year for donations at Ole Miss," Chancellor Dan Jones said. "To me, some of the most special gifts are those that come from our former faculty members who decide they want to give back to continue to support Ole Miss."

Among the programs the Dilley Endowment will help fund are ArtZone, an after-school art program; Mini Masters, an art program for 2- to 4-year-olds; adult studio workshops; and the Traveling Trunk Program. More than 6,800 children participated in the museum's educational outreach programs in 2011.

"Mrs. Dilley's generosity will touch many lives and significantly impact our programming," said Emily Dean, the museum's program coordinator. "We want to expand our current programs to bring the museum collections to life for more students of all ages. We will also be able to develop new programs that reach varied audiences. We want to be ambassadors of Mrs. Dilley's belief in the power of education."

Dilley came to Oxford in 1956 with her two sons and husband Norman Edward Dilley, who was a UM education professor for two years until his sudden death in August 1958. In the wake of the tragedy, community members flocked to support Dilley, who by then had a third, 3-month-old, son.

"If you're going to have a disaster like that, Oxford is the place to have it," Dilley said. "I received three job offers almost immediately. The Presbyterian church found a housekeeper for us."

A trained architect, Dilley worked for a local architecture firm while taking education classes at Ole Miss to earn her teaching license. Education became an appealing career move for the single mother; the job offered flexibility to support and raise her family.

In 1961, Dilley took a sixth-grade teaching position at Oxford Elementary School and began studying for her master's degree in education. In 1966, she joined the School of Education faculty, a position in which she impacted thousands of students and received grant monies to study education in more than 20 countries.

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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

Dilley became the director of field and laboratory experiences for the School of Education in 1981 and helped develop educational outreach programs, including the Dilley Boxes. She retired from teaching in 1991.

She said she plans to make a second donation in January to the School of Education to create an endowment for elementary education.

"I can't tell you how much this town and this university have meant to me," Dilley explained. "During some of the toughest moments of my life, this community has wrapped arms around my family and me. I'm happy to give back to a community that's given so much to me."

For more information about the museum's outreach programming, visit <http://www.museum.olemiss.edu>.



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