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Gift Supports Student-Athletes' Mental Health

Shelly gift to name counseling room in upgraded Manning Center

JANUARY 10, 2023 BY BILL DABNEY

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Ole Miss Athletics Foundation CEO Denson Hollis (left) greets Lori and Keith Shelly outside Vaught-Hemingway Stadium. Photo by Bill Dabney/UM Foundation

OXFORD, Miss. – **University of Mississippi** graduate and former Rebel basketball player Keith Shelly's gift to Ole Miss athletics will help student-athletes keep their heads in the game.

Oxford residents Shelly and his wife, Lori, have given \$125,000 to the **Ole Miss Athletics Foundation's CHAMPIONS. NOW.** campaign. To honor their gift, the Shelly name will adorn a counseling room within the **Olivia and Archie Manning Athletics Performance Center**, which is expected to complete a \$45 million renovation by July 2023.

"Both Lori and I worked in mental health most of our adult lives and are passionate about the Ole Miss student-athletes having access to quality care in a safe, comfortable environment that prioritizes their emotional health," Keith Shelly said.

Today, student-athletes can meet one-on-one confidentially with a mental health professional in the **FedEx Student Athlete Academic Support Center**. Once the Manning Center renovation is complete, counseling and sport psychology services will be moved to the new dedicated space.

"I love that the Shellys are aware of how important mental health is for our student-athletes," said Josie Nicholson, assistant athletic director for sport psychology. "Mental health is our primary driver. That's the main reason our student-athletes come to see us.

"When we help improve their overall wellness by removing obstacles to both mental health and sports performance, it puts a better product on the field while facilitating personal success in life in general."

Nicholson, who founded sport psychology services at Ole Miss in 2011, and two additional clinicians help student-athletes address such issues as depression, family problems and relationship challenges.

"Most student-athletes realize the importance of physical preparation, but great student-athletes recognize that placing emphasis on mental preparation as well as physical preparation facilitates optimal performance," she said.

Mental health obstacles are frequently the root cause of student-athletes' performance issues such as low confidence, difficulty communicating with teammates or coaches, distractibility, lack of joy and fun in sport, inconsistent performing, taking too few or too many risks, lack of motivation, performance slumps, unproductive self-coaching, ineffective leadership skills and sub-optimal team dynamics.

The Shellys are familiar with these challenges, both as athletes themselves and by having longtime

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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

careers in health care.

After graduating from Ole Miss with a pharmacy degree, Keith Shelly had an opportunity to own an independent pharmacy while serving as director of three pharmacies in outpatient mental health clinics in Nashville, Tennessee.

Lori Shelly, who has a graduate degree in psychology, worked as the manager of one of those clinics. In fact, that's where the couple became close.

During a return to the Ole Miss campus, Keith Shelly proposed under the stars at Kennon Observatory and the two were later married at Paris-Yates Chapel. He is proud that both his daughters, Karah Sprouse and Kalyn Dennis, are also UM graduates. The Shellys love celebrating Ole Miss traditions with their five grandchildren.

"Lori is the love of my life and the most gifted mental health professional I have ever known," Shelly said. "We could not be more pleased to have our names attached to the counseling center in the newly renovated Manning Center, and it gives us immense joy to know so many of our student-athletes will be beneficiaries of the great work that will be accomplished there."

Denson Hollis, the athletics foundation's CEO, expressed gratitude for the Shellys' gift.

"With gifts like theirs, we are able to greatly improve many facets of our athletics offerings, giving our student-athletes a level of excellence comparable to or better than that of our peer institutions," Hollis said. "We are extremely grateful for Keith and Lori's support, their unwavering fandom and their desire to see our student-athletes have the comprehensive needed resources to compete at the highest level."

In the renovated Manning Center, supported by gifts to CHAMPIONS. NOW., Ole Miss athletes will train in a 10,710-square-foot weight room, featuring a cardio mezzanine, yoga/Pilates space, fueling stations and offices for the nutrition staff. The training room will also expand and provide additional recovery benefits, including hydrotherapy, massage therapy, compression units, two sensory deprivation tanks, cold and hot tubs, and new concussion rehabilitation technology.

The Van Devender Family Foundation Locker Room will receive a complete makeover and will be expanded to include a barber shop, hydro tanks, plunge pools, a players' lounge and fueling station.

All new office spaces will be built, including separate offensive and defensive team meeting rooms, to supplement the existing Roland and Sheryl Burns Team Meeting Room. Office layouts will be streamlined for offensive, defensive, analytics and recruiting staffs, and plans include a renovated head coach's office.

Additionally, the equipment room will be expanded along with an ESPN/SEC Network bureau cam room, a photo and video studio, and a media workroom. The new Williams-Reed Foyer will welcome visitors to the Ole Miss football headquarters and the Gina and Chip Crunk Grill at 1810 will remain to prepare meals for the Rebels.

To make a gift in support of Ole Miss athletics, visit [CHAMPIONS. NOW.](#) or contact Denson Hollis at dhollis@olemiss.edu or 615-957-4372.

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