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Gift Supports Business Students, Student-Athletes

UM alumna supports budding entrepreneurs, athletics support programs

MARCH 5, 2021 BY BILL DABNEY



Archive Photo: UM business student Prahar Patel, of Ridgeland, presents a business plan during the 2019 Gillespie Business Plan Competition. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – **University of Mississippi** student-athletes and business students will benefit from recent gifts made by alumna Steve Rowell, of Brandon.

Rowell's gift stemmed from two thoughts: He was concerned about the impact the pandemic has had on Ole Miss athletics programs. Also, he knows firsthand that starting a business can be challenging and hopes his gift to the **School of Business Administration** will ease the struggle for young entrepreneurs.

The 1978 accountancy graduate's gift establishes the Stephen E. Rowell Entrepreneur Award, a \$5,000 prize that will be awarded annually to students selected among those participating in the Gillespie Business Plan Competition.

Rowell, owner of Flagstar Construction, said he enjoyed watching students' presentations when he served on the business school's advisory board.

"They all had so much enthusiasm for their respective ideas and they were looking for seed money to help turn their ideas into bona fide businesses," he said. "I believe there are too many talkers and not enough doers in the world today, so I hope my gift enables some of these students to continue with their ideas and further their entrepreneurial spirit."

Organized by the business school's **Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship**, the annual Gillespie Business Plan Competition is designed to foster entrepreneurship by encouraging students to develop their business ideas. Competitors receive mentoring from entrepreneurial leaders throughout the competition and many students subsequently launch successful companies based on their business plans.

Rowell's award will be issued by the CIE to an individual or venture team during the competition's awards reception. On pitch day, winning teams will split more than \$20,000 in scholarships, prizes and support. For a look at other prizes in the competition, [click here](#).

Rowell said the purpose of his award is to help validate students' ideas, giving them confidence in bringing them to fruition.

"Our economy now is global," he said. "Our competitors for good and useful products and services are not just in the United States but also in

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

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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Ole Miss In the News

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

other continents. Students' skills need to be honed at this early age to be able to compete in both national and international markets."

Check out the [2020 Gillespie Business Plan winner here](#).

Business school Dean Ken Cyree expressed gratitude for Rowell's gift.

"Steve's support of our business plan competition will have a lasting impact on a large number of students for generations to come," Cyree said.

"It has been an honor to get to know Steve. We greatly appreciate his service on our advisory board and moreover his desire to see us maintain our level of excellence in higher education."

Besides his support of the business school, Rowell established a scholarship endowment in 2008 to memorialize his father, William Paul Rowell. He also has made major gifts to Ole Miss athletics programs.

"Steve's recent cash gift to athletics was his way of stepping up and showing support for our For the Rebs campaign," said Jordie Kindervater, associate director for development in the Ole Miss Athletics Foundation. "We trust his gift will set an example for others to follow during these challenging times."

Rowell hopes so too.

"Because of the pandemic and the loss of revenue last year, I felt like it was a good time to contribute more money to Ole Miss athletics," he said, adding that he has been impressed by the program's upward trajectory under Athletics Director Keith Carter. "While I realize what I contributed is just a drop in the bucket of what's needed, I hope it helps with expenses.

"Hopefully, many more alumni and other fans will make similar contributions to help out. If we all help, we can make a difference."

The [Department of Intercollegiate Athletics](#) provides more than 400 student-athletes with resources not only to compete for championships but also to experience support such as academic services (\$1.8 million); health, nutrition and sports performance (\$6.9 million); and scholarships (\$13 million).

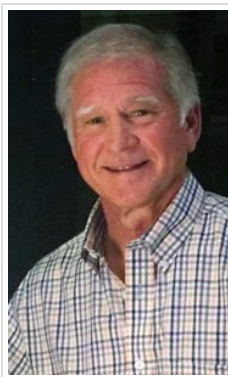
"Due to limited seating capacity because of COVID-19 restrictions, continuing to provide these services has been challenging without financial assistance from loyal fans like Steve," Kindervater said.

Contributions to For the Rebs are 90% tax deductible and earn triple priority points.

For more information on supporting Ole Miss athletics, visit <https://givetoathletics.com> or contact Denson Hollis, associate athletics director/chief development officer, at dhollis@olemiss.edu or 662-915-8455.

To make a gift to the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, [click here](#). To make a gift in support of the Gillespie Business Plan Competition, [click here](#).

For information about supporting the School of Business Administration or setting up a specific Gillespie Competition award, contact Sally Rychlak, development associate, at sally@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3084, or Angela Brown, senior director of development, at browna@olemiss.edu or 662-915-3181.



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