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## Following in Their Footsteps

### Sistrunk triplets discover paths to health care careers through Ole Miss

JUNE 3, 2019 BY DANA ENGELBERT



Katherine (left), Will and Ann Weston Sistrunk celebrate earning their degrees May 11 at the University of Mississippi's Commencement ceremonies. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Ann Weston, Katherine and Will Sistrunk have gone their separate ways for the first time ever. The Springfield, Missouri, triplets and **University of Mississippi** graduates have been attached at the hip their whole lives, including their time at Ole Miss. Despite three different paths forward, the trio remain connected through their individual pursuits in health care.

The Sistrunks' parents, Dr. William and Camille Sistrunk, are Ole Miss alumni who frequently brought their children to Oxford.

"We grew up coming to Ole Miss and to visit family in Mississippi, even though we lived in Missouri," Ann Weston said.

All three noted that their parents encouraged them to choose their own paths and never focused on Ole Miss as the preferred choice.

"Ann Weston and I were looking at other schools," Will said. "Eventually we visited more and realized that we didn't want to be apart right away, though it wasn't the deciding factor."

The academic and service-related opportunities available at Ole Miss ultimately made the decision clear-cut. And to say they have seized those opportunities would be an understatement, as all three graduated with induction into both Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi academic honor societies.

Ann Weston and Katherine chose the public policy leadership degree in the **Trent Lott Leadership Institute**.

"Our mom actually showed us the program when we were seniors in high school and thought it was something we should consider," Ann Weston said. "It's been a great experience being a part of a small community of students with similar interests."

"I knew I wanted to do something different," Katherine said. "I did have an interest in health policy and realized that a degree in public policy leadership could really prepare you for a career in anything."

Opportunities within the **College of Liberal Arts** allowed them to diversify their studies.

"Ann Weston and I are both Spanish minors, which has allowed us to broaden our education here at Ole Miss and abroad," Katherine said. "We've learned a lot more than the basics."

Ann Weston also pursued a minor through the nationally recognized **Center for Intelligence and**

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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

**Security Studies**, demonstrating the various opportunities that can be pursued outside a major.

Will also supplemented his biology major with minors in chemistry and society and health.

"They've broadened my horizons by looking at psychology and ethics," Will said. "I didn't just focus on biology; I was able to learn how everything works together, and what I want to do with my career."

He conducted research in biochemistry and natural products and taught a freshman biology lab, where he enjoyed interacting with students.

Through the **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College**, special programs further expanded their learning. All three participated in a **biomedical ethics class** in Washington, D.C., during winter intersession, and Will further pursued his interest in bioethics, participating in a medical ethics and humanities internship at the Pellegrino Institute at Georgetown University in summer 2018.

Will also participated in a professional shadowing program that fueled his interest in the medical program at the **University of Mississippi Medical Center** in Jackson. Continuing her interest in health care through the Honors College, Ann Weston completed a Frate Fellowship in Bioethics and Medical Humanities at UMMC.

The Sistrunks academic endeavors were rewarded. Besides their honor society memberships, Ann Weston earned a Taylor Medal, the university's highest academic achievement.

Outside academics, all three worked to ensure fellow and prospective students experienced the family atmosphere they enjoyed through active involvement in the Greek community and student leadership.

Ann Weston worked as an Ole Miss Ambassador, showing prospective students and their families around campus. Katherine worked in the Office of Admissions, serving as an orientation leader.

At graduation, Will finished his term as co-director of the Future Alumni Network in the Student Alumni Council.

Though the Sistrunk parents are supportive of each child making their own path, it is clear their efforts have shaped Ann Weston, Katherine and Will as individuals.

William Sistrunk is an infectious disease physician practicing at Mercy Health Systems in Springfield, and wife Camille earned her Ole Miss degree in health information management systems.

"Our dad really modeled how important the field is," Ann Weston said. "He showed genuine care for his patients and the people around him. He shined the light on the impact you can have in your profession."

With undergraduate degrees in hand, Will is staying in Mississippi to attend the UM Medical Center.

Ann Weston will attend the University of Minnesota School of Public Health for a master's degree in health care administration. She plans to continue studying health care needs across the country, particularly in rural areas.

Katherine will pursue a master's degree in nursing at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in Baltimore. She was attracted to the program for its strong health care policy and advocacy emphasis, which she plans to combine with a clinical nursing career.

Though it will mark the first time they aren't in the same place, the Sistrunk triplets know they have support from and for one other, and they already reflect fondly on their time at UM.

"Ole Miss is a great school," Katherine said. "There are so many unique learning experiences, so many opportunities to do things outside of your major."

"The opportunities here really set us apart for graduate school and our future," Ann Weston said. "The resources that the University of Mississippi has provided have been exceptional and will only continue to grow with strong alumni support."

"Ole Miss is much more than just a typical state school," Will said. "It is a great example of outstanding education and initiative to lead Mississippi to a greater future."

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After spending their whole lives together, the Sistrunk triplets – Katherine (left), Will and Ann Weston – are preparing to go in different directions in pursuit of health care-related careers following their graduation from the University of Mississippi. Submitted photo

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