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MISSISSIPPIAN

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SERVING OLE MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911 Visit theDOnline.com @thedm_news

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THEDMONLINE.COM

Trans awareness 'die-in' cut short



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Em Gill, who is transgender, and UM Pride Vice President Brenna Paola participate in a die-in on Tuesday in the Union. Protesters lay down in the Union to represent members of the transgender community who have been killed.

RACHEL ISHEE

THEDMNEWS@GMAIL.COM

As students flooded into the Student Union on Tuesday for their lunch breaks, the usual sounds of crinkling food wrappers, fizzing soda machines and chatter about end of the semester exams were quieted by nearly a dozen students lying on the ground, chanting "trans lives matter" and "transphobia has got to go" while naming transgender people who have been killed.

"Today, we are here to serve notice that trans lives matter," Malik Pridgeon, Queer People of Color executive director and an organizer for the protest, said during the demonstration.

The Transgender Awareness "die-in," a protest in which participants lie on the ground to represent people who have died, hosted by Queer People of Color and UM Pride Network, was cut short Tuesday afternoon when participants dispersed after three University Police Department officers asked students to

not block student traffic through certain areas of the Student Union.

"It was only scheduled to go to 12:45, and the police showed up at 12:42, so we were only cut off by three minutes," Pridgeon said. "At the end of the day, we did what we wanted to do, which was to bring awareness and honor the lives of those who had been murdered due to their gender expression."

Senior public policy leadership major

SEE DIE-IN PAGE 6

'Our silence is literally killing us'

With opioid overdoses on the rise, leaders reevaluate their approach to the crisis

HAYDEN BENGE

HKBENGE@GO.OLEMISS.EDU

When Josh Horton's phone rang, a voice on the other end told him something he never wanted to hear. The world turned silent. Shock coursed through his body.

His best friend John was dead. Heroin overdose.

"You never think it's going to happen to people you know," Horton, then a sociology undergraduate student, said.

His best friend's 3- and 5-year-old daughters sat on the curb with their suitcases. The last time they saw their dad, his body was hard and flies were buzzing around his mouth.

"He had gotten into prescription pills, the typical story of the opiate epidemic," Horton said. "He started taking painkillers, could no longer access those painkillers and then found out that you could get heroin for half the price and twice the kick."

John had begun injecting heroin to get his fix, not knowing that what he was doing would end up killing him.

"Opioid epidemic" is the phrase used to describe the high number of overdose deaths nationwide resulting from the addictive nature of opiate-based drugs designed to alleviate pain.

Opioid painkillers include drugs such as hydrocodone, morphine and codeine, which can all be highly addictive. This addiction can lead patients to heroin after using up their prescribed supply.

This epidemic claims up to 78 American lives every day, according to the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, and has quickly become one of the nation's most lethal drug epidemics.

Now 34 years old and in his third year at the University of Mississippi School of Law, Horton is studying criminal law, has founded the non-profit organization Southern Recovery Advocacy and has served on the Governor's Opioid and Heroin Task Force for the state of Mississippi.

The moment his best friend



Every time you hear a story about someone who dies on Highway 6 from a car wreck, think to yourself, 'At least two people died from overdose that I don't know about.' Because statistically, that's what's happening."

-Lt. John Harless



GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY: HAYDEN BENGE

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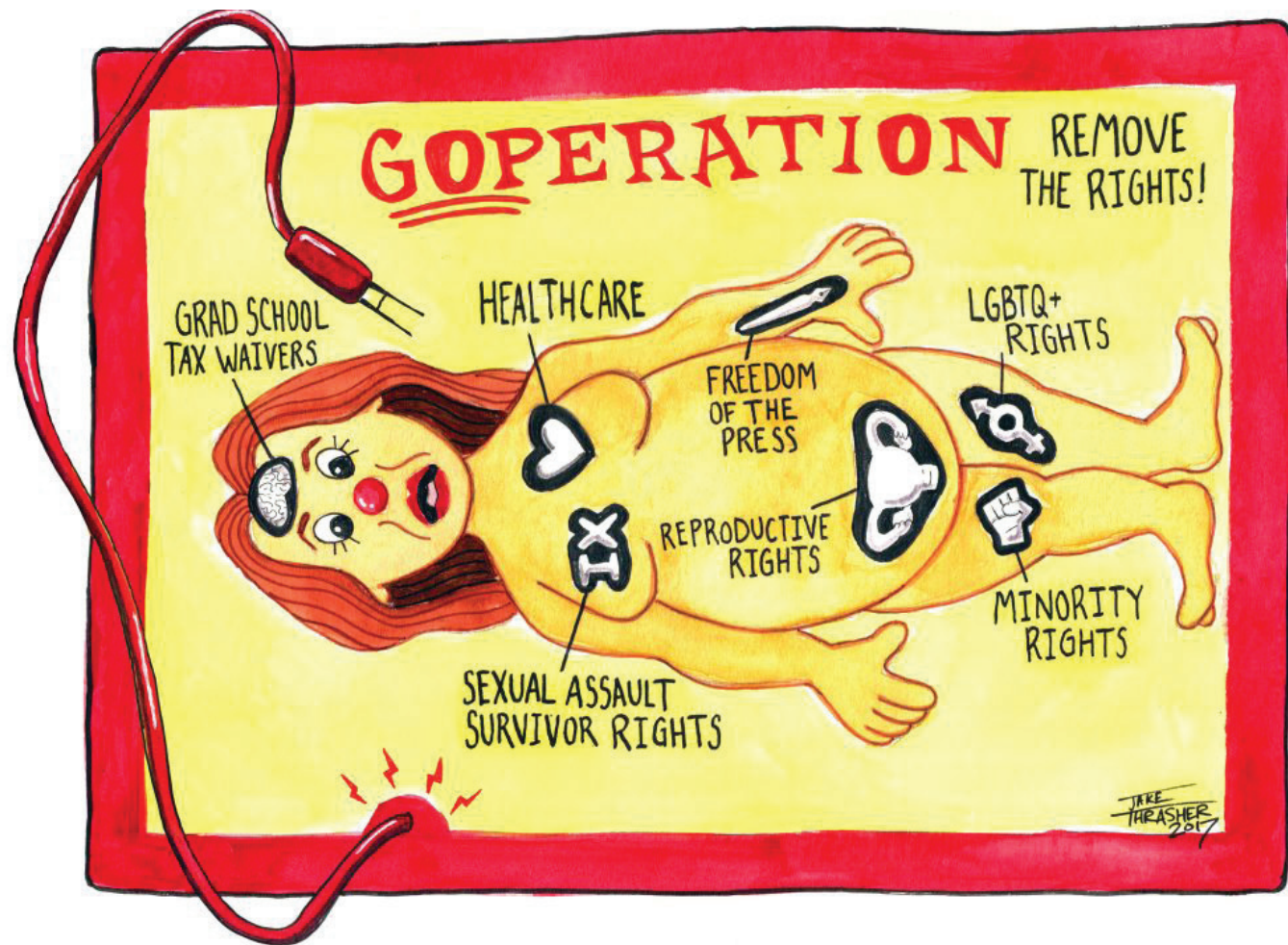
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COLUMN

Beyond the mythical ‘best years of our lives’



FRANSICO HERNANDEZ
STAFF COLUMNIST

The life of the college student is as idealized as it is misunderstood. Popular culture often depicts us as perpetually happy and carefree: drinking out of red Solo cups, throwing Frisbees or reading on the grass under an old oak tree. Those who have graduated before us will tell us, with great confidence: “These are the best years of your life.”

It’s fairly easy to buy into this idea. It wouldn’t be credible to say college hasn’t provided us with some of the most exciting opportunities and memorable moments of our lives. But are these really “the happiest years of our lives”? Are we as cheerful as we seem?

Looking at the status of our mental health, we can get a much more honest picture. According to a 2016 survey by the

American College Health Association, two-thirds of university students reported feeling “very sad” at some point in the last 12 months, and 44 percent reported feeling that way in the previous month. More than one-third of students felt “so depressed that it was difficult to function.” This data doesn’t quite match the stereotype of the college student popular culture wants to show us.

The ideal of the carefree, cheerful student is not just mischaracterizing us. It’s also blinding us to the reality of our vulnerable mental health — three-quarters of mental health conditions develop before the age of 24.

We struggle with confronting our mental health conditions partly because we keep telling ourselves that we must be happy, that these are supposed to be the best years of our lives, that we can’t waste our time being sad, anxious or just tired and overwhelmed. Despite fast growth in the use of mental health services on college campuses, only 43 percent of students in need have accessed their university’s accommodations, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Parents, family and other adults outside our campus

can be of great support. But the ideas they might have of our lives in college are sometimes distorted and idealized — they, too, buy into the myth of the ever-joyous college life. Partly because of nostalgia from their time in college and partly because of their inability to understand the struggles of the modern student, many adults tend to dismiss concerns about students’ mental health. “You’re just stressed out” or “You’re young and in college. You should be happy” are some common responses.

Another danger behind the romanticized tale of college is the normalization of alcohol and drug abuse — both students and the general population partake in constructing this idea that excessive drinking is almost a necessary part of the college experience.

Though it is true that experimenting with alcohol and drugs is part of the learning process toward adulthood, the focus should be on developing healthy and responsible habits and not on encouraging outright abuse. The popular tale of the college student in a perpetual state of partying might be cool for movies, but it is deeply unhealthy and gross in real life. An estimated 20 percent of col-

lege students meet the criteria for alcohol dependence, according to the National Institute of Health.

There is a clear link between substance abuse and mental illness. On the one hand, abuse of alcohol and drugs leads to mental health conditions and dependence. On the other hand, it might also be that alcohol and drugs serve as ways to cope with anxiety and depression. Could it be that college students drink so much not necessarily because they’re having the best years of their lives but because they’re plagued by overwhelming worries, anxiety and depression?

Those who attempt to look at the modern college student must take off their rose-tinted glasses. We must make efforts to create a more encouraging and less stigmatizing environment in which students can seek help with for mental illness, and for that purpose, the myth of students living “the best years of their lives” has to be re-considered.

Do we even want to peak at 22?

Francisco Hernandez is a senior international studies major from Valencia, Spain.

**THE DAILY
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Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Letters may be edited for clarity, space or libel. Third-party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or “name withheld” will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.

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.



**MISSISSIPPI
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MEMBER NEWSPAPER

COLUMN

Marketing rap music exploits the genre's struggle



BEN POLICICCHIO
STAFF COLUMNIST

The proliferation of rap music in the modern age is evident in daily life. Just look at gas station shelves stocked with “Rap Snacks” marketed by the image of popular rappers like the group Migos.

Sprite uses rap lyrics to market soft drinks, plastering the words on the sides of cans and bottles. It’s even gone so far as to create advertisements with famous Canadian rapper Drake. In one very popular commercial, he tastes a Sprite, and his face explodes into a robotic array of speakers, sound systems and Sprite.

How has rap music come to possess such control over mass media and consumption? Is it because the music is relatable?

I would figure not, considering most middle-class Americans to whom these products are marketed will never find themselves slinging drugs, fighting cops or ending up in police cars like popular rap songs boast. Instead, the hype, coming from the catchy beats and hooks, is what pushes rap music to the mainstream.

Feel-good sells, and rap music makes people feel good.

It makes them feel powerful. Hooks about running a neighborhood or “getting hoes” make individuals feel special and important. This hype makes rap music a prime tool for marketing products to a youth base that longs for a sense of belonging and power.

Even in the past, rap music’s influence on fashion and its crucial role in selling clothes are undeniable. In the earlier days of the genre, when groups like Run-D.M.C. and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five wore Adidas track suits and Superstars, street culture followed the hype and began to embrace these fashions.

The Adidas Superstar would have never become a streetwear staple without hip-hop artists wearing and advertising them. If Grandmaster Flash had never rocked them, sorority girls nationwide probably wouldn’t be sporting them now.

Today, with brands like Nautica, which recently partnered with rapper Lil Yachty, making a comeback, it’s hard to contest rap music’s power to sell. And in women’s fashion, hip-hop artist Rihanna has her own line of beauty products, Fenty Beauty, which flies off the shelf. Rihanna’s endorsement of these products is marketing gold, and the line basically sells itself.

Rap controls not only what products we buy but also how we live our everyday lives. Cars zooming down the street can be heard as they pass by, their bass thumping with whatever rap song is topping the chart at the moment. Parties all around the United States and the world



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS: EMILY HOFFMAN

are fueled by rap music, banging loudly from speakers. Strangers become friends over their shared ability to recite those catchy hooks to popular rap songs.

Rock and alternative music used to dominate the top spots on the Billboard charts. But in recent years, rock ‘n’ roll has slid down, with rap, hip-hop and R&B slowly taking its place at the top. But why?

Perhaps it is rap music’s focus on products, like clothing, to define one’s status that makes record executives push the genre more than they do other types of music. This marketability abuses both the artist and the consumer.

Using rap music to market products to white, suburban households exploits the poverty and struggle so central to the genre. These suburban kids, riding down the streets and blasting songs with lyrics referring to “running from the cops, shooting at the opps,” will never live the lives or share the

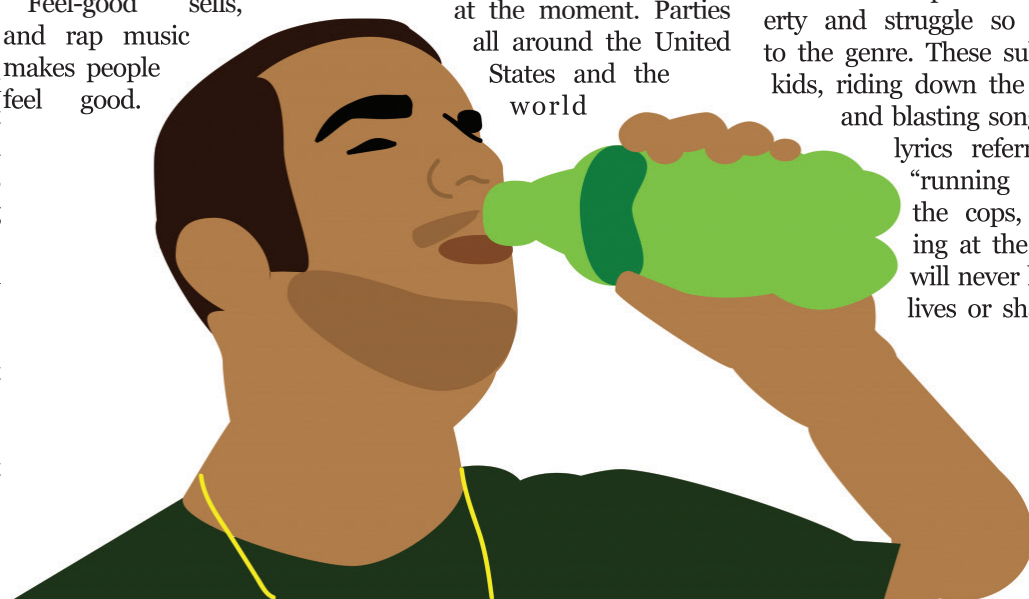
experiences and struggles endured by the artists who create the music.

In a way, using rap to market these products is an appropriation of street culture, gentrifying it to sell products to well-off white families. Rap dominates American consumer culture in the same way the lyrics glorify the clothing artists wear, the cars they drive and the diamonds they stunt.

This creates a push in the con-

sumer to strive for a lifestyle that is not his own. Oddly, rap music perpetuates the “keeping up with the Joneses” culture that makes all the households in the suburbs eerily similar to one another.

Ben Policicchio is a sophomore business major from Tupelo.



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Author explores mass incarceration injustices

RACHEL ISHEE
THE DMNEWS@GMAIL.COM

One in 3 black men in the United States is under criminal justice supervision, and while the country makes up 5 percent of the world's population, it has 25 percent of the world's prisoners, according to James Forman Jr. He said this is the new crisis the country has on its hands.

"We have to be doing something wrong to produce those numbers," Forman said.

Forman, a Yale Law professor and former D.C. public defender, visited the Overby Center Auditorium on Tuesday night to discuss how controlling crime and drug use with harsh sentencing has been counterproductive among people of color in America and to promote his book "Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America."

The book delves into the topic of mass incarceration in the United States and how it is

negatively affecting the African-American community disproportionately. Forman noted that some prominent black officials supported harsh punishments because they feared the civil rights movement was being undermined by rampant crime.

He said that while incredible progress has been made in combatting racism, there are still many issues that aren't being addressed.

"I wouldn't trade with any previous generation of African-Americans. I would not trade living through the Jim Crow segregation, and I would certainly not trade a time earlier than that," Forman said.

He said mass incarceration is the newest human rights and racial justice crisis.

"The dilemma that I face in this moment is simultaneous, overwhelming, undeniable progress and great human tragedy, suffering and racial injustice," he said.

An idea Forman addressed



PHOTO BY: LOGAN CONNER

Yale Law School professor James Forman Jr., author of "Locking Up Our Own" (on left), discusses with Tucker Carrington (on right) the effects of the American criminal justice system on African Americans.

in his book was how the African-American community can be both underpoliced and overpunished.

"For most of American history and still in many ways to this day ... but especially before the Civil Rights Era, one of the basic stories of the African-American relationship to the criminal justice system was under protection," Forman said. "Crimes against black people did not get investigated and did not get pursued."

Forman said past white-on-black violence proves underpolicing to be true.

"We know this in the famous case of Emmett Till (and) the cases of Schwerner, Goodman and Cheney, the cases of civil rights workers killed and when they went to look for their bodies, right here in this state, they found other bodies on river banks of black people, the crimes of whom had never even been investigated," Forman said.

He said the lack of protection is a central part of American history.

"At the same time, we have this history of overpunishment, and that's a thing that, in a lot of ways, we're living with today," he said.

Forman said he decided to write "Locking Up Our Own"

when he grew frustrated with the lack of African-American perspective in the world around him, like the lack of black actors in television and movies. He said when he was seeing African-American perspectives, they were limited to people who were incarcerated or victims of extreme violence but not showing African-American decision-makers, intellectuals and politicians.

Beginning in the 1970s, the United States saw an 800 percent increase in African-American elected officials.

"We are policed. We are imprisoned. We are arrested. We are victims of crime," Forman said. "We're all of those things, but we're not only that. We're also intellectuals and activists and citizens and elected officials."

Tucker Carrington, assistant director of law at the Ole Miss law school, said he decided to ask Forman to speak at the university because he believes his book offers insight on an issue affecting both the nation and the state of Mississippi.

"Mr. Forman is really a national voice on one of the most critical social issues facing us, particularly in Mississippi," Carrington said. "It's a fantastic book. It's both beautifully written and also deeply researched."

I've read it twice, and it is absolutely terrific."

Author and journalist Ralph Eubanks, who serves as a visiting professor of Southern studies, said he attended the event because of his interest in the book and how the topic pertains to Mississippi.

"I came tonight because it's a real interest of mine. I'm a D.C. resident, and I think that this is a really important issue," Eubanks said. "I think, in particular, the example Forman gave from this community, an African-American man being stopped twice by police officers within a single morning, that it is a problem. We have far too many people incarcerated in the state."

Julia Grant, a sophomore public policy leadership major from Gulfport, said she attended the night's discussion because mass incarceration interests her.

"Over the summer, I was answering calls at the Supreme Court from very poor petitioners that really didn't see a lot of hope for their future," Grant said.

Grant said Forman did a great job of explaining why his book is important to read and how it contributes to literature already written on the topic.

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ACROSS

- 1 Tel
- 5 Choreographer de Mille
- 10 Comic Kamen
- 14 Broccoli (leafy vegetable)
- 15 Alley Oop's girlfriend
- 16 Teen follower
- 17 Party to
- 18 Chopper topper
- 19 Nintendo rival
- 20 Aids
- 22 Stupid
- 24 Madame de
- 26 Elaborately adorned
- 27 Thespian
- 30 Holder
- 32 Machine for lifting heavy loads
- 33 Indian wrap
- 34 Age unit
- 38 Boy king
- 39 Without any flaws
- 42 Involuntary muscular contraction
- 43 Blue-pencil
- 45 Type of gun
- 46 Place to sweat it out
- 48 Pave over
- 50 Characteristic actions
- 51 Falafel sauce

DOWN

- 1 Opera highlight
- 2 Moving vehicles
- 3 Native Nigerians
- 4 Flesh of a deer
- 5 Main arteries
- 6 Farm bird
- 7 "As if!"
- 8 "The Time Machine" people
- 9 Mocking
- 10 Stonework
- 11 Kick Out of You
- 12 On the up-and-up, briefly
- 13 Vestige
- 21 Throat problem
- 23 Wrath
- 25 Casual shoes
- 27 Entr
- 28 Gunk
- 29 French actor Jacques
- 31 Small songbird
- 33 Mex. miss
- 35 Ornamental case
- 36 Misbehavin'
- 37 Some VCRs
- 40 Guess
- 41 Autocrats
- 44 Three-pronged weapon
- 47 First Biblical patriarch
- 49 Opposite of WSW
- 50 Intense dislike
- 51 Unsaid
- 52 Without in the world
- 53 Sported
- 55 Marketing connection
- 57 Hydroxyl compound
- 59 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 60 Construction beam
- 61 Ages and ages
- 64 RR stop

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		1		9		7		

HOW TO PLAY

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

EASY

8	9	7	5	3	6	4	1	2
6	5	4	2	1	9	3	7	8
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7	8	5	6	9	2	3	1	4
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3	2	1	4	9	8	6	5	7
5	4	8	1	6	2	7	3	9
9	7	6	3	8	4	5	2	1
2	1	3	6	5	7	8	4	9

OPIOID

continued from page 1

died was the moment Horton decided to use his own experience with addiction to help others. As a 15-year-old, Horton dropped out of high school and spent the next 14 years of his life in and out of jail because of his own addiction.

"I had a lot of fear surrounding coming out and talking about my own personal struggles, because it's just so stigmatized," he said.

In order to make a difference, Horton had to overcome his fears.

"I realized I could try and go through this educational system. I could fly under the radar, go get a law degree and do corporate law and try and hide my past, like so many people in recovery do," Horton said. "But I decided against that."

His story, along with those of many others who have suffered the same condition, has come to the forefront in the battle against the opioid crisis in Mississippi — which ranks fifth in the country for number of opioid overdose deaths per capita — and across the nation.

The situation

Last month, President Donald Trump declared the opioid epidemic a national public health emergency. Between 1999 to 2015, opioid overdose deaths killed twice the number of people in the United States as World War I, the Korean War and the Vietnam War did combined and is the number one cause of death for people under the age of 50, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We're on the brink of a super-pandemic — that's how we termed it in our opioid threat assessment for the state," Lt. John Harless of the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics said at an opioid town hall meeting last month in Oxford.

The opioid crisis has crept its way through Appalachia, barreled across the country and is not shying away from Mississippi.

Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann told *The Daily Mississippian* there are around 201,000 dosage units of opioids in Mississippi right now. He said the heroin cases investigated by the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics are up 300 percent, and 200 people have died from opioid overdose in the state this calendar year.

"I've seen states like Ohio, Kentucky, Florida and Vermont that have been battling this epidemic, and it's coming our way," Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood told *The Daily Mississippian* in an interview.

On behalf of the state, Hood filed the nation's first lawsuit against big pharmaceutical companies for misrepresenting the addictive nature of opiate-based painkillers.

Hood was the district attor-

ney in Oxford during the '90s, when the crack epidemic and meth epidemic were both prevalent issues, and he said he has yet to see another epidemic that affects such a broad spectrum of people. Hood said the government needs to spend more money and effort on mental health treatment and rehabilitation.

"It haunts me to think of how many kids I was responsible for sending to prison in the '90s when I was DA," Hood said. "They had a mental health issue, were really self-medicating, then wound up getting addicted. That led to them selling those drugs, and that's how they got into the penitentiary."

The stigma

Horton wrestled with his own addiction for 14 years because he was afraid of what would happen when he admitted he had struggled with addiction.

"The stigma keeps us quiet," he said. "Our silence is literally killing us."

Ann Rodio, program administrator at the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, said silence is a major issue in the battle against opioid addiction.

"We have no idea what amount of resources we need if we don't know what we're dealing with in the communities," Rodio said.

Horton is still dealing with issues rooted in his past offenses. He struggled to find housing when moving to Oxford because of his convictions, and instead of walking into his internship at the U.S. district court through the back door like his coworkers, he walks in through a metal detector.

"We're taking a medically diagnosed condition and we're criminalizing it, and I feel like that's unconstitutional," he said.

Once labeled a felon, it's more difficult to get a job, education, housing, basic life skills and other things that make it



PHOTOS BY: DEVNA BOSE

Josh Horton

easy to reintegrate into society.

"We wonder why there's a revolving door on the jail and we're losing 175 people a day to the opioid epidemic," Horton said. "It's because we're not treating it. We're criminalizing the behavior and not addressing it as a public health issue."

Criminalization comes at a cost, too. According to Lt. Harless, the fiscal cost of the opioid addiction — treatment, incarceration and health care — is estimated at \$78.5 billion nationwide.

The "tough on crime" mentality prevalent in the political environment, which has its roots in the late '60s and early '70s, is the idea that arresting the offenders will get rid of the drug issue. Horton said this mentality needs to be uprooted from society's way of thinking in favor of actual treatment for the offenders.

"The really, really tough people are the ones going out there and saying, 'How can we help?'" Horton said.

Horton took this approach when he served on the Governor's Opioid and Heroin Study Task Force for the state, a group of experts in their respective fields which created a

list of 41 recommendations on how to best confront the opioid epidemic in Mississippi for Gov. Phil Bryant. The task force agreed that addressing the issue by funding treatment instead of incarceration would be the most successful long-term approach.

"We're trying to educate people that you're not a moral failure," Horton said. "You're not a bad person trying to get good. You're a sick person trying to get well, you're not a criminal."

The recovery

Horton said there are two major concerns for him about treatment when dealing with the opioid crisis — the political agenda and big pharmaceutical companies.

According to him, politics combined with pharmaceutical companies' lust to stay in business takes away from addressing the real problems with lack of access to recovery. To keep profits high, these companies are now recommending medication-assisted treatment, which means giving patients another drug to take the place of the current one.

"A substance is not going to fix a substance problem. It is not meant to be a recovery replacement," he said.

For Horton, enrolling in college and meeting other people going through the same struggle helped him during his recovery process.

"It was this perfect storm of circumstances that allowed me to be able to go forward," he said. "I don't know which one is more important, the education or the recovery."

A helpful part of his recovery was being removed from his environment in Atlanta, where he had connections with his past drug offenses. Horton was fortunate to have this opportunity, but not everyone is so lucky.

Horton said it is difficult to find adequate resources to help someone through the recovery process, especially on Ole Miss' campus. He was a guest speaker in a freshman experience class just last week and said the students were attentive and fascinated by everything he was talking about, because they had little to no knowledge

about opioids and addiction.

Colleges such as Texas Tech and the University of Alabama provide sober housing on campus, meetings for those going through recovery and employees on campus who have been through recovery themselves and are ready to help those students. Compared with these other college campuses across the South, Ole Miss offers fewer resources to help students seek treatment or continue the recovery process. Horton wanted to do something to change this, so he created Southern Recovery Advocacy. His non-profit attempts to shift the mentality towards addiction in Oxford and across the South.

"We really want to start targeting it and going after it and start advocating for those who can't really advocate for themselves," he said.

The university has also started to take action, however.

Campus organizations such as Student Wellness have continued to offer resources to help students battling addiction, among other mental health conditions.

Just this semester, the university announced it would open the William Magee Center for Wellness Education, which will be housed in the new \$32 million South Campus Recreation Center, in hopes of educating students about substance abuse issues.

"The Center for Wellness Education will strive to become a nationally recognized leader in education, support and research contributing to the development and implementation of effective, evidence-based strategies for substance abuse prevention in a collegiate environment," said Erin Cromeans, assistant director of health promotion for the Department of Campus Recreation.

Horton thinks things are becoming better for those affected by the substance use disorder but there are still challenges to be fought.

"I think we're on the verge of a major cultural shift in this country," Horton said. "I think this is going to be one of those moments in history where we look back and we say 'which side of history were you on?'"

"You're not a bad person trying to get good. You're a sick person trying to get well — you're not a criminal."

Josh Horton
Ole Miss law school student



DIE-IN*continued from page 1*

Allen Coon, who participated in the protest, said he was disappointed the demonstration had to end early.

“I think that it’s frustrating that students who are just exercising their free speech in a public space is frowned upon,” Coon said. “The reality is that we weren’t infringing on anybody’s freedom in the space.”

Coon said he was troubled with how UPD responded, because people were still able to walk around and move freely throughout the Union.

“Nonetheless, it’s important that students get this message out here,” Coon said.

In an email to The Daily Mississippian after the protest, UPD Chief Tim Potts said he was not there and the event was not shut down.

“I think people were asked to move from blocking access to the stairs,” Potts said.

Queer People of Color and UM Pride Network hosted the transgender awareness die-in to acknowledge violence against the transgender community, especially in comparison with that shown toward other minority groups.

“The transgender community



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

University police officer Daniel Ross speaks with the Executive Director of Queer People of Color, Malik Pridgeon, to break up the die-in at the Union held Tuesday. The people were protesting for those within the transgender community who have been killed.

is a part of the lesbian and gay community – LGBTQIA,” Pridgeon said. “We all share similar struggles; however, I would have to say our trans brothers and sisters are typically even more unaccepted in comparison to individuals who identify as gay or lesbian.”

The event was held this week as a way to acknowledge that the third week of November is

Transgender Awareness Week (TAW).

Pridgeon said celebrating a week dedicated to a community that oftentimes has little to no voice is extremely important, especially in a place like Mississippi.

Pridgeon said it’s important to celebrate Transgender Awareness Week because members of the transgender

community need to know they are valued.

“TAW is even more important in Mississippi because at the beginning of this year, Meshia Caldwell, a black transgender woman, was murdered in Canton, Mississippi,” Pridgeon said.

Caldwell was found shot to death Jan. 4 and was the first reported transgender person to be killed this year. The Human Rights Campaign reports there have been at least 25 transgender people killed in 2017.

“Silence is consent,” Pridgeon said. “Celebrating TAW is an overt declaration that we will not tolerate discrimination and violence against transgender individuals.”

Danica McOmber, a member of the transgender community in Oxford, said she came to watch the die-in to show her support and act as a voice for the trans community.

“I came here to observe and answer questions if people had them,” McOmber said. “I like to answer questions, and I like to talk to people about what it means to be transgender, without having them feel that they can’t ask me a question because they might offend me.”

She said that although many trans people face violence and persecution after coming out

as transgender, she feels she has been accepted both on and off the Ole Miss campus since coming out.

“Attitudes are very accepting towards transgender folks in the community and on campus,” McOmber said. “I have felt very little negative impacts from my transition, which I thought would occur, based on what I had been told.”

McOmber said that though her transition has been relatively peaceful, she believes there is still work to do when it comes to people’s views of the transgender community.

“I do believe that the transgender community has a little more stigma against them than the gay and lesbian community due to transgender folks being seen as mentally ill and self-destructive because we want to change our bodies to match our identity,” McOmber said.

Part of the reason the event ended early was that the papers required to hold a demonstration were not submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students by the organizations’ leaders.

“The point of this is civil disobedience, and so the thing about civil disobedience is that you do not comply with laws,” Pridgeon said. “We want to, in a sense, catch people off guard because we do feel like there could be, perhaps, some kind of infringement or impediment of our protest, had we gone through and gotten the proper authorization.”

Pridgeon said that if the group had submitted the required papers, the office could have told them “no,” and police could have been required to attend, which could have made the protesters and demonstrators uncomfortable.

UM Pride Vice President Brenna Paola said the Student Union was the best place to reach the largest number of people and to spread the word about violence in the LGBTQ community.

“Recognizing the lives of trans people opens up a platform for awareness,” Paola said. “Without an awareness week, it’s easy to be clueless about the prevalence of trans people currently and historically, the terminology acceptably used and the ongoing social activism combatting issues within the community.”

She said anything short of full support, however, isn’t enough support.

“But I’d be ignorant not to admit that’s an optimistic future,” Paola said. “To have a voice, this community needed enough support to feel safe from harm. It’s a process that involves trans activists as well as ally activists.”

Kristen Walker, vice director of Queer People of Color, said she thought the die-in went well.

“We did what we aimed to do, spread some awareness and shed some light,” Walker said. “We came in here to do the die-in, and we successfully orchestrated it.”

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PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

TOP LEFT: Afton Thomas of the Southern Foodways Alliance speaks on personal branding during the "Be You: Branding Your Life" panel at the Alumni Center on Tuesday, the first day of the inaugural Women and Entrepreneurship Week. **TOP RIGHT:** At the Croft Institute on Tuesday, founder and executive director of the Cuban Malpaso Dance Company, Fernando Sáez, addresses the changing cultural landscape in Cuba.



PHOTO BY: XINYI SONG



PHOTO BY: TAYLAR TEEL

The Ole Miss African Drum Ensemble performs a mixture of traditional and modern African dances and songs Tuesday night in Nutt Auditorium.



PHOTO BY: ALEXIS T. RHODEN

Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority members stroll during Pavilion Presents on Tuesday.



PHOTO BY: XINYI SONG

Yunshu Wang demonstrates how to write Chinese characters at the "10-Minute Language Lessons" event in the Circle on Tuesday, where more than 10 languages were represented. The International and American Student Alliance will also be in the Circle from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

‘You are now entering your mission field’

Oxonians travel to southeast Texas to help with Hurricane Harvey relief efforts



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Oxford locals and Ole Miss alumni Lannie Shackelford (RIGHT) and Harold Wilson (LEFT) work on deconstructing and removing molded furniture from a couple's home last month in Orange, Texas. Shackelford and Wilson, two members of First Baptist Church in Oxford, traveled eight hours by car to help with relief efforts in southeast Texas after Hurricane Harvey devastated the region.

LANA FERGUSON

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ORANGE, Texas – The garbage truck had come to pick up the remnants of the hurricane. It rolled to a stop in front of its next pile.

In one swoop, the massive metal claw grabs two full-size leather couches. They crunch the same way twigs do on the sidewalks in the autumn time. Water, leftover from the hurricane, drips out of the cushions and onto the grass below.

Pieces of the storm are everywhere.

The destroyed belongings are lifted away by the truck, like the Angel of Death carrying away souls.

“It’s not just stuff. It’s a life on the street,” homeowner Bruce Alexander said. “I’m watching all of my stuff being taken away, but otherwise, it’s just sitting outside, smelling bad.”

Alexander is one of the thousands of Texans who have returned to their flooded homes to begin recovery. One of recovery’s first steps is cleaning everything that was damaged during the hurricane and piling it on the curbside for FEMA to take away.

Two Ole Miss alumni who are members of the First Baptist Church in Oxford made the trek eight hours southwest to spend a week helping

with relief efforts in Orange, Texas.

Before the sun fully rose and the Sunday church bells rang, Lannie Shackelford and Harold Wilson packed their silver pickup truck to the brim with construction gloves and goggles, respirator masks and their Bibles. It was time to depart.

This was the second post-Hurricane Harvey trip for Shackelford, who has a background in construction and has worked abroad on mission trips multiple times before.

Wilson, on the other hand, had never experienced anything like this.

“I have lived a really privileged life,” Wilson said. “Not talking about being wealthy or anything like that. I’ve just lived a very easy existence.”

Before moving to Oxford four years ago, Wilson ran a wholesale women’s clothing business out of Dallas and had a showroom in the World Trade Center.

Reports of the turmoil Hurricane Harvey wreaked on his home state kept him up at night.

“I think it was God’s way of saying, ‘Harold Wilson, get off your lazy butt and make a contribution. Do something for somebody other than yourself,’” he said as tears filled his crystal-blue eyes.

Volunteer headquarters

Ten minutes past the bright green “Welcome to Texas” sign and a few left turns later, the men pull into the North Orange Baptist Church. This would be their home for the next week.

They take their bags upstairs to a Sunday school room and prepare their FEMA mattresses for the night. Then, it’s dinnertime: six o’clock sharp every night with a briefing before.

Thomas Nix, a quiet worker, is one of the leaders of the Mississippi Relief Team, a Southern Baptist Convention agency. He runs around headquarters all day, making sure all of the volunteers have what they need and the other workers from the convention are good to go. It’s a busy job, but someone has to do it.

All of the volunteers get to know Nix because he leads the discussions each night and the devotion every morning. His low voice fills the room with hope for the people of Texas and a love for Jesus.

After prayer, everyone eats.

Shackelford retrieves a stack of stapled papers. It’s his and Wilson’s project assignment. Handwritten pages list off the homeowner’s information and the damage the house endured.

Job in hand, the men head off to bed. Tomorrow's an early morning, and there is work to be done.

The first house

First you smell it, and then you see it. The odor of moldy walls, soggy insulation and lost belongings lingers in the air. Everything that was inside their homes now sits on the street. Memories are all they have left.

John and Sybil Fortenberry have been married for more than 46 years. They've been in Orange that whole time. They're high school sweethearts, finish each other's sentences and lead the Calvary Baptist Church together down the road in Deweyville, Texas.

They had planned to weather the storm because their town had never flooded before and they were never told to evacuate.

Once the rain began Friday, no one was sure when it would stop.

Three nights later, as they were falling asleep, John and Sybil could hear the water lapping at the doorways.

"We knew as the night went on and those storms kept coming through, we thought, 'Well, that's not going to be good,'" Sybil said. "Then, we literally were trapped in the neighborhood. There's only one way in and one way out."

The rain was getting heavier, and so were their hearts. It was time to take action, and they retreated to a neighbor's house on higher ground.

They came home as the sun was rising the next day to find 4 inches of water sitting in their hallway. Water should not be underestimated, though; inches can destroy an entire house.

The couple doesn't have a timeline for when its walls will be rebuilt and its house will once again become a home to move back into. John said they've just got to get it done.

"Got to recover. Got to rebuild. Got to work on it," John said. "Got to get your boots pulled up high, get your gum in the center of your mouth and chew hard and get after it."

Shackelford and Wilson pulled their goggles up to their eyes, hooked their masks around their ears and pulled on their gloves.

Hammering and buzzing noises filled the house with sounds of progress.

Back to headquarters

Back at the fellowship hall, workers in yellow shirts keep busy. Texas and American flags hang on the wall, and the blue painter's tape pasted on the glass door at eye level reads, "You are now entering your mission field."

There are phone calls to be answered, food to be cooked, laundry to be washed, a Lord to be served.

Over chicken and dumplings and brown-sugar-bacon-topped green beans, volunteers shared the stories of the work they did and the lives they touched that day.

While the volunteers had been at their assigned houses, the Southern Baptist Convention workers were at headquarters, busy

"It changes everybody's perspective on life, basically how short life is, how things, possessions, can be gone overnight."

Lannie Shackelford
Oxford volunteer



PHOTOS BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

TOP: Mildewed cabinets, drywall, carpets and memories are ripped away from houses and drug to the road to be picked up by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) dump trucks in Orange, Texas. On Monday, Sept. 25, 2017, over three weeks after Hurricane Harvey left the town soaked through, people are still surrounded by the damage. BOTTOM: Sybil and John Fortenberry take a break from cleaning out their house to pose for a picture in Orange, Texas. Their home flooded with a few inches of water after Hurricane Harvey swept through southeast Texas in September.

behind the scenes. They were filling out charts and forms, taking calls and updating the list of completed projects.

The kitchen staff works throughout the day, cleaning up from breakfast, which they woke up at 4 a.m. to prepare, setting out lunch options for volunteers to pack their sandwiches and cooking dinner to feed the hungry stomachs after the sun sets.

Outside, the laundry trailer continues running. Workers clean the dirtied clothes using a meticulous washing process, including mixing vinegar into the detergent to rid the clothes of any mold they might have collected throughout the day.

Next door, hot steam rises from the shower trailer, which

is fully equipped with soap, shampoo and towels. Here, volunteers can wash off the dirt and sweat from the unforgiving Texas sun before they sit down for dinner.

There's something rejuvenating about a full stomach, fresh clothes and a clean body.

Volunteers do their best to help take care of Orange's homeowners, and in return, the people of Southern Baptist Convention do their best to take care of them. If you ask why they do it, they'll tell you, "Jesus."

Another neighbor affected

At night, North Orange Baptist Church serves as a place to bond and a place to rest.

During the day, elementary school-age kids from two of the local schools that

HARVEY

continued from page 9

were damaged during the storm fill the hallways and classrooms.

Taylor Willis, a teacher from Little Cypress Elementary School, has relocated her classroom to the church. But every afternoon, after class is finished and she sends her students home, her day doesn't end.

She leaves school and goes home to continue working on fixing her house so she and her husband, Josh, can move back in from the RV in their driveway.

Fans hum in every room, making sure every last drop is dry. The walls were already cut 4 feet up so new chunks of drywall could fit in with ease.

Peering through the openings were the still sturdy studs. Members of her church had visited earlier in the week and wrote Bible verses along some of them.

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:14" was written in black ink on the stud next to a door.

"I wrote that one," Taylor said, pointing to the top of the doorframe. "It used to hang right there."

Taylor remembers the Tuesday night when she knew the rain wasn't going to stop. When the water first started leaking in, Taylor and Josh piled towels at the doorway until they were sopping wet.

Then, they realized there was nothing they could do to stop the water.

"It just rushes in," she said. "At one point, it felt like a river was going through our house, and we just had to sit back and let it come in."

Josh was sick, and their dog, Cova, was lying on the kitchen island because she was scared of water. Taylor sat in a chair. She felt the water creep up past her ankles, and all she could think of was the possibility of the water levels eventually hitting her waist.

She called 911. No answer. There was nothing they could do until morning.

When the sun rose, Taylor slid on a fluorescent vest she'd found and sat on top of a ladder at the foot of the driveway next to the mailbox. She knew daylight meant rescuers would be coming through.

Boats made small ripples in the water as they slowly passed, each already on a mission to rescue someone else but promising to come back. After more waiting, it was her turn. Taylor, Josh and Cova loaded into a car and watched their neighborhood grow distant in the rearview mirror.

"I just looked and my husband, and he was like, 'I just feel so hopeless,'" Taylor said.

It was four or five days before Taylor could come home. When she did, there was no time to grieve. It was time to get to work.

"I wanted to just bawl



my eyes out but didn't have time to do it," Taylor said. "It was an overwhelming feeling seeing our house like that after the flood. It's incredible what water can do over time when it sits."

Taylor, like many other Texans, has also had to deal with the mental and emotional toll the hurricane left in its tracks.

"It's depressing when everything in your life falls apart and you can't go anywhere to find just somewhere where you can be normal," Taylor said.

Although these weeks have been tough, Taylor said even if they didn't have the walls in their house, they had each other, and everything would be OK.

"I don't like the sound of rain. It used to be relaxing, but not anymore," Taylor said.

Changed lives

Wilson said that all he could think about while he lay restless in bed the night before he and Shackelford left Oxford was how he could get out of going to volunteer in Orange, Texas. He's glad he didn't, though.

"I got to tell you something," Wilson said. "It's been two of the greatest days of my life."

As hard as he tries, he can't find the words to describe the experience to his wife when he talks on the phone with her each night.

"She said, 'Why are you so emotional about it?' and I said, 'Because their life is out on the street, and what's not on



PHOTOS BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

TOP: A FEMA employee scoops up soaked furniture and other belongings left at the road as trash. BOTTOM: Thomas Nix, a leader at the Southern Baptist Convention that provided relief to Hurricane Harvey survivors in Orange, Texas, gives a morning devotion after breakfast before the teams leave to clean out houses that were affected.

the street, that's what Lannie and I are going to do in the next week," Wilson said.

Wilson said his life changed in the last month. He was baptized again the Sunday before he left for Orange.

"It's me having to learn that on a scale of 1 to 10, I'm not the 10," Wilson said. "I lived my life thinking I was the 10, and I've come to realize that I'm the 1."

He's trying to develop a servant's heart, as his wife calls it.

Wilson used to throw money at a problem, thinking that would make it go away. Now, he sees that's not the case.

"These are born and bred Texans, and they're wonderful people, but they need help," Wilson said. "They need money, but they need people. They need volunteers."

For Shackelford, when he retired in January, he knew he would set out to do some sort of mission work.

"I've done a lot of this, and I knew when I retired I was going to do as much of it as I was physically able to do," Shackelford said. "So, it wasn't something that came overnight."

He said no one can witness a disaster area and it not have any effect on him.

"You'd have to have blinders on," he said. "It changes everybody's perspective on life, basically how short life is, how things, possessions, can be gone overnight."

Shackelford has learned that taking care of others is everyone's responsibility.

He doesn't mind the long days and hard work much, because he knows it needs to be done.

"Myself and Harold are close to the same age, so a long day is hard, but it's a difference in what you do during the day that makes it more or less worth it," Shackelford said. "I've never regretted it. I might be tired, but I'm not that tired."



GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY: EMILY HOFFMAN

To Adams, art, God and love are *sacred*



PHOTOS BY: DEVNA BOSE

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Jonathan Kent Adams has always seen life in technicolor.

“He saw beauty and color in everything, almost like he had a kaleidoscope view of life,” his mother, Ann, said about him as a child. “His heart was full of love for everyone.”

And it still is. Ole Miss graduate Adams sees the beauty and love in the world and pursues it. For the parts of the world that aren’t so beautiful, Adams tries his best to make them so.

His younger brother, Bailey, said Adams’ love and optimism has encouraged him throughout his life.

“I couldn’t have grown up with a better brother,” Bailey said. “He’s there to pick you up and lift you up. You can find beauty within anything as long as you look, and that’s exactly what (Jonathan) does.”

Over time, Adams learned to express his love through art. One of his first pieces was for a grieving mother.

“My mom works in neonatal intensive care. A baby passed away, and I made art for the family and got a thank-you note,” he said. “I realized how art could touch people and had power. Not only that, but art, even though it was playing around, was an escape for me.”

Adams realized how much he needed that escape as the years passed.

Growing up in Yazoo, a few miles outside of Jackson, Adams knew he wasn’t like other boys. He remembered classmates in elementary school who would call him “girly” or “sissy.”

“I knew growing up that I was attracted to guys. I thought that would diminish, I thought everyone had those feelings, and you just eventually became heterosexual,” he said. “I needed to escape from always think-

ing about being gay and no one understanding.”

As Adams struggled with his sexuality, religion became an increasingly fundamental part of who he was, and intertwined with that was his own assumed sin.

“God became a big part of my life starting in early junior high, and so did noticing my family wasn’t perfect and I wasn’t perfect,” he said. “I thought that even thinking things were sin. It started all of this. It wasn’t self-hate, because I knew to see myself as someone loved because God loved me, but there was this part of me that I closed off. I always felt unknown.”



In high school, Adams helped design the yearbook, sang and played basketball. Art remained in his peripheral vision. It was something he was embarrassed to fully embrace, but when he came to college and took Introduction to Art as an elective, his professor encouraged him to fully pursue art.

As a student, Adams was the kind of person in class who would stay hours afterward. If an assignment deadline was looming, he would be there working past midnight. In his first painting class on campus, the instructor noticed this work ethic and raw talent and pushed Adams to become a painter.

“I noticed that it could heal, but I didn’t really start finding that in myself until college,” he said.

Adams first labeled himself as a gay person while here at

Ole Miss. Even though he was beginning to accept his sexuality, he continued to think of himself as a gay person who would never be in a relationship because it seemed impossible.

“The churches I had been to, that was their stance,” he said.

Adams also became very involved in YoungLife, a student-run Christian organization on campus, while in college. He was a leader in the group, but sophomore year, after he told the area director that he was gay, Adams was told to step down as a leader.

“I’ve forgiven him now, but the whole year after that, I was very depressed. If I ever thought

I was going to kill myself, it was during that semester,” he said. “All of my friends were in that community. Not all of them agreed with that decision, but to be excommunicated, in a way, was really difficult.”

Adams knew art had power to heal people, but it was during sophomore year that he experienced that healing firsthand. He spent the following summer in New York taking painting classes, and while in the city, he began going to the Catholic church near his dorm.

“I would see a gay couple there. I emailed Sarah Moses, who taught me religion, and asked, ‘Gay people go to church together?’” he said. “That started a journey as seeing myself as someone accepted and loved by God, not someone who had to continue suffering.”

After praying daily for God to

take away his sinful thoughts, it was difficult for Adams to rethink his negative view of the gay part of his persona, and it is still something he is learning to do.

“It wasn’t a revelation. I didn’t just think, ‘I’m a happy, gay Christian now.’ I wish it was that easy, being touched by God and having no more struggles,” he said. “I am still learning to love all of me. It’s a journey.”

And so is his art. In the beginning, his pieces started out as abstract shapes and initials — things Adams described as “not anything serious.” However, after his struggles sophomore year and coming out to more people afterward, his art became an immediate release for his complicated emotions.

“I look back at that art, and it’s kind of dark. I can look at my color palette and the things I painted and the words I chose to include, and I can see what I was going through,” he said. “I can look through everything I’ve made and see where I’ve been in those moments.”

Adams’ art made a significant shift the moment he met his boyfriend, Blake Summers.

Claire Whitehurst, one of Adams’ peers who encouraged him to pursue art, said, “I remember when he met Blake. A spark was kind of in his eyes. I remember he came up to me and was kind of a little timid and said, ‘I met a boy.’ There was a sense of ease and calm about him that I had never noticed before. That was when his work really started changing and growing and got more expressive.”

As Adams has grown more confident in who he is, his art has become his voice.

“I’m not a great public speaker, that’s not my gift. My gift is storytelling through an image,” he said.

Adams created an installation for a sculpture class exploring the relationship between his religion and his sexuality, a

theme he later explored in his thesis show. For his installation, Adams hung his paintings in a blacked-out room around a centerpiece made of a Bible and letters from friends who disagreed with his sexuality.

“There was audio of me singing and playing the piano to God, and I added layers of preachers’ anti-gay sermons,” he said. “People were coming from different parts of campus to see my little undergraduate art installation. It was the first time I saw people relate to my art. They had to think beyond something. When they walked in, they were challenged. I like for my art to do that.”

The conflict between his sexuality and religion is partially why Adams decided to stay in Mississippi to continue his art career. He said if there is any place where his art can challenge people while also making sense, it is certainly in a place like Mississippi.

“It’s a little messed up and needs a little work, but it’s home,” Adams said. “It would be easier to move, but we’re in such an important time in history as far as civil rights. I think it’s important to stay. We’re not all called to be someone trying to make things better, but I feel like I want to do my best.”

Adams has a studio in Water Valley, and on his commutes there from Oxford, he is often struck by the beauty of the world around him. He stops sometimes in the middle of the drive to capture the landscape, which has been inspiring him recently.

“With the election and shootings and everything really, when I get in the car and leave my phone and drive out there, it’s a freedom that I feel is like a prayer to me,” he said. “I’ve just pulled over and painted some paintings on the side of the road. Maybe it’s that when I see those fields, I see the freedom of being a kid and running across the road to the field.”

The most important thing to Adams, both as an artist and a human being, is being present and being honest to himself and to others.

“That’s what I’ve tried to do with my art, allow people a peek in. I want to be honest and truthful about my experience as a gay person, and I hope when I create art, people see that it’s about that,” he said. “Interacting with people and letting them know that you’re gay and that you’re OK with it, even if they’re not OK with it — I’m sure that will affect people over the long term.”

Though Adams is still figuring out how to love himself for who he is, the love he has for his community, his God, his family and his boyfriend is unconditional and unapologetically expressed through his art and his humanity.

“I never thought it was possible to love God and love Blake at the same time, but here I am.”

PODCASTS of the week

ETHEL MWEDZIWENDIRA
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Staying well-informed on global issues can be challenging with news constantly changing and updating. It can be hard to stay up to date on the latest events without being glued to the internet, whether it's news in the U.S., the Middle East or things happening locally. Keep up with these political podcasts that range from daily to biweekly, to keep you informed and entertained, without taking over your life.

THE DAILY



PHOTO COURTESY: THE NEW YORK TIMES

Start your morning commute with "The Daily." Powered by The New York Times and hosted by Michael Barbaro, "The Daily" is a quick and informative way to get your daily dose of current events. Like any podcast with a witty host, it's hard to resist Barbaro's vocals, personality and interview techniques. In just 20 minutes, the podcast highlights the latest headlines and the biggest topics every day. It focuses on more than just politics and expands on in-depth stories and coverage from The New York Times. Recent episodes have explored the Roy Moore accusation, the GOP tax plans and Steve Bannon's war on the Republican Party. Barbaro presents the facts without bias and gets straight to the point. By delving into important information in news, he also brings insight and analysis.

NPR POLITICS



PHOTO COURTESY: NPR POLITICS

"NPR Politics" is a successor of NPR's very own "All Politics." Featuring political reporters from NPR, the podcast focuses on the week's most important, groundbreaking political news. The reporters rotate each week and provide weekly roundups for those who may not want to spend an eternity reading up on the latest news. Each reporter on the show weighs in on important issues and provides opinions. Despite personal biases at times, the opinions shared make the content engaging, especially when it concerns critical decisions being made in D.C. During the 2016 presidential election, the podcast became a quick source to find out what was happening with the candidates and how the campaign process worked. The show is a preeminent synopsis of practical politics.

INTELLIGENCE MATTERS

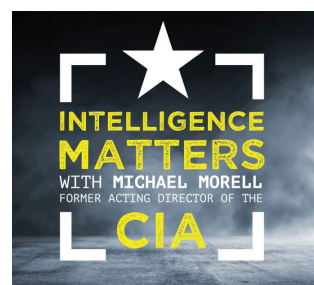


PHOTO COURTESY: THE CIPHER BRIEF

Michael Morell, former deputy director of the CIA, has found a new way to stay engaged and inform the public, and it's through podcasts. Morell is a significant figure with an extensive knowledge of foreign policy. His efforts have played a role in U.S. counterterrorism efforts for more than two decades. In partnership with CBS, Morrell speaks with prominent leaders in the intelligence community about national security within the U.S. This podcast brings a different perspective on what's happening both abroad and domestically, and the conversations with Morrell are insightful. If you've wondered about what happens behind

closed doors in the CIA, this podcast gives you a glimpse into that – kind of. Each week Morell discusses salient issues like National Geospatial Intelligence's role in the Osama bin Laden raid, the analysis behind the Iran nuclear deal and what the Trump administration is doing to decertify the deal and, most importantly, the escalating crisis with North Korea.

PANTSUIT POLITICS



PHOTO COURTESY: PANTSUITPOLITICSSHOW.COM

"Pantsuit Politics" is all about no shouting, no insults and plenty of nuance. Hosted by two women from opposite sides of the political spectrum, Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers, the show provides listeners with each host's views on politics and news. Though they have opposing perspectives, it's interesting to listen to both hosts converse about political issues. I recently started listening to the podcast after the Tongo Tongo ambush in Niger killed a U.S. soldier. Though details are still emerging about the situation, Holland and Silvers provide a comprehensive look at U.S. involvement in Niger since the early 2000s. Furthermore, they take a look at the rise of extremism in the African country.

Their insight proves to be both constructive and respectful, and twice a week, they agree or disagree and still maintain their political discourse.

How to host the ultimate Friendsgiving

GEORGIA HEATHCOTE
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Thanksgiving: a whole holiday dedicated to food, family and festivities — in that order. However, for those of us who can't spend it with our nearest and dearest, here are some ideas on how to host the ultimate, stress-free Friendsgiving, recreating your home away from home.

1 Make it a potluck dinner: Hosting a dinner party can be a daunting task. Not only do you want to provide a feast fit for a king, but there is also a plethora of other things to organize in order to transform your home into a Pinterest-perfect Thanksgiving headquarters. A potluck dinner not only keeps your food costs down and gives you some extra time to look in the mirror, but it also prevents any conflicts about who wants what kind of potato or pie. It's simple — if you want to eat it, then you bring it. This way, your guests can bring their own tastes of home and not feel cheated about not having gravy the way their mommas make it. This also means you don't need to worry about anyone with a dietary restriction. Because let's be real here, Thanksgiving isn't really Thanksgiving if there's no turkey, but your friend can still enjoy his homemade tofu that you had the pleasure of not preparing.

2 Make decorations out of what you have: Got any old wine bottles lying around? You're in college — you definitely do. Don't throw them out just yet; instead, use them as candle holders or flower vases. For extra ambiance, you can even burn the candles ahead of time so the wax drips down the side of the bottles. Presto — atmosphere in an instant.

3 Create a group playlist: Include your guests in a joint Spotify playlist and get them to add any songs that remind them of being home for the holidays. You don't need to worry about people judging your music tastes, and all the guests get to listen to a little bit of what they want. Ideal.

4 Get the games going: Though we love our friends, we've all endured those awkward moments of silence when conversation dies at the dinner table. Have no fear — here is a fail-safe dinner party game to resolve any awkward silences. Get your guests to secretly send you their favorite songs. You will be the only person who knows which song belongs to which player. Instead of using name cards for place settings, buy everyone a wooden spoon and write his or her name and "Thanksgiving 2017" on it. This will double as a microphone later. Play the playlist and have everyone try to guess who sent in what song. If you guess the right person, that guest will have to stand up and give his or her best rendition of the song into the "microphone." Not only is this game a great icebreaker and solution to awkwardness, but your guests also walk away with a small souvenir from the night to remind them of what a fantastic host you were.



Budding rapper turns pain, aggression into tracks



PHOTO BY: DEVNA BOSE

Southaven native Devante Malone poses in the Grove. He never thought he would make music, but after a football injury derailed his college athlete plans, he released much of his pent-up frustration through music.

JORDAN MAURY

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Devante Malone is a sport and recreation management major who aspires to leave the University of Mississippi as not only a scholar but also a bonafide rap artist his hometown of Southaven can be proud of.

The young aspiring artist has already released two full-length projects on Apple Music under the stage name Smoov. After listening to his newest album, "Letter from the Heart," it's evident this guy has talent. Smoov raps with a certain charismatic charm that would make you believe he was born to do it.

But music wasn't his first love.

"To be honest, I didn't really think I was going to be making music," Smoov said. "I was firm in my belief that I would be playing football."

Rap, at first, was nothing more than something Smoov and his teammates would jokingly do in their free time, but a career-ending injury would change that.

Smoov's dreams of becoming a collegiate football player were derailed, his future was uncertain and his outlook on life was bleak.

"I had so much pain and aggression built up after my injury and didn't know what else to do," he said.

The answer to Smoov's dilemma came from conversations with friends who suggested he take making music seriously. He was sold. Smoov immersed himself in

his music by writing songs and recording beats.

The 21-year-old has come a long way from his simple beginnings. The sound quality on "Letter from the Heart" far exceeds anything he has previously recorded. Then again, that's what happens when a musician goes from recording things with minimal equipment in his hallway bathroom to being surrounded by talent in a Memphis-based recording

"I found myself crying at one point because I was putting so much soul and realness into it. It was the first time I experienced something like that.

Devante Malone
Rapper

studio, One Sound Studio.

"One Sound is sort of a staple for Southern artists," Smoov said. "I have people ask me all the time, 'Where do you record?' I don't hesitate to tell them because I didn't have too many people pointing me in the right direction to get my music where it is now. It's only

right for me to point them in the right direction."

Smoov's humble and honest nature can be seen not only in his actions but also in his music. On the song "Come By," Smoov raps candidly about a failed relationship in which he gave his all. Listeners can almost feel the regret as if it is their own.

When Smoov makes music, he's not doing it just for the sake of making music. He wants to pour his feelings into his tracks for the audience to feel, like he did on the song "Letter from the Heart."

"I found myself crying at one point because I was putting so much soul and realness into it," Smoov said. "It was the first time I experienced something like that."

The openness Smoov shows in his music comes as no surprise, because he keeps artists like Kevin Gates, J. Cole and Drake in his listening rotation.

With the help of his producers TGlock and Fadaway-jay, Smoov doesn't appear to be slowing down anytime soon. He's already performed live multiple times in his hometown and had a gig at The Lyric Oxford last spring.

Even though his name is relatively small now, Smoov has all the tools to become bigger. He's so versatile that matching the right flow or hook to a beat comes with ease. There's no doubt he'll continue growing into something Southaven can brag about.

D A A A T R I G H H H T E N T P R E S E N T S

Smoov LETTER FROM THE HEART



PHOTO COURTESY: DEVANTE MALONE



PHOTO BY: DEVNA BOSE

Malone has already released two albums on Apple Music under his stage name, "Smoov."

HUNGRY FOR SUCCESS

Guard Breein Tyree renews drive for NCAA relevancy

SAM HARRES

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Sophomore guard Breein Tyree grew up running around a household full of athletes. Someone was always playing catch, kicking a ball or practicing for the next big game.

"I used to always tell the fellas, 'Listen, don't put any holes in my walls. I want no holes in the walls,'" Clarice Tyree, Breein's mother, said.

Each of Tyree's three older brothers earned Division I offers for soccer, basketball or football, and his father, Mark Tyree, earned third-team All-American honors as a lacrosse player at Rutgers in 1979.

Clearly, the Tyrees were doing something right.

"We were always outside, always getting into something and always competing with each other," Tyree said. "As I grew up watching my brothers going at each other, it kind of rubbed off on me, and now I hold that with me wherever I go."

Adding to the Tyree family resume, Breein's cousin David Tyree cemented a spot in New York Giants history after making the infamous "helmet catch" during 2008's Super Bowl.

"It's just what he's grown up with," Clarice said. "From his father's background and family background."

Sports have always taken center stage in Tyree's life. But if not for his mother, his career could have followed a vastly different path.

The sophomore from Somerset, New Jersey, spent time in high school traveling through Europe, representing the United States in an international youth soccer tournament until the team ultimately lost to Spain.

"I used to play soccer like I play basketball," Tyree said. "That was my No. 1 sport as a kid. What took me away from soccer was my mom. She wasn't having it."

After Tyree returned from Europe, his mother pushed him toward more traditional sporting opportunities.

Tyree shifted his efforts toward football and basketball. As one of New Jersey's top quarterback recruits, he received and declined various scholarship opportunities.

"He had to decide which area he wanted to focus his attention on, and it ended up being basketball," Clarice said.

Tyree had fallen in love with the court, and by senior year, top programs had fallen in love with him.

For much of his recruitment process, the University of Southern California and Kansas State led the way. Ole Miss, sitting more than 1,000 miles



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Sophomore guard Breein Tyree is pressured by an opponent while driving the ball to the basket during the exhibition game against North Alabama last Sunday. The Rebels started the season with a 94-53 win.

away from Somerset, entered the sweepstakes late. Yet, by chance, former Ole Miss assistant coach Bill Armstrong came across Tyree at a tournament in Atlanta.

"Breein was playing in Atlanta, and coach Armstrong had been given a lead to go over and see this guard Breein Tyree," Clarice said.

The Rebels needed a young guard to fill graduating All-SEC guard Stefan Moody's shoes. Tyree fit the bill, and after numerous visits from head coach Andy Kennedy, he signed his national letter of intent.

"Ole Miss was a little late in the recruiting process just because of where I was, but once they got on me, they stayed on me," Tyree said. "They were up at my school twice a month, and you know, he (Andy Kennedy) was diligent, and he got the job done."

Once he arrived in Oxford, Tyree made quick work of landing a starting spot in Kennedy's lineup. His upbringing, Clarice claims, helped Tyree earn his place.

"Whatever it is that (Tyree and his brothers) were doing, whether they were throwing the lacrosse ball or throwing the football or on the basket-

ball court, they were very competitive," Clarice said. "Breein couldn't catch a break as the youngest. Those were the rules. If you can't hang, you've got to go in the house."

Lacking a veteran guard last season, Kennedy originally opted to start Miami transfer Deandre Burnett as the primary ball handler. Tyree worked to prove himself and eventually pushed Burnett back into his more natural shooting guard spot, landing himself in the starting five.

What fans last season didn't know, however, is that Tyree earned his spot while dealing with a chronic knee injury.

"If I would have come into last year healthy, maybe it would have been different," Tyree said. "But I'm 100 percent ready this year."

And he's proving that already. In the first two games of this season, Tyree has added 17 points and seven assists in just 44 minutes of play.

"He's now healthy and confident, and he's got that experience," Kennedy said. "He's probably taken the biggest step of anyone on our team."

Tyree fought through last season's on-and-off knee pain to post surprisingly solid numbers. He averaged 19.1 minutes and 7.3 points per game. But



PHOTO COURTESY: CLARICE TYREE

Breein Tyree is pictured with his brothers. From left: Sean, 9 years old; Breein, 2; Michael (above), 13; and Jevon, 6.

Tyree's scoring stats don't tell the whole story.

After playing 10 minutes or less through his first six Ole Miss games, Tyree's stats skyrocketed down the stretch. Over the Rebels' final six regular-season games, he averaged 16 points per game on 43.58 percent field goal shooting.

Tyree's late push, while impressive, failed to carry the Rebels past Georgia Tech in the quarterfinals of the 2017 National Invitation Tournament. After defeating No. 1 seed Syracuse 85-80, the Rebels dropped a 74-66 result to the Yellow Jackets, ending their postseason ambitions. That did not sit well with Tyree, who hopes to capture the NCAA's attention this season.

"What I want to get accomplished is creating an identity for this team and myself and earning some respect in the SEC," Tyree said. "The polls have us really low, and we just want to show that we deserve to be in the top tier of the SEC and that we deserve a chance to make the NCAA Tournament."

As part of that push for national relevancy, Tyree plans to step into an even greater leadership role this season.

"He understands that, as a leader, you are always to be a believer," Clarice said. "Because if the leader doesn't believe, how can the troops believe?"

Tyree's mom believes in him and his ability to lead the team, and Tyree is beginning to believe, too.

"I feel like I'm a natural-born leader," Tyree said. "That's what I came to Ole Miss to do. I came to become a leader of this team and do something special."

2016-2017 SEASON BY THE NUMBERS: FIRST SIX GAMES VERSUS LAST SIX GAMES

STEALS

0

STEALS

6

POINTS

0

POINTS

96

MINUTES

20

MINUTES

183

ILLUSTRATION BY: ETHEL MWEDZIWENDIRA

Rebel seniors prepare for pivotal final home game

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This confusing season of up-and-down Ole Miss football has seen some highs in recent weeks following Jordan Ta'amu's takeover at quarterback after Shea Patterson suffered a season-ending knee injury. An arguably more effective offense under Ta'amu is currently No. 16 in total offense and No. 6 in passing offense nationally.

After a rout in which the Rebels chalked up 50 points against the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns, the offense looks to continue this hot streak at home against SEC opponent Texas A&M. Of the chaos Ole Miss has encountered in 2017, its bowl ban is perhaps the most unfortunate aspect. The ban guarantees this will be not only the last home game of the Rebels' season but also the last game in red and blue for the 18 rostered seniors.

Among those seniors is running back Jordan Wilkins, who continues to play a role in this increasingly hot offense. After the run game struggled for legitimacy throughout the season's early weeks, Wilkins fired up during the dreadful 66-3 loss at Alabama. Since



FILE PHOTO: ARIEL COBBERT

Senior defensive end Marquis Haynes (38) battles with an Auburn defender during a game earlier this season. Auburn won 44-23.

Week 4, he has tallied 814 total yards from scrimmage and five rushing touchdowns. For Wilkins, the bowl ban is not on his mind as he looks forward to Saturday.

"I want to go out with a big one," he said. "For all the seniors and the coaches, we'll be ready. Not going to try to think about, you know, this

being the last one too much, just go out and play my game and don't overthink it and just be comfortable out there."

While the offense is hanging with the very best in the country, the Rebel defense is pretty low on the NCAA ladder. Throughout the season, an inability to limit big gains,

struggle to stop the run, penalties and lack of discipline have haunted the gritty group.

However, this defense has shown flashes of greatness that make Ole Miss a volatile group to watch. A turnover on downs or forced fumble could precede a 70-yard touchdown run or a prog-

ress-erasing penalty. Among this inconsistent group is consistently dominant defensive end Marquis Haynes.

Haynes' authoritative defensive play shows that — he has recorded 7 1/2 sacks, 39 tackles and a forced fumble in only nine of 10 games. For the senior captain, this emotional weekend is an opportunity to shine in his final outing in front of his home crowd.

"I've been talking to most of the seniors, and we know what this means to us and how much we fought through to get here," he said. "It's emotional for some of us because we want to give it our all and make sure we leave the team the right way and make sure we leave a positive influence and a high standard for the seniors coming in behind us. Everyone wants to do good for coach Luke."

In what could be the defining moments for head coach Matt Luke's future at Ole Miss, the seniors and the rest of the team will be looking to put on a superstar performance. The final home game of a whirlwind season kicks off at 6 p.m. this Saturday and comes against a quality Texas A&M team.

Texas A&M's high-powered defense visits Oxford

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This weekend, Ole Miss will take on Texas A&M for the sixth time since the Aggies joined the SEC in 2012. Ole Miss has won the last three matchups, but with both teams' head coaches hoping to keep their jobs at the end of this season, this game could prove interesting.

Texas A&M has weapons on both sides of the ball and an excess of young talent, but it is currently sitting at 6-4 overall with a 3-3 record in the SEC.

The Aggies have drastically underperformed this season, and as a result, head coach Kevin Sumlin is sitting on the hot seat coming into the weekend.

Fresh off an impressive 55-14 win over New Mexico, Sumlin's offense will be tested against a Rebel team that has slowly turned around its defense throughout the course of the season.

The biggest threat on the Texas A&M offense is wide receiver Christian Kirk, who was recently placed at No. 20 on Mel Kiper's Big Board for the

upcoming NFL draft. Kirk has accounted for 2,512 yards on 209 catches for 22 touchdowns in his three years thus far. He is also tied for the ninth-most career punt return touchdowns with six, making him a threat on special teams.

Texas A&M also boasts a stout defense, one that depends on generating big plays in crucial moments. In contrast to previous years, defensive coordinator John Chavis pulled a 180-degree turn, and in his third year in the position, the maroon and white rank first in sacks in the SEC, which does not bode well for the Rebels.

On the opposite side of the ball, Ole Miss' offense has exploded and is ranked No. 16 in the nation with more than 4,000 yards. Quarterback Jordan Ta'amu lights up opposing defenses and has thrown for at least 350 yards in each of his two starts, making him the second Ole Miss QB to accomplish such a feat. When combined with the efforts of now-injured quarterback Shea Patterson, Ole Miss is ranked No. 6 nationally in total passing offense, in large part due to the Nasty Wide Outs, a nickname given to the Rebel wide receivers. The corps has certainly made the transition easier for



PHOTO BY: TAYLAR TEEL

D.K. Metcalf, Jordan Ta'amu and A.J. Brown huddle to review a play during the game against the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns last Saturday.

Ta'amu. Ole Miss is one of only two schools in the country to have at least three receivers with six or more touchdowns this season.

A.J. Brown, a member of the Nasty Wide Outs, has dominated all season long and is ranked No. 1 in the SEC for receiving touchdowns and No. 7 nationally for receiving yards per game with 101.5. However, the Aggies have a talented secondary that is capable of going up and high-pointing the ball alongside receivers. A&M safety Armani Watts has four interceptions, the most in the SEC, and is second on the team in tackles.

On the ground, Rebel running back Jordan Wilkins may be averaging 6.2 yards a carry this season, but A&M's resilient defensive line and linebacker combination can shut down the run before it gets started. Inside linebacker Otaro Alaka has recorded 11 tackles for loss this season, which places him at second in the SEC. Fellow linebacker Tyrel Dodson leads the defense in total tackles with 84 and is fifth in the conference at 10 tackles for loss.

Ole Miss' prolific offense will go to battle with A&M's fireplug defense at 6 p.m. Saturday in Vaught-Hemingway Stadium.

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Bjork confident amid NCAA, coaching dilemmas

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The Ole Miss football program is in a unique situation.

As the Rebels await the final verdict in a yearslong NCAA scandal, they are also in the business of finding a new head coach. Former play-caller Hugh Freeze resigned from the program in July, following a “pattern of personal misconduct,” which included using a university-issued phone to call a number associated with an escort service. Although Ole Miss’ football program lacks stability at the moment, athletic director Ross Bjork said he believes the university can still attract the right man for job.

“What I’ve sold is resources, a beautiful place (and) a university that’s surging in many areas,” Bjork said. “It may be tough right now, but look at the possibilities to get right back on track.”

Bjork cites the fact that the Rebels have enjoyed success recently as well as in the past. He does admit, however, that consistency has been an issue throughout the program’s storied history.

Since Ole Miss football got its start in 1893, only five head coaches have stayed with the team for more than five seasons. Since 1995, Ole Miss has had six different men running its football program. That is a trend Bjork hopes to reverse in the coming years, especially given that Ole Miss currently awaits sanctions resulting from 21 NCAA allegations.

“Our challenge has been maintaining and being con-



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

In his office Monday, Ross Bjork speaks on NCAA allegations and the search for a future head coach.

sistent,” Bjork said. “Our peaks have been really good, but then we bottom out pretty darn fast. To me, that’s very important: stability and consistency.”

He said the team has finished with at least seven wins in 12 of the last 21 seasons. To avoid a “bottoming out” period for a head coach and program, Bjork believes patience is key.

“If we give the right kind of support and we’re in this thing together, then a longer-term approach, to me, is (healthier),” Bjork said. “I’d rather build it to last versus build it fast and then it falls apart.”

According to Bjork, Ole Miss still has a number of

options on the table for its new head coach, including current interim head coach Matt Luke. Luke played football at Ole Miss from 1995 to 1998 and had been an assistant coach under Hugh Freeze since 2012.

“I think (Luke) has done a great job,” Bjork said. “He has made it worth it to these players to keep fighting. I think he’s done a tremendous job. We’ve said it from day one: Who better to be a candidate than Matt Luke?”

With someone like Luke — who has deep ties to Ole Miss — currently leading the program, Bjork said the coaching position boils down to more than just wins and losses, but a fit for

the program.

“If he’s the right guy, he’s the right guy, bottom line,” Bjork said. “It’s not wins and losses. It’s not anything to do with the final two games.”

The looming NCAA investigation has draped itself over Oxford like a dark cloud. The Rebels face almost two dozen NCAA allegations, 15 of which are of the Level I variety — the most severe, according to the association’s bylaws. Although Bjork is still awaiting a response from the NCAA’s Committee on Infractions, he said the closure of that day, regardless of the penalties, will be a bright day for Ole Miss Ath-

letics.

“(The NCAA investigation) has been a barrage of negative recruiting towards our program,” Bjork said. “To kind of withstand all of that has been really tough. One of the things that will help is we can say, ‘This is the final report.’ There’s no question that the day of getting that report will be a day of clarity, relief and moving forward in many ways for this program and the university.”

Ole Miss hosts Texas A&M this Saturday before traveling to Mississippi State for the Egg Bowl on Thanksgiving Day.

Win Ole Miss Football Tickets

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