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## FedEx Gift Supports University's STEM Efforts

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## FedEx Gift Supports University's STEM Efforts

Donation to UM Science Building Fund honors alumnus Jim Barksdale

AUGUST 15, 2019 BY BILL DABNEY

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Jim Barksdale (left) chats with Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez, director of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, and former Honors College student Sierra Mannie. Photo by Nathan Latil/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – With a \$250,000 gift to the **University of Mississippi** Science Building Fund, FedEx Corp. has honored Ole Miss alumnus Jim Barksdale upon his retirement as a longtime member of the global shipping company's leadership team.

"Jim was an innovative leader during his tenure at FedEx and went on to serve as an outstanding board member for almost two decades," said Frederick W. Smith, chairman and CEO. "We at FedEx are pleased to honor him for his great contributions to our company."

Barksdale served 13 years in various senior management positions at FedEx Express, including executive vice president and chief operating officer. He also provided leadership on the company's board of directors for 19 years.

"I was quite honored in receiving such a wonderful gift from FedEx and was very excited, as was my family," said Barksdale, of Jackson. "FedEx was and is a part of my life. I am glad to be appreciated in this way."

FedEx asked Barksdale to choose where to direct the gift at Ole Miss.

"I chose to devote my gift to the STEM Building Fund because I think it will be significant to further our STEM training at the university," said Barksdale, a 1965 graduate of the UM School of Business Administration. "The future of the economic world depends upon having more graduates in science, technology, engineering and math, and I hope my gift will be in furtherance of those aims."

Barksdale himself is an innovator credited with leading the development of package tracking computer systems for FedEx. Additionally, on the board, he served as the chair of the Information Technology Oversight Committee.

Since the launch of the university's Tech Summit in 2016, Barksdale has played a key role in the annual event that brings together leaders from government, business, and higher education to explore trends in technology and to stimulate discussions about technology-related needs in industry and education.

The new STEM building will be designed to enhance active or cooperative learning, which is a departure from students simply listening to a professor's lecture. Students will spend class time in group work and discussions.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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#### Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

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

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#### 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

The former lecture materials will be delivered in modules that the students read on their laptops at their convenience. Faculty members will see quiz results and know what material students had difficulty with, enabling them to target those areas in the next classes.



The planned UM science, technology, engineering and mathematics building will be an important tool to bolster science literacy in Mississippi by providing active learning classrooms and state-of-the-art labs to prepare STEM majors and K-12 teachers of those subjects. The 200,000-plus-square-foot facility is poised to be the crown jewel of the university's Science District along University Avenue.

"It's time that we put a stake in the ground and say that Mississippi is going to lead the way in respect to STEM," said David Rock, UM education dean. "The way we're going to do that is to engage our children all across the state.

"We need to actively involve our K-12 partners to show all of our children the truly amazing things we're doing at Ole Miss and the great opportunities we offer with respect to technology, math and the sciences."

The company's gift reflects its own vision for the future, said Rose Jackson Flenorl, a UM alumna from Cordova, Tennessee, and manager of FedEx Global Citizenship.

"With this investment to the UM Science Building, FedEx is investing in the next generation of leaders and innovators in science and STEM by providing competitive facilities and a commitment to advancing the industry research and innovation," she said.

Site work has been completed on the new building. Among factors driving plans is the crucial need on the state, regional and national level to increase graduates in STEM fields.

The 204,000-square-foot building, which will anchor the Science District in the heart of campus, has an estimated project cost of \$160 million. Private support is being sought for the state-of-the-art facility, which will serve all Ole Miss students with active learning classrooms and labs.

"The FedEx gift in honor of one of our most esteemed graduates, Jim Barksdale, gives significant support to our vision to become one of the nation's leading student-centered learning environments for STEM education," Interim Chancellor Larry Sparks said. "He has done so much for the university throughout his professional life and we greatly appreciate his interest in shaping our future."

A former member of the UM Foundation Board of Directors, Barksdale served as president and chief executive officer of Netscape Communications Corp. from January 1995 until the company merged with America Online in March 1999. After the merger, Barksdale joined Time Warner's board of directors. Before Netscape, he served as CEO of AT&T Wireless Services.

The Barksdale Foundation established the university's [Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College](#) in 1997, and in January 2000, the foundation granted \$100 million to the state of Mississippi to create the [Barksdale Reading Institute](#) to help Mississippi children improve their reading skills.

In 2008, Barksdale and his wife, Donna Kennedy Barksdale, presented a gift to the [School of Education](#) to create the Mississippi Principal Corps, an initiative designed to change the way school principals are trained. The Barksdales have also sponsored Parents for Public Schools' "Schoolhouse to Statehouse" project, which trains parents to become more engaged with public schools.

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina, Barksdale was appointed by Gov. Haley Barbour to chair the Governor's Commission on the Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal of Mississippi. He was subsequently asked by Barbour to chair the Mississippi Broadband Connect Coalition.

In January 2012, Gov. Phil Bryant appointed Barksdale as interim executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority. Later that year, Bryant also appointed him co-chair of Mississippi Works, a working group of business leaders focused on achieving greater economic success for the state.

Besides the FedEx board, Barksdale has served on the boards of Time Warner and In-Q-Tel. He also was appointed to the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board by President George W. Bush.

The UM Science Building Fund is open to gifts from individuals and organizations. Checks, with the endowment noted in the memo line, can be mailed to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. Gifts also can be made online by visiting <http://give.olemiss.edu>.

For more information on ways to support the Science Building Fund, contact Charlotte Parks, vice chancellor for development, at [cpparks@olemiss.edu](mailto:cpparks@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-3120.

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