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Alumna Hopes to Assist Students with Disabilities

Graham makes gift to support services, increase awareness, honor family

JULY 2, 2016 BY TINA HAHN

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Tana Graham, left, has paid tribute to family members, including son O'Keefe Graham and sister-in-law Jane Kerr Nance, with a new endowment for Student Disability Services and the tennis program at the University of Mississippi. Photo by Bill Dabney

OXFORD, Miss. – Tana Graham believes the more successful students are in their college studies, the more successful they can be in their professional careers. That's one thought behind her new gift to support the **Office of Student Disability Services** at the **University of Mississippi**.

The Oxford resident also hopes the gift helps erase the stigma that may exist regarding student disabilities as well as recognizes the impact SDS had in her children's lives when they attended Ole Miss.

The Graham-Person Endowment is the first established through the **University of Mississippi Foundation** to provide support to SDS. The gift memorializes Graham's father-in-law, Bubber Graham, and parents Milt and Louise Person, and honors her mother-in-law, Jane Graham, and the families of son O'Keefe Graham and daughter Tan Burroughs.

The Graham-Person Endowment is designated for awareness, mentoring, orientation, campus programming and funding needs that arise with SDS. Seventy percent of the endowment is directed to SDS, while the other 30 percent of the gift will support the tennis programs in **Ole Miss athletics**, a nod to the family's longtime participation in the sport.

Among students who are served by SDS are those with learning disabilities, ADD/ADHA, mobility limitations or other physical limitations, who are blind, low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, or who have psychological or neurological conditions, and/or chronic illnesses.

"There are so many avenues for help and assistance through the Student Disability Services," said Graham, who earned an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Ole Miss. "Private support given to Student Disability Services can make a tremendous difference in the lives of students."

The SDS office ensures equal access to a quality education for qualified students with disabilities through the provision of reasonable academic accommodations that support university standards and academic integrity. SDS provides classroom accommodations to all students who disclose a disability, request accommodations and meet eligibility criteria.

Students with disabilities are served in much the same way as other students on campus.

"Some individuals are uncomfortable when they hear the word 'disability,' but everything in SDS is completely confidential," said Graham, who is not only an advocate for SDS but also a staff member. "There are no disclosures to professors or even parents when a student qualifies for our services. I love working in Student Disability Services where I feel that I am also giving back to help students.

"When graduation time comes around, the SDS staff members love to look at the commencement program and see all of our students' names and know that the students have accomplished so much. One of the reasons I chose to honor family members through this endowment is that I know it will make a positive impact, and I know it will go on forever."

UM policy provides for reasonable accommodation to be made for students with verified disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis as specified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. SDS not only takes an individualized approach when providing services – as each student is impacted differently based upon his or her diagnosis and approve accommodations on an individualized basis, said Stacey Reyecraft, director of the SDS.

"People tend to discount the existence of a disability if they can't see it," the director said. "Likely 11 (percent) to 15 percent of a student body could use our services, but only 4 (percent) to 5 percent

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Students Learn 'Real Politics' in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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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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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 abate. The Federal Reserve's

actually turns to SDS.

"We continually try to build awareness for our services, and Tana's gift will certainly help. We are seeing the first generation of students who have received accommodations since before grade school, so general awareness is increasing. High school counselors are the key, we believe, to encouraging students to continue with disability services through their college years.

"We are very excited to have this first endowment established by Tana," Reycraft said. "This generous support means a great deal to our students and to our program."

The other portion of Graham's gift, directed to the university's tennis programs, speaks to her family's longtime participation in the sport as well as their friendship with tennis players at her alma mater.

"Tennis has a special place in my heart," said Graham who grew up in Greenwood with five older brothers and sisters and one younger brother, and lived as an adult in Jackson for many years.

"Both of my children were state champions as high school tennis players, and my parents and I played. As a tennis fan, I have become friends with Ole Miss tennis players including Mira Radu from Romania. After she graduated from Ole Miss and married, I served as her 'mother of the bride.'"

Matt Mossberg, associate athletics director for development and major gifts, expressed appreciation for Graham's support.

"Tennis is such a great sport, one that individuals can enjoy all their lives. We are grateful for Tana Graham's thoughtful gift that will strengthen our tennis programs for future generations of players."

Gifts from individuals and organizations are welcome. To support the offerings at Ole Miss, send a check to the University of Mississippi Foundation with Student Disability Services noted in the memo line to 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. For more information on making gifts to SDS, contact Angela Barlow Brown at 662-915-3182 or abarlow@olemiss.edu.

For more information on Student Disability Services, contact Stacey Reycraft at 662-915-5972 or reycraft@olemiss.edu. For more information on giving to Ole Miss athletics, contact Matt Mossberg at 662-915-7160 or mossberg@olemiss.edu.

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