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Honoring a Father's Memory

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Honoring a Father's Memory

Waddell gift names mezzanine at The Pavilion at Ole Miss

FEBRUARY 20, 2021 BY BILL DABNEY

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Ray Waddell (left) and his father, Rayburn Waddell, attend an Ole Miss football game together. Waddell has honored his late father with a gift to rename a mezzanine in The Pavilion at Ole Miss. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Former Rebel basketball player Ray Waddell, of Dallas, Texas, has made a gift to the **University of Mississippi** that honors his late father by naming a mezzanine in **The Pavilion at Ole Miss**, the Rebels' state-of-the-art arena.

Rayburn Waddell, of Madison, died in August 2020.

"I enjoy giving back to the community and chose to support the Vaught Society in honor of my father because he was a big Rebel fan," said Waddell, a native of Philadelphia who grew up attending Ole Miss games with his dad.

In college, watching basketball from the stands was too far away from the action, so Waddell was asked to walk on, joining the team under Coach Rod Barnes in 2000.

"The tough training and practices helped build character, and I formed some lifelong friendships," said Waddell, founder and CEO of **CEC Cos.**, a specialty contracting and engineering company in the mechanical, electrical, plumbing and technology space.

Keith Carter, athletics director and vice chancellor for intercollegiate athletics, expressed his gratitude for Waddell's gift.

"It's so encouraging to see one of our former players give back to our program, and I greatly admire Ray for wanting his gift to be unrestricted, meaning it can be used to support any of our initiatives that are designed to help our student-athletes succeed in college and beyond," Carter said.

Waddell himself is an example of a player who found a measure of success. After earning a bachelor's degree from the College of Liberal Arts in 2001, he worked for Cellular South and T-Mobile before joining W.G Yates & Sons Construction, where he built a rewarding career as director of business development.

Then, with a passion to run his own company, he started CEC Electrical Inc. in 2009. In a few short years, CEC became one of the largest subcontractors in the country with more than 800 employees and \$200 million in annual revenues.

"Success is a subjective term," Waddell said. "It means a lot of different things to certain people. For me, it's having a sustainable business that lives by its core values and provides a great working

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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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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

environment for our employees.”

He met his wife, Angelique, on the Oxford campus in 1999. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UM in 2003 and a law degree from Tulane Law School in 2006; the couple was married in 2008. They have three children: Charlie, 9; Madeleine, 7; and Mary Lehmann, 3.

Waddell, who now plays golf more than basketball, has a favorite memory from his Rebel days: the time he hit a three-point shot at the buzzer in Rupp Arena, home of the University of Kentucky’s Wildcats.

Another fond memory came only a few years ago.

“I had my wife, kids, Mom, Dad and my in-laws in the Grove for a football game day and I was able to take them all over to the Gibbs Letterwinner Walk and show them my name on the M-Club wall,” he remembered. “That was really a cool thing to be able to do with my family, and especially with my Dad.”

Waddell is a board member of the ACE Mentor Program and president and board member of The Heartland Group Captive Insurance Group; he was named Most Admired CEO in 2018 by the Dallas Business Journal.

The late Rayburn Waddell was a native and longtime resident of Neshoba County. He graduated from Philadelphia High School, where he played and excelled in basketball. He then played at East Central Junior College under the late Denver Brackeen.

While an Ole Miss Rebel in 1955, Brackeen topped the SEC in scoring, earning second-team All-America and unanimous All-SEC honors.

Ray Waddell said one of his father’s favorite teammates was Van Chancellor, former Ole Miss women’s basketball coach.

“Dad told me he would always pass the ball to Van because he knew Van would pass it back for him to shoot a basket,” Waddell said.

The owner of an auto auction, the senior Waddell also was alderman of Ward 1 from 1989 to 1997 and mayor of Philadelphia from 1997 to 2009. Additionally, he was a member of First Baptist Church of Madison and former member and deacon at First Baptist Church of Philadelphia.

Ray Waddell said he’s looking forward to returning to campus one day to watch basketball from the mezzanine named for his dad.

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

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