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## An Era Passes

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## An Era Passes

### Eassons retire aprons after two-decade tailgate service to UM engineering family

NOVEMBER 20, 2018 BY **BILL DABNEY**



Greg and Darlene Easson have cooked out at School of Engineering tailgates for 20 years. Photo by Bill Dabney

Time is money.

If the adage is accurate, Greg and Darlene Easson have, by now, made a major gift to the University of Mississippi **School of Engineering**.

For the past 20 years, the Oxford couple has spent football-weekend Friday nights shopping and cooking, preparing to serve the next day's breakfast and lunch in the Circle, pre- and postgame, to hundreds of members of the School of Engineering's extended family.

"When we started out, we were just cooking about three-dozen burgers for a few friends on a Weber grill that we carried up here. Then it got bigger and bigger," said Greg Easson, the school's associate dean for research and graduate programs, director of the **Mississippi Mineral Resources Institute**, and professor of geology and geological engineering.

"On a normal weekend, when we have a pregame in the afternoon, we don't count people but we look at the number of plates. So we start out with a package of 250 plates, and we'll go through two of those."

That's a lot of breakfast burritos, bratwurst and burgers. The Eassons also serve up two kinds of wings, pulled pork and a variety of sliders. Not to mention the sides: coleslaw, mac and cheese and more – all of which they assemble from scratch at home on those football Friday nights.

For an 11 a.m. game, they arrive before sunrise, light their Sterno warmers and begin serving a piping-hot breakfast cafeteria-style. The location is always the same, strategically located between Brevard Hall and the **Center for Manufacturing Excellence** – both of which house engineering classes. Crowds return to the tent week after week, year after year.

It's good for business, Dean David Puleo said.

"School of Engineering tailgating has been an outstanding event, where we have a mix of future students, current students, faculty, staff and alumni who come back and engage in conversations," he said. "It's the past, present and future meeting together to enjoy a social activity and to get to know one another and ultimately enjoy a good football game."

Puleo said the tailgate often serves as prospective students' introduction to campus, one that frequently results in their ultimate enrollment at Ole Miss.

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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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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

It's not only the food that welcomes visitors but the atmosphere as well. The School of Engineering tent is well-appointed with big-screen televisions and comfortable seating, where Rebel fans and visitors alike share a tailgating experience like no other.

"When TVs in the Grove were a novelty, we would get huge crowds around the tent, and both teams would be cheering or booing or whatever," Darlene Easson said. "It's always been a really good atmosphere. We've always been the place where both students and families know they can gather on game days."

Rain or shine. For 20 years. This year, however, the Eassons will hang up their aprons. They're ready to take a turn on the receiving end of those serving spoons.

"It's great to see somebody like him do what he's done, and I don't know what they're going to do because he's going to retire after this year," said Tom Riddell of Madison, a neighboring tailgater who has supported the School of Engineering tent with monetary gifts for years. "Who's going to take his place?"

"He's doing God's work, in my opinion, and that's the reason I support him and the engineering group so much, because this tailgate is open to anybody."

A pin Darlene Easson wears seems to capture the essence of the couple's philosophy.

It simply says, "Kind."

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