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**February 5, 2015**

The Daily Mississippian

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# MISSISSIPPIAN

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SERVING OLE MISS AND OXFORD SINCE 1911 Visit theDMonline.com @thedm\_news

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**TOP 25**

**DAMARKUS LODGE**

**ERIC SWINNEY**

**VAN JEFFERSON**

**RAVENWOOD**

GRAPHIC BY: ALLI MOORE

## ‘WE WON MANY BATTLES’

★ Despite missing out on five-star recruits, Rebels reel in another successful recruiting class. For full signing day coverage, including the full 2015 recruiting class roster, see pages 10, 11 and 12. ★

## Chancellor Jones' recent test results show no sign of cancer

LACEY RUSSELL  
dmeditor@gmail.com

After four months of battling lymphoma, University of Mississippi Chancellor Dan Jones's condition appears to be improving. His most recent positron emission tomography, or PET, scan shows no evidence of cancerous activity.

"I'm very grateful," Jones said in a telephone interview with The Daily Mississippian on Wednesday. "It is a very optimistic situation that I'm in."

Before Jones began chemotherapy, his initial PET scan showed a widespread pres-

ence of lymphoma in his abdomen and bone marrow. He received the encouraging news that the cancerous masses had absolved about a month ago after his third round of chemotherapy treatment.

The chancellor has one month of treatment remaining. His goal is to return to campus by mid- to late-March.

"When I first get back, I'll probably have some limitations. You know, I got a new haircut that we'll all have to get used to," he said with a laugh. "It will take me a little bit of time to regain my strength to return to my full



Chancellor Dan Jones poses for a photo in his office last August.

schedule."

Jones said being diagnosed with cancer has been a life changing, yet humbling experience. He credits the uplifting letters he has received from colleagues and students as a crucial part of his healing process.

"With every challenge in life comes some positives," he said. "This has provided an unusual opportunity for me to understand how many people care about me, how many friends I have and how much support and encouragement and prayers have been offered on my behalf. It's humbling to go through that experience."

FILE PHOTO

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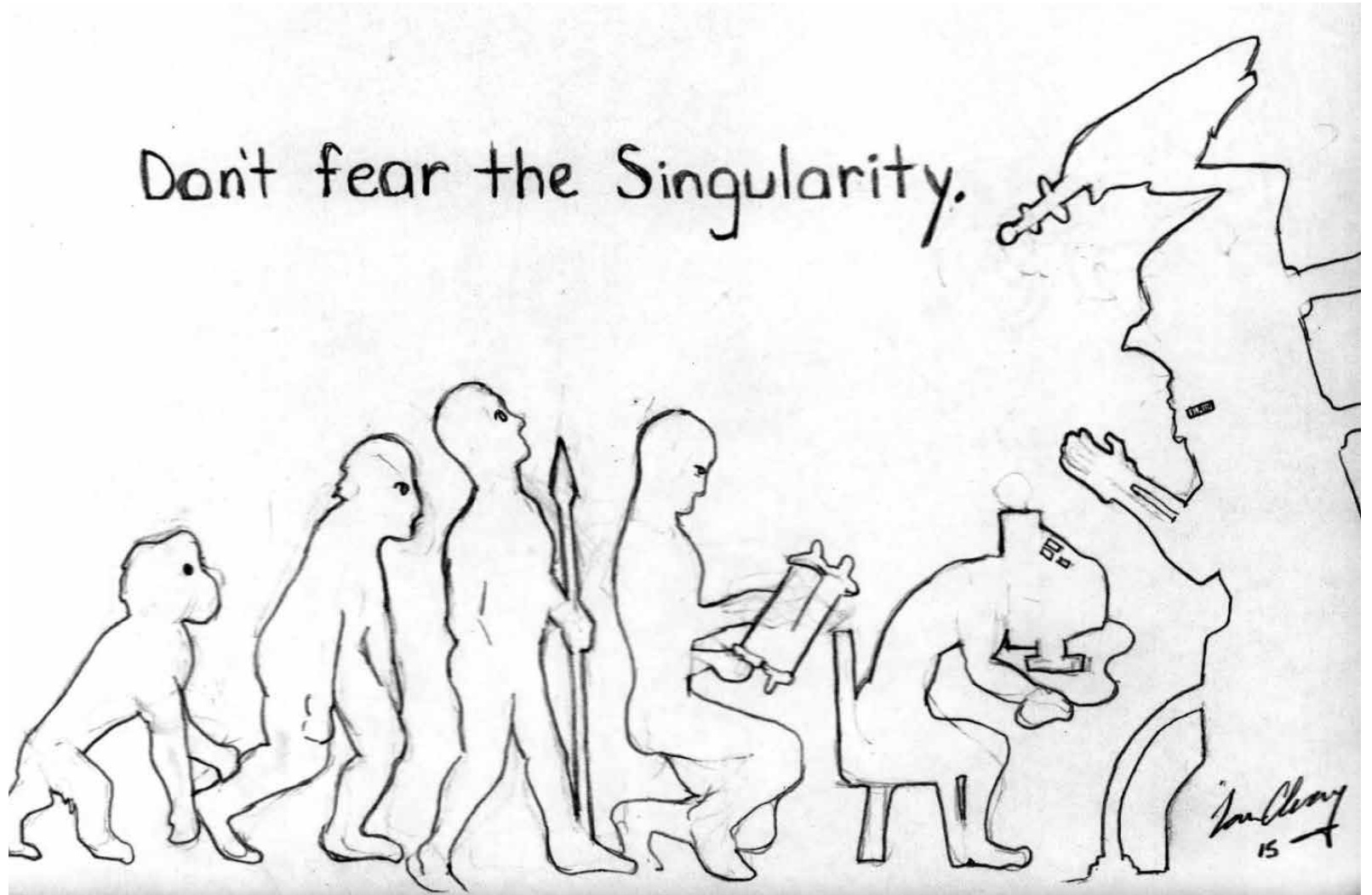
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**COLUMN**

## Debunking the legend of a mythical creature

**JUSTINA GREER**  
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Quick disclaimer: This article is actually not about unicorns. Sorry.

This piece is about sexuality — more specifically, bisexuality and its existence. There seem to be some ridiculous views surrounding the topic, the most ridiculous one being that bisexual people do not exist.

In a way, I'm humored because that means that I've been granted mythical creature status. I feel that I'm somewhere between the centaurs and unicorns. But then I remember that many people cannot wrap their heads around the concept of a single person being attracted to two sexes. A man blasts into space to walk on the moon, and people can't fathom that someone liking both men and women is actually a thing.

I've heard statements like: "You're actually just gay, and you don't want to admit it," because if I date a woman then I absolutely must be a lesbian,

and, "You're just straight and you date girls for attention," because if I date men then I'm straight. When you fall outside of a realm that people understand, they tend to make assumptions so that they are more comfortable with the confusion of your existence.

In both straight and gay communities, negative connotations associated with being bisexual abound. I recently read an article about the struggles of bisexual people, and a few words tossed around were "greedy," "liar," "confused" and "phase." All of these words have been directed at me at some time or another in regard to my sexuality.

This belief that bisexual people are somehow greedy for dating both men and women is especially egregious. Sure, there are bisexual people in polyamorous relationships, and that's OK. Bisexual people, however, are capable of monogamy.

I'm not saying that bisexuals are without flaw and will not cheat or engage in "greedy

behavior." I'm saying that anyone, regardless of their sexuality, could do that. Also, there seems to be a generalization that all bisexual people, especially men, only identify as bisexual because they are afraid to come out as "fully" gay. I've heard that women can be bisexual and men cannot. All of these arguments I've heard for years now, and I've never recognized an ounce of logic in any of the statements.

Surprisingly, this hurtful language doesn't only come from heterosexual people, but from the LG portion of the LGBTQ community.

Sure, some people come out as bisexual before they come out as gay or lesbian, and that's OK. It's all about what you're comfortable with. The belief that a man cannot be attracted to both men and women, however, is a very erasing statement, perhaps rooted in what I believe to be symptoms of patriarchy and what it means to "really be a man." Believing such statements allows for the erasure of someone's identi-

ty which can in turn be quite harmful.

Bisexual people aren't a hegemony of individuals any more sexually confused than the next person. Maybe some are, and that's OK, too — but maybe consider that navigating sexuality can be extremely confusing, especially when there are people who do not share your experiences or feelings telling you what you are and what you cannot be.

People hear the word bisexual and immediately don't take it seriously. In my experiences, I've heard it was a phase, and if it's a phase, well, I've been in a phase for half of my life. But, as Tumblr user dajo42 explains:

"The moon has phases but it's still literally always the moon. Just because the moon's doing something different today doesn't mean it was lying about being the moon yesterday."

*Justina Greer is a junior political science major from Terry.*

**THE DAILY  
MISSISSIPPIAN**

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**MISSISSIPPI  
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MEMBER NEWSPAPER

## Gay-Straight Alliance Network changing the South

SARA ROGERS

sbrogers@go.olemiss.edu

In the South and especially in the state of Mississippi, people who classify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer face many challenges. Despite politicians' resistance to change, the region continues to show surprising signs of progress and acceptance; however, laws that prohibit the legal recognition of same-sex marriage and deny same-sex couples the right to adopt children still stand in the state.

Several organizations like the Gay-Straight Alliance Network are working to strengthen the LGBTQ community across the nation.

The Gay-Straight Alliance is a LGBTQ Racial Justice organization focused on youth leadership at the local and national levels.

Anna Davis, the Southeastern Regional Organizer for the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, is working to develop youth leaders in the organization through trainings, mentorships and event support.

Davis stressed the importance of these organizations, as they play a crucial role in the school and community environment.

Three in 10 Mississippi adults identify as LGBTQ, according to Davis, which is



COURTESY: GSANETWORK.ORG

higher than any other region in the country. She said this statistic gives organizations like the Gay-Straight Alliance a huge role in the state. Most Gay-Straight Alliances offer services to teachers, faculty and staff at their schools around cultural competency.

Oxford High School has a Gay-Straight Alliance that is student led and open to any student who feels that harassment or discrimination against LGBTQ people, their friends or families is wrong.

Davis joined the Gay-Straight Alliance after becoming a student at the University of Southern Mississippi. She quickly took leadership roles, and worked to build more support for students on campus and within the community.

"I went from being a fairly reserved and shy person to

feeling like I had a voice," Davis said. "I also grew to love my home-state not for its faults, but for its people and communities that show such warmth and openness. The work that I do today is in hopes of creating more opportunities like these for young people across the state."

The Gay-Straight Alliance Network was founded in 1998 in California to empower youth activists to fight homophobia and transphobia in their schools and has since expanded to 39 states and territories. The Gay-Straight Alliance Network works directly with schools and young people ranging in age from 13-24 in California. They work with state-based groups as a part of their national work.

This week, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit

pi, has made clear that all its residents deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and equality, regardless of who they are or who they love," said Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, in response to the resolution.

Visiting Assistant Professor of English and faculty affiliate at Sarah Isom Center for Women's and Gender Studies Dr. Jaime Cantrell believes that there is hope within our region for LGBTQ equality.

Unfortunately, Starkville's decision to pass the LGBTQ anti-discrimination resolution made last year was repealed last month. Elected officials in Starkville also rescinded a policy that extended same-sex health benefits to domestic partners of city employees.

"These actions did more than set back the city's pro-LGBTQ measures," Cantrell said. "They symbolically illustrate the daily struggle for dignity and equality the LGBTQ Southerners face."

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## Billy Crews makes full circle back to his alma mater

**NATALIE WILLIAMS**  
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Being an alumnus of Ole Miss and a Mississippi native, Billy Crews is no stranger to the city of Oxford. After working for many years in Tupelo, he returned to the city, first with Teach for America, and now as the development officer for the School of Education at The University of Mississippi.

It is no surprise that Crews would choose to bring his talents back to the university.

While Crews attended The University of Mississippi, he lived all four years in Kincan-

non Hall and majored in political science.

He admitted that the most memorable moments of his college career were the relationships he built with not only fellow students, but also with professors.

When asked who has influenced him the most in his career, he immediately named his sociology professor, Vaughn Grisham.

“Vaughn Grisham was literally responsible for introducing me to my career,” Crews said.

Coming from a family who focused heavily on the values of education, Crews seems to

have taught his own children the same importance of public service. His daughter is now a social worker in Denver, Colorado. His middle son taught in inner city schools in North Carolina and is now an assistant principal in New Orleans, and his second son is starting his career as a Spanish teacher at North Panola High School.

“At this time of my life, I am only interested in working at something that I am passionate about, which happens to be education,” Crews said.

In Education Weeks 2015 Quality Counts ranking of states, Mississippi was given a grade of D, which includes the grading of areas such as Chance for Success,

K-12 Achievement and School Finance.

“I want to ensure all schools and all students have the opportunity to use their gifts to excel,” Crews said. “Mississippi

and the nation needs excellent teachers, and, as far as I’m concerned, that starts here at The University of Mississippi.”

He also believes that the School of Education is and should be the most impactful resource to the state of Mississippi because it supplies hundreds of teachers.

With the first 10 days of the new job under his belt, Crews admitted that he finds the School of Education to be a very meaningful work environment, full of driven faculty and staff.

“To become a leader in educational performance requires an excellent school of education. This requires private sector support. I’m hoping that my background will be helpful to build on our school and Dean David Rock’s vision,” Crews said. “I hope to help market and gain support to build on our strengths and be the most impactful school of education possible for our students and our region.”



PHOTO BY: CADY HERRING  
UM School of Education development officer Billy Crews poses in his office Sunday.

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## Kiese Laymon selected as Grisham Writer-in-Residence

ELLEN SPIES

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Kiese Laymon will be the recipient of the John and Renee Grisham Writer-in-Residence Fellowship for the 2015-16 school year. Originally from Jackson, Mississippi, Laymon attended Millsaps College and Jackson State University, graduated from Oberlin College and later earned his MFA from Indiana University. He is currently an associate professor at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, where he teaches English and African Studies. Laymon's writing includes themes of southern culture and American racism.

"I can't wait to learn from the different communities in Oxford," he said.

After his time in the Northeast, Laymon is returning back to the South, the place that served as a major influ-

ence in his writing.

"I couldn't be more excited to come back home," Laymon said.

Laymon is the author of "Long Division," a novel that intertwines two stories from different time periods and deals with issues of racism. The novel was awarded the 2014 Saroyan International Writing Award and also recognized as one of the "Best of 2013" by publications including BuzzFeed, the "Chicago Tribune" and the Crunk Feminist Collective.

Laymon has also written essays and short stories for



COURTESY: KIESELAYMON.COM

various publications and has a published collection titled "How to Kill Yourself and Others in America." He is also a contributing editor at "Gawker" and makes frequent posts to ESPN's website. Bloomsbury is publishing two more of his works, "A Fat Black Memoir" and another novel, "And So On."

"I think the writer in residence contributes a lot to the English department," English major Claire Lee said. "It gives the students someone to look up to who has published work."

The Grisham Writ-

ers-in-Residence fellowship began in 1993 with T.R. Pearson. The current writer is Mary Miller, author of "The Last Days of California" and "Big World." The writer spends a year at the university.

"The resident has moved to the Grishams' old home, where they lived in Oxford, out on Highway 6," said Blair Hobbs, MFA liaison.

The writer in residence teaches one class a semester during their time at the university and is generally involved with the MFA program.

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## Parade of Beauties



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Contestant Amber Murphy walks across the stage.

**LANA FERGUSON**  
Infergus@go.olemiss.edu

Taylor-Alice Mays was crowned Miss Beautiful 2015, Wednesday night at the Parade of Beauties. Mays, a nursing major, was nominated by sorority Delta Gamma to compete in the event.

The Parade of Beauties is an annual beauty pageant hosted since 1951. This year it was hosted by Ole Miss Student Union and the Student Activities Association with Director Bradley Baker.

The pageant began with a total of 97 women. Each contestant was privately interviewed before the pageant and walked in an evening gown segment, where they were escorted by Army ROTC members.

The contestants are judged 90% on their evening gown portion and 10% is based on their interview. Judges Amanda Harmon, Blake McCollum, Kim Greenwood, and Jan Reid-Bunch judged the evening gown portions based on the beauty, poise, grace, and stage presence of each

girl.

Mister and Miss Ole Miss, Rob Barber and Emily Wikle emceed the pageant. Special guests, Miss University 2015, France Beard, and Miss Mississippi USA 2015, Courtney Byrd presented the Top 10 Beauties and Most Beautiful 2015.

Wickle participated in the parade last year, but was eager to participate in a different way by emceeding this year.

"I loved being on the other side and announcing all of the beautiful women," Wickle said.

Barber said emceeding the event was a amazing because it emphasized the fact that it is more than just who can wear the prettiest dress.

"It gave me the chance to once again see firsthand how the women of Ole Miss excel in every area of life from the service, to the hobbies, to rebel spirit," Barber said.

Miss Beautiful 2014, Reade Heredia, crowned Mays.

"I don't have much to say," said Mays. "I'm truly humbled," Mays said.



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Contestant London Sivira walks across the stage.



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Parade of Beauties winner Taylor Alice Mays waves as she wins Most Beautiful 2015.



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Most Beautiful 2014 Reade Heredia walks onto the stage.



PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Contestants wait on the stage for the top 25 to be announced.

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## Celebrated songwriters to perform at the Powerhouse

### CLANCY SMITH

clsmith3@go.olemiss.edu

Seasoned songwriters Byron Hill and Wil Nance are set to perform Friday evening at the Powerhouse, as part of the Songwriters on the Road series sponsored by the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council.

Those in the audience will have the chance to meet the masterminds behind the familiar songs from country artists such as George Strait, Brad Paisley, Ray Charles and others.

Hill and Nance have known each other for about 30 years while working together in the Nashville music industry, but they said they each achieved their love of songwriting at a much younger age.

Hill started playing the guitar at age 10 and said he knew he wanted to be a songwriter at the age of 16. He attended college at

Appalachian State University, where his parents urged him to take science classes and to go into the medical field.

More often than not, however, he found himself playing his music for people at the ASU student center "coffee house."

He moved to Nashville to pursue his career in music full-time in 1978.

"I had no other real career aspirations," Hill said. "There were things that I felt like I could fall back on, but nothing that was tugging on me like music."

Nance began playing guitar at age 11 and, after high school, joined a band and began to write songs before moving to Nashville in 1987.

"By the time I moved to Nashville, I was about 30 years old and all the aspirations of being an artist had gone away," Nance said. "My main focus really be-

came about writing songs because I feel like that's what became most natural to me."

Both writers agreed that inspiration often comes from their surroundings.

"The ideas come from anywhere out there," Hill said. "I like to read. I like to listen. I pick up on ideas, and I keep pieces of paper and notebooks everywhere. So, anytime I get an idea I have a notebook within arm's length."

One example that Nance cited was Brad Paisley's song "She's Everything."

"I wrote that song about my wife," Nance said. "I just started thinking about her and everything I love about her that I see everyday, and it just so happened that everything I see about her also applies to other girls, so it just translated to people that way."

Songs performed by George Strait hold special meaning for both Hill and Nance. In fact, Hill wrote George Strait's first number one song, "Fool Hearted Memory."

"Having written George Strait's first number one, it will always be a favorite song because of how it impacted my life," Hill said. "It's kind of like having a kid that grows up to be president of the United States. You're pretty proud of that when you've helped an artist become his story."

Nance received his first big break in the music industry when Strait decided to record his song "Where Have I Been All My Life."

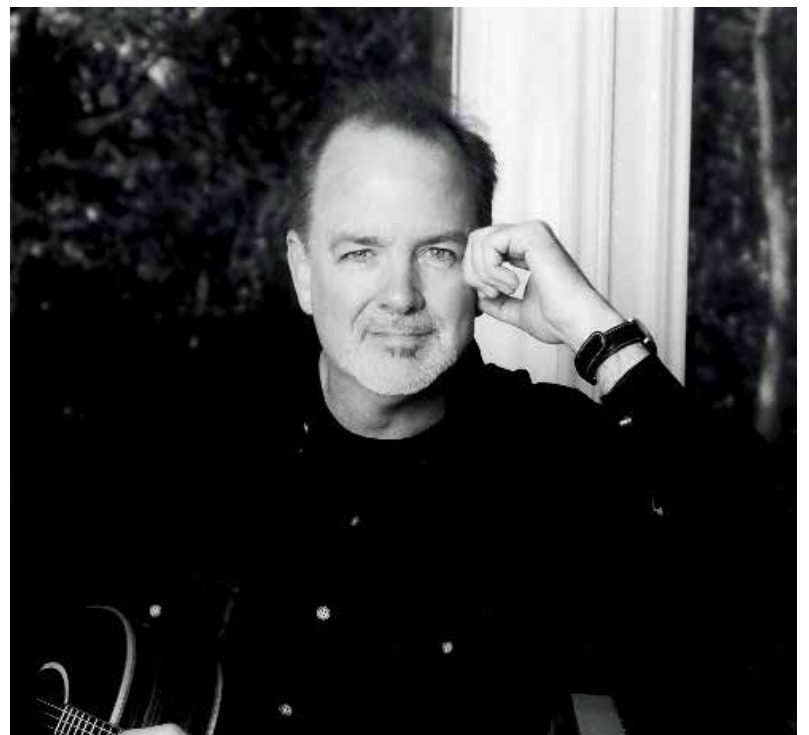
Neither Hill nor Nance expects to lay down their song-writing pens anytime soon.

"Does a doctor ever really put down his stethoscope?" Hill asked. "Probably not. Once in a while, he's probably going to check his grandkids out and make sure they're OK."



WIL NANCE

COURTESY: OXFORDARTS.COM



BYRON HILL

COURTESY: BYRON HILL MUSIC.COM

Nance echoed this sentiment. "I may never retire," Nance said. "There may come a day when I just decide I want to sit on a beach, but I'll probably keep riding this bus for a while and keep on writing."

These talents will be at the Powerhouse from 7-9 p.m. Friday to talk about the songwriting process and aid young songwriters in gaining inspiration.

## Rebel THURSDAY

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  - 19 Arial or Helvetica
  - 20 Nuisance
  - 21 Chipmunk's storage unit (2 wds.)
  - 23 Sign after Libra
  - 25 Vast multitudes
  - 26 Here, to Henri
  - 27 Undivided
  - 29 Cause
  - 32 Amusing
  - 33 Good buddy
  - 36 Haze, plus
  - 37 Super-duper
  - 38 Kramer or Satie
  - 39 Laptops, briefly
  - 40 Big box
  - 41 Purse closers
  - 42 Metalworker
  - 43 "Gunsmoke" nickname
  - 44 "Venus" singer
  - 47 Dangerous bears
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  - 9 Became established (2 wds.)
  - 10 Diet-ad caption
  - 11 Audibly
  - 12 Draw back in pain
  - 13 Thin strips of wood
  - 21 LI doubled
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E	T	O	N	B	A	R	S	I	E	S	T	A
P	A	S	T	A	R	E	R	I	D	I	N	G

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- 27 Fierce anger
- 28 Improve, as skills
- 29 Venomous snake
- 30 Truck mfr.
- 31 Sister of Helios
- 32 "Confound it!"
- 33 Car grill cover
- 34 Tear
- 35 Approves
- 37 Pepper mills
- 38 Write for a spy
- 40 Slangy summons
- 41 Instant lawn
- 42 Inclined gently
- 43 Pentagon grp.
- 44 Wide cravat
- 45 Extreme edge
- 46 Kind of squash
- 47 Paid homage
- 48 Not with anyone
- 49 Carpenter or Blixen
- 50 Knight's mount
- 52 Lament loudly
- 53 Cuba, to Castro
- 57 TV screen

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## SUDOKU®

Puzzles by KrazyDad

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

**CHALLENGING**

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

## Oxford Film Fest spotlight and out-of-competition lineup

The Oxford Film Festival released its official spotlight and out of competition lineup for 2015 yesterday. The complete list of films can be found at [oxfordfilmfest.com](http://oxfordfilmfest.com). The festival will be held February 26-March 1 at the Oxford Malco Commons.

### Special Screenings:

Barton's Block  
Saturday 2 p.m.

### UM's Southern Documentary Project films:

Bury the Show  
Friday 3:30 p.m.  
Sunday 3:30 p.m.

Longleaf: The Heart of Pine  
Friday 3:30 p.m.  
Sunday 3:30 p.m.

### Mississippi Films:

A Different Kind of Festival

Saturday 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday 3 p.m.

In Ten

Saturday 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday 3 p.m.

Barry

Saturday 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday 3 p.m.

### Short Films:

Star Warp'd  
Saturday 2:15 p.m.  
Shanks  
Saturday 2:15 p.m.

### Spotlight Screenings:

'The Sound and the Fury'  
Thursday 7 p.m.

Sunday 1 p.m.

'The Last Time You Had Fun'  
Friday 7 p.m.  
Sunday 1 p.m.

#### COLUMN

## Is SremmLife the life for you?

JARED BOYD

[jlboyd3@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:jlboyd3@go.olemiss.edu)

Rae Sremmurd has no appeal. The group's name itself is a tongue twister, derived from backwards spellings of "ear" and "drummers," a nod to the Ear Drummers recording imprint in which the duo calls home. Fans, coincidentally, find difficulty pronouncing the consonant sound comprised from the "S-R" in their stage name.

Like previous rap acts, such as Travis Porter or Tanya Morgan, many rap listeners even have trouble discerning if "Rae" is in fact one person. Brothers, Khalif "Swae Lee" Brown and Aaquil "Slim Jimmy" Brown, seem to be interested in stacking odds against themselves.

Within the yearlong campaign leading up to their debut album "SremmLife," they overcame those odds. Bolstered by the help of producer and label-head, Mike WiLL Made-It and two similarly titled singles "No Flex Zone" and "No Type," the boys won over American hip-hop hearts. The two Tupelo, Mississippi, emcees play to their key strength: energy.

The group, formerly known as Dem Outta St8 Boyz, showcased their amped-up antics when they returned to their

home state of Mississippi for a show last October at The Lyric Oxford. Having then only released a handful of songs under their new moniker, the brothers vaulted across the stage interpolating chants of "Hotty Toddy!" into new material, yet to be released to the public.

They specialize in an endearing mix of boyhood mischief; not unlike the kind that characterized episodes of "Leave it to Beaver!" Except, the Brown brothers' idea of good clean fun comes in the form of songs like "Safe Sex, Pay Checks." The album closer is a commercial for controlled mayhem, wrapped in light-hearted synths that sound lifted from a Flo-Rida or Black Eyed Peas performance. It's a straight-faced version of The Lonely Island's comedy-rap single "We're On a Boat." Opening with the spoken ad-lib, "We just wanna party," the song, although placed at the end of the album, feels more fitting as a preamble in a crunk constitution.

Although composed by two sons of Mississippi, the "SremmLife" falls a bit further away



from the tree that other Magnolia State acts like David Banner and Big K.R.I.T. hang on. Instead, the album plays like an homage, blending the current trap melodies of Atlanta artists like Future with the strip club-ready drums of the early 2000s Georgia scene, led by Lil' Jon & the Eastside Boyz affiliates such as Lil' Scrappy and Ying Yang Twinz.

Swae Lee asserts himself on each track as a star, delivering rap verses that feature rapid-fire flows along with choruses that allow him to sing sincerely about topics that would cause most to blush. It isn't every day that someone commits a singing voice to words like "Some body come

get her, she's dancing like a stripper," or the Twitter meme-inspired "This could be us, but you playing."

Unfortunately, the boys leave very little to be desired in the realm of lyrical complexity. Most of their songwriting boils down to a brag-fest.

When they aren't listing the diverse amount of expensive tags, they are prone to pop off high-end Celine, Givenchy and Fendi clothing items.

They often are punctuating quips about foreign cars with onomatopoeia outburst "skrrt" to signify leaving their competition in a haze of exhaust fumes and smoke. When more experienced rhymers like Big Sean and, even the borderline incoherent, Young Thug arrive to deliver guest verses, they remove the memory of whatever the last-appearing Brown brother had to say.

However, Rae Sremmurd, aren't inept at attempting dexterity.

In the midst of their party-based rhymes, they approach human emotion. They contextualize their braggadocio by detailing their brush with poverty in "Yno." Immediately following their first

single, anthem dedicated to refraining from flexing and flaunting, they fire back at scorned lovers with "My X," wishing their success serves as a hurtful reminder of what-could-have-been.

Beyond the vocal acrobats of Lee and Jimmy, the unsung star of the show is the production, anchored by Mike WiLL. The maestro lends his talents to seven of the album's 11 tracks. The producer, who is known as much for holding down Atlanta street artists, Gucci Mane and Future, as he is for orchestrating Miley Cyrus hits "We Can't Stop" and his own "23." He toys around with fresh sounds on "SremmLife," utilizing Elton John-style piano rock on "This Could Be Us" and off-kilter organs on "No Type."

Over beats this invigorating, lyrics wouldn't even matter. Rae Sremmurd simply sweetens the pot by devising catchy records that are sure to supplement their increasing star power.

"SremmLife" has no context. Much like the marquee performers on its album have no appeal. "SremmLife" is the context. "SremmLife" is the party. Anyone attempting to play it in any other setting will simply start a party. Rae Sremmurd simply leaves you no other choice.

## Plenty of ups and downs for Rebels on National Signing Day

**CODY THOMASON**  
csthoma1@go.olemiss.edu

Every year, there are plenty of twists and surprises on signing day, and this year was no different. Ole Miss had its share of ups and downs, snagging some top recruits but losing out on some of their best targets. Overall, the class was ranked as 17th in the nation by 247 Sports' composite rankings.

The strength of the class is definitely at wide receiver with Texas wideout DaMarkus Lodge and Tennessee receiver Van Jefferson leading the way. Lodge never committed to Ole Miss but was long thought to be a heavy lean to the Rebels and should make an early impact in his first season at Ole Miss. Jefferson was committed to Ole Miss, but after a late push by Michigan and continued interest by Georgia, it wasn't clear if he would stick to his commitment especially when he delayed his decision several hours. But now that he signed with Ole Miss, his speed and route running make him an excellent edition to the wide receiver corps.

The offensive line was a let down for the Rebels. Top tackle Drew Richmond signed with Tennessee after being committed to the Rebels for months. Richmond de-committed two days before signing day, leaving Ole Miss virtually no time to find a replacement. While Ole Miss did land stellar five-star offensive guard Javon Patterson in the early signing period and two good three-star tackles in Michael Howard and Alex Givens, losing out on Richmond brings down the group as whole, especially because a viable replacement could have been found earlier

in the season.

The Rebels could look at Austrian Robinson as a replacement, as the 6 foot six inch, 255-pound prospect played defensive and offensive line in high school and could now move to the vacancy at right tackle.

But possibly the most disappointing moment in the day was when five-star defensive end CeCe Jefferson shocked the nation and signed with the Florida Gators. Jefferson had previously said Ole Miss was his leader, but the pull from the in-state Gators was too much for him to turn down. Jefferson would've been one of the top players in the class and seen time right away on the Ole Miss defensive line.

The heartbreak didn't end there, as top inside linebacker and in-state star Leo Lewis signed with Mississippi State. Lewis had also de-committed recently as well, but the Rebels did have a little more time to look for a replacement and flipped three-star linebacker Shawn Curtis from Pittsburgh.

The Rebels did outstanding at recruiting the secondary, landing two four-stars in Armani Linton and Cameron Ordway. They had already added the top junior college cornerback in the nation in Tony Bridges and also added Georgia defensive back Montrell Custis late in the game. Also in the class is athlete Jalen Julius, who has exceptional speed and could see time at cornerback, wide receiver and returner.

Overall, Ole Miss had some tough misses that really brought down the ranking of the 2015 signing class. Although there will always be



Athletic Director Ross Bjork speaks at the Ole Miss Quarterback Club National Signing Day event.

PHOTO BY: KAYLA BEATTY



PHOTO BY: KAYLA BEATTY

Art Doty, Pat McNease and Walker Watters are seen at the Ole Miss Quarterback Club National Signing Day Event Wednesday.

that "what could have been" program. feeling, Hugh Freeze still added a solid group of players and locked in a bright future for the



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## Hugh Freeze pleased with depth of 2015 recruiting class

**DYLAN RUBINO**  
 thedmsports@gmail.com

Another year, another hyped-up, media-frenzied signing day all across the country for college football programs looking to build title contenders.

There may never be another recruiting class like the 2013 class. The 2014 class had a tough act to follow, but successfully shined with one of the deepest classes in the history of the program.

The 2015 class may not have the flashy names or the stand-out prospects, but there is plenty of talent to go around as head coach Hugh Freeze hauled in another top 20 recruiting class.

The 2015 class for Ole Miss ranks 17th according to 24/7 Sports, and 19th according to ESPN.

Freeze started off his signing day press conference Wednesday describing how motivated he was with the message from chancellor Dan Jones announcing that he is cancer-free. Freeze called Jones, "an encourage-

ment to the program."

"We are extremely excited about our class that I think from top to bottom actually may be our best since we've been here," Freeze said about his 2015 signing class. "I do believe we have identified the young men in terms that fit with Ole Miss and that is huge for us because we want to develop young men that fit with us with the guys that we have here to be great."

Freeze admitted that it was a challenging class to put together because of the restrictions of numbers that the program was under with the limited amount of spots.

The 2015 class totaled 23 new players on signing day, including early enrollees. The Rebels had 14 four-star recruits and nine three-star recruits. There were some star-studded prospects that Ole Miss missed out on, including five-star defensive end CeCe Jefferson, who signed with Florida, and five-star offensive lineman Drew Richmond, who signed with Tennessee. Even though the Rebels missed out on top-flight prospects, the class is a success.

"You always lose some when you're battling for some of the nation's best. Every school does. We had a few of those," Freeze said. "We also won many, many battles with kids that really wanted to be at Ole Miss and representing this great university. I'm excited to get to work with them."

Finding players in the junior college ranks is a very important aspect for Freeze and his coaching staff. He acknowledged how important it was to haul in an exceptional mid-year class.

"The mid-year class, I think, is a home run," Freeze said. "Tony Bridges is one of the best looking corners that I signed. I think our DB (defensive back) class—I would put it up with any other DB class that has been signed. Terry Crawford is an athletic linebacker that gets us longer and faster. Javon Patterson, man, I don't know if I have been any more crazy about a young man and his family as I have that guy."

One name in the recruiting class that has stirred up some negative attention was quarterback Chad Kelly. Kelly was ar-

rested in his hometown Buffalo, New York on Dec. 22 for a scuffle early in the morning with a bouncer at a local bar.

For the first time since Kelly's arrest, Freeze addressed his status with the team and his future.

"He's made some poor decisions that have cost him some opportunities and almost cost him this one," Freeze said. "He understands exactly what we have to do moving forward, and he's got some strong reins on him hopefully."

The secondary is the bright spot of the 2015 recruiting class with players such as Tony Bridges, the versatile Jalen Julius, Cameron Ordway, Montrell Custis and Armani Linton.

Freeze described the secondary in his recruiting class as long, athletic and can provide the physical presence that he looks for in his secondary.

The wide receiver position also was a success for the Rebels, headlined by four-stars DaMarkus Lodge from Texas and Van Jefferson from Tennessee. Freeze had high praise for Lodge, who Freeze called one of the best receiver recruits

he has seen since coming to Ole Miss. Freeze was pleased with the receivers he has brought in and is happy with the depth at the position.

"I think our receiving core when you look at it is arguably one of the better in the country," Freeze said. "We have to manage not only next year, but the future also and how we manage everyone there. I'm excited to see how it all works out."

Hugh Freeze said when he was hired that it would take three full recruiting classes that he would feel like he had a full SEC roster. This is now Freeze's third full class, and the 2015 class has the program right on track to moving into the tops of the conference.

As for the 2016 recruiting class, Freeze has already turned his attention to it.

"We got to have some help on the offensive line, defensive line, linebacker. Our secondary is in good shape. We did really well with our receivers," Freeze said. "We need to continue to build. Those are some of the needs we need to address next year."

## Rebels beat Texas A&M, move into 2nd place in SEC

**JIMMY ANDERSON**  
 jbander2@go.olemiss.edu

Ole Miss used an impressive defensive performance and timely shots down the stretch to win a big game against Texas A&M by a score of 69-59.

"Tremendous defensive effort for us in the second half. It wasn't the most aesthetically pleasing at times, but these are the kind of games you got to win in early February," Ole Miss head coach Andy Kennedy said. "These are the games you got to grind through in order to achieve your goal."

Ole Miss fought through the first half, as they got off to a good start, going on a 9-4 run in the opening three minutes and then followed that up with another 9-4 run to go up by 18-10.

The Aggies would respond to the runs by the Rebels, going on a 12-1 run of their own to go up 22-19.

The first half was a struggle offensively for both teams, as the Aggies and the Rebels shot below 25 percent. Both teams started to heat up a little bit near the end of the half with the Rebels shooting 36.4 percent and the Aggies shooting 42.5 percent.

"We were missing point blank looks. In the first half, we were 0-for-12 from the three and honestly, I thought most of them were clean looks," Kennedy said. "In the second half, we made enough to give us separation."

The game featured trading baskets up until halftime, as the Rebels would hit their last 4-out-5 three pointers to close the half after missing their first 12.

Ole Miss would gain the halftime lead at 33-32. Senior guard Jarvis Summers went scoreless in the first half for the second straight game.

Junior guard Stefan Moody would pace the Rebels in the first half with 13 points and sophomore forward Sebastian Saiz had four points and five rebounds.

Junior guards Jalen Jones and Danuel House, Texas A&M's leading scorers, were held to a combined 11 points and 4-for-11 shooting in the first half. Junior guard Alex Caruso led the Aggies with eight points.

Ole Miss opened up the second half hot, going on a 17-6 run over the first seven minutes to go up 50-38. A big part of that was the Ole Miss frontcourt as they made life difficult on the Aggies defensively and offensively.

Senior forward M.J. Rhett finished with 11 points, Saiz had nine points and nine rebounds and sophomore center Dwight Coleby finished with seven points and six rebounds.

"We just get more reps in practice and keep grinding it out and going hard in practice," Rhett said on why they are playing so well defensively. "Just focusing the task at



PHOTO BY: LOGAN KIRKLAND

Stefan Moody dribbles the ball in Wednesday's game against Texas A&M.

hand."

The Aggies would respond though, going on an 11-2 to bring the game to 53-50 with just over eight minutes to play. In a game full of runs, the Rebels went on the last one, a 10-4 run in response, to go up for good 63-54 with 3:26 left to play.

That was all the Rebels needed to pull away, as Ole

Miss used suffocating defense and free throws to put the game away.

"We throw the kitchen sink at you defensively," Kennedy said.

Doing that allowed Ole Miss to contain the Aggies best penetrators, Caruso and House, to not get anything close to the rim and keep Jones from getting any open looks down

low.

"The zone against them was concerning because I thought that Caruso with his size could see over the top," Kennedy said. "We went with a little different game plan and put Moody on him, and we wanted to play under him and to harass him. I did think it threw him off his game."

The Rebels were led by Moody, with 19 points on 6-of-14 shooting, and Summers scored seven points, all in the second half. Senior guard Terrance Smith has eight points off the bench.

Kennedy said he was impressed with the way Rhett played down low, and he was really satisfied with his frontcourt production as a whole. The three collectively went 11-for-20 from the field.

The team has two road games coming up in the next two weeks at Auburn and Florida.

Ole Miss looks to continue their road success and four-game-winning streak at Auburn this Saturday at 5:30 CT.



## 2015 Ole Miss recruiting class

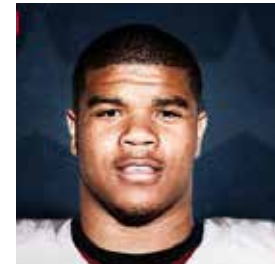
Below are the 22 signees that make up the 2015 Ole Miss football recruiting class. The list includes junior college and high school early enrollees. Each signee's height, weight, hometown and previous school are given in addition to the star rankings from each of the four major recruiting services.



**WR DAMARKUS LODGE**

6-foot-2, 186 pounds, Cedar Hill Texas, Cedar Hill High School

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**OL JAVON PATTERSON**

6-foot-3, 313 pounds Petal, MS, Petal High School

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**DT D.J. JONES**

6-foot-2, 310 pounds Piedmont, SC, East Miss CC

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**WR VAN JEFFERSON**

6-foot-2, 183 pounds, Brentwood, TN, Ravenwood HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**CB TONY BRIDGES**

6-foot-1, 185 pounds, Hattiesburg, MS, MGCCC

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**RB ERIC SWINNEY**

5-foot-10, 188 pounds Tyrone, GA, Sandy Creek HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**ATH JALEN JULIUS**

5-foot-11, 170 pounds, Winter Garden, FL, West Orange HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**OT MICHAEL HOWARD**

6-foot-5, 245 pounds Green Cove Springs, FL, Clay HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**S CAMERON ORDWAY**

6-foot-1, 170 pounds Pulaski, TN, Giles County HS

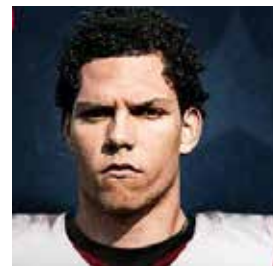
24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**ATH WILLIE HIBBLER**

6-foot-5, 233 pounds Sardis, MS, North Panola HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**QB JASON PELLERIN**

6-foot-3, 210 pounds New Iberia, LA, Catholic HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**DT ROSS DONELLY**

6-foot-2, 300 pounds Cypress, Texas, Cy-Fair HS

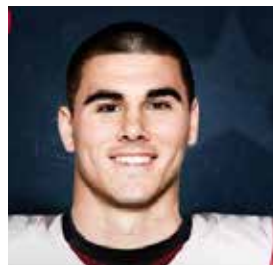
24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**DE JOE ANDERSON**

6-foot-4, 240 pounds Reserve, LA, Riverside Academy

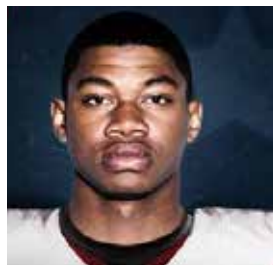
24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**QB CHAD KELLY**

6-foot-2, 215 pounds Buffalo, NY, EMCC

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**DB ARMANI LINTON**

6-foot-2, 195 pounds Walnut MS, Walnut HS

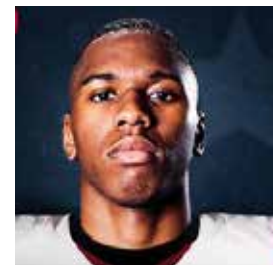
24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**CB MONTRELL CUSTIS**

6-foot-1, 175 pounds Lovejoy, GA, Lovejoy HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**DE RASOOL CLEMONS**

6-foot-4, 210 pounds Aiken, SC, South Aiken HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**LB TERRY CALDWELL**

6-foot-2, 220 pounds Wilmington, NC, NEMCC

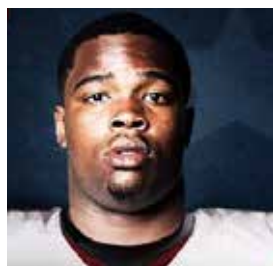
24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**OT ALEX GIVENS**

6-foot-6, 280 pounds Nashville, TN, NCAA

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**DE AUSTRIAN ROBINSON**

6-foot-4, 270 pounds Pawling, NY, Trinity Pawling School

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**OL SHAWN CURTIS**

6-foot-2, 245 pounds Miami, FL, RWRDSHS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★



**OL ZEDRICK WOODS**

5-foot-11, 200 pounds, Lake City, FL, Columbia HS

24/7 Sports ★★★★★  
 ESPN ★★★★★  
 Rivals ★★★★★  
 Scout ★★★★★