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## League of Legends Communications Lead to Speak with Students

Ole Miss graduate Ryan Rigney will discuss pursuing his dreams in the gaming world

JANUARY 20, 2020 BY LAREECA RUCKER



Ryan Rigney, UM alumnus and global communications lead for the League of Legends franchise, speaks to Ole Miss journalism students at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 29 in the Overby Center auditorium. He also will be one of the featured panelists during the 2020 Jobs Conference, set for Jan. 30. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Ryan Rigney, global communications lead for the League of Legends franchise, will be the first speaker of the spring semester at the **University of Mississippi** School of Journalism and New Media.

Rigney will address an audience at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 29 in the Overby Center auditorium. He also will be one of the featured panelists during the 2020 Jobs Conference, set for 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Jan. 30 in the Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics and Farley Hall.

A native of Poplarville, Rigney, 28, said he enrolled at UM in 2010 with dreams of becoming a magazine journalist.

“While still in high school, I landed some gigs writing about video games for, first, websites and later, small-press magazines like GamePro (R.I.P.),” he said. “By the time I was in college, I’d worked my way up the ladder of the magazine world enough to write for magazines like PC Gamer, and later Wired and Edge.”

Rigney wrote about mobile games, which culminated in the publication of his book “Buttonless” (CRC Press), which examines iOS games. After graduating, he moved to Los Angeles to work for a gaming-adjacent startup.

About a year later, he landed his first job at Riot Games, the developer and publisher of League of Legends. By player count, it is the world’s most popular PC game and biggest esports, with an annual world’s championship that has drawn about 100 million unique viewers for a couple of years.

A key driver of the explosive growth of esports, Riot Games is headquartered in Los Angeles and has 23 offices worldwide.

“On paper, I’m a people manager,” he said. “I lead a team that includes our editorial lead and a quartet of senior/mid-level comms strategists who run all communications on three of Riot’s games. I operate at the ‘franchise’ level, which is just a fancy way of saying that they call me whenever we do something that covers more than one game.”

“I’m a little unusual in that I also work as an individual contributor. I write a lot of Riot’s messaging directly. I act as a spokesperson for the company on social media – Reddit/Twitter especially – and I guide our overall approach to communications. Mostly, I sit in meetings and help developers figure out how to say stuff to players.”

Rigney predicts the games industry will get bigger and more ambitious. “I think students should consider pursuing jobs in the industry because more entry-point opportunities are available than ever before,” he said.

Rigney arrived on campus as a student with big ideas and a lot of energy, said Ellen Meacham, adjunct instructor in the UM **School of Journalism and New Media**.

“He was a hard worker, too,” she said. “In 2012, he won the university’s **Gregson Award** for his business plan. I think he will also have a lot to say about what the esports and gaming world is like now, what’s in the future and how his work



League of Legends has grown to become one of the most popular video games in North America and one of the largest esports titles worldwide. Submitted photo

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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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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

in communications will shape and be shaped by that.”

Rigney said writing is one of the most valuable skills he learned at Ole Miss.

“My j-school professors taught me how to write,” he said. “Which is to say, they taught me how to think clearly and to structure information in a way that’s digestible for other people.

“Even though my job doesn’t match the degree I earned from Ole Miss, I think the lessons I learned about writing are 100 percent applicable to my current job.”

Rigney also remembers the professors who encouraged him to pursue his passion.

“I don’t know what sort of encouragement the current crop of Ole Miss students need, but I’d love to listen to their questions and share what limited knowledge I have to help them along their own paths,” he said. “I think sometimes people from Mississippi don’t think they can do the sort of work that successful people in the film industry, or literature or gaming do.

“It all seems very distant, when you grew up in the woods, like I did. I would love to help people understand how achievable their goals are, if they’re strategic about their career.”

Rigney said he doesn’t believe in one-size-fits-all advice, but he’s learned a few things about the business world.

“You have to ask for something if you’re going to get it,” he said. “That applies to jobs, and career opportunities and chances to grow.”

Tickets are not required for the event. For assistance related to a disability, contact Sarah Griffith as soon as possible at 662-915-7146. For more information about the School of Journalism and New Media, visit <http://jnm.olemiss.edu/>.

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