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## Lecture Hall to be Named for Knighton Family Foundation

Major gift directed to Patterson School of Accountancy Building Fund

JANUARY 21, 2023 BY **TINA H. HAHN**

**FaTvLiErCcSMPrSt**



Jay (left) and Vanessa Knighton, with their sons Oliver and Franklin, have made a major gift to the Patterson School of Accountancy Building Fund. A lecture hall will be named for their Knighton Family Foundation to honor their gift. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Future students at the **University of Mississippi's Patterson School of Accountancy** will be taught in the Knighton Family Foundation Lecture Hall – a name honoring a \$400,000 gift to the new building from 1998 alumnus Jay Knighton and his wife, Vanessa.

Knighton said the building demonstrates that Ole Miss and the state of Mississippi are “stepping up to the present and future need for quality educated and prepared accountants.”

“The IRS is hiring 87,000 new agents,” said the estate and tax attorney who lives and practices in The Woodlands, Texas. “The United States has more jobs for accountants than the colleges can graduate, and the industry is only growing with so many tax and accounting rules and regulations imposed by government.

“This building will set the standard for accountancy education and advancement of business.”

The university and its accountancy school gave Knighton a good foundation for his career, and he has wanted to give back to the school for some time, he said.

“Dean Mark Wilder spoke with me about this new building and the future of the program,” he said. “The potential impact of the Ole Miss accounting program for not only the university but also the tax and accounting profession is a bold step forward on a national level.

“As a family, we felt the time was right to participate in advancing that potential.”

The four-story academic building featuring 110,000 square feet of tiered auditoriums and classrooms, study areas, conference rooms, administrative and faculty office suites, and outdoor balconies and terraces will be constructed at the corner of University Avenue and Grove Loop, overlooking the iconic Grove. Its cost is estimated to be more than \$75 million.

Knighton earned a bachelor's degree in accountancy from UM, where he earned a Taylor Medal. In 2001, he earned a Juris Doctor from Tulane University School of Law, and in 2002, he earned a Master of Laws in Taxation from the University of Florida School of Law.

He is the managing partner of Knighton & Stone PLLC, a full-service estate and business planning, tax

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### 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

planning and commercial litigation firm. He is a frequent speaker at continuing education seminars for CPAs, financial planners and insurance agents.

"We are grateful to Jay, his wife, Vanessa, and the Knighton family for supporting Ole Miss accountancy education and providing this generous gift for our new building," Mark Wilder said. "This remarkable investment will help provide us with the top facility nationally for preparing our accountancy graduates for success in the professional world."

"The high-profile nature of our new building will help us recruit the best and brightest to the Patterson School, further strengthening our program and providing an opportunity for us to pursue our goal of becoming the top accounting school in the nation."

The school offers a Bachelor of Accountancy degree, four master's degrees and a doctorate in accountancy. The master's degrees include two new ones in data analytics – Master of Accountancy and Data Analytics and Master of Taxation and Data Analytics. It is the top accounting school in the SEC and has ranked among the top 10 programs nationally for more than a decade. Big4AccountingFirms.org ranked the Ole Miss program No. 8 in the nation in 2022.

Knighton issued a challenge to his fellow Texas alumni to support the school's building fund, as well as to his generation of accountancy graduates and the school's leadership.

"I believe that with the current leadership, the next wave of support will entrench the Patterson School of Accountancy as the keystone to business learning and research for not only the state of Mississippi but also the nation, all while leading development of our professions forward," he said. "The time is right to step forward."

"I challenge the leadership at the Patterson School to continue innovating to address future accounting workforce needs. The potential for growth and the positive impact of that growth is tremendous, and you are charged with leading the program forward."

Before college, the Corinth native engaged with his father's friends while playing golf, and one of them mentioned that some lawyers did work other than sue people, handle family law and deal with criminals. Knighton researched legal careers and discovered tax law and that most tax lawyers majored in accounting.

"After that research, I was determined to get a degree in accounting," he recalled. "Plus, I was smart enough to realize that an accounting major opens so many doors that I would have exciting and interesting career options for the rest of my life."

He became an estate and tax attorney, an achievement that he said was possible because of his accountancy preparation.

"Importantly, the Ole Miss accountancy curriculum filled in the blanks, so to speak, that business law classes at Tulane law and an intense tax law curriculum at the University of Florida could not thoroughly convey," he said. "The accounting program is a deep and well-rounded curriculum for anyone interested in being excellent in business and tax."

"Do you know what is rewarding about my work? I will help you understand how to protect assets, discretely own assets and transfer them to the surviving spouse and children or charities in a way that protects those assets after you pass away, minimizes estate and gift taxes, optimizes income taxes, and ensures assets remain in your family for future generations."

Knighton and his wife, a native of Santa Cruz, California, have two sons: Oliver, 6, and Franklin, 4.

To learn more about supporting the school's building fund, contact Jason McCormick, executive director of development, at [jason@olemiss.edu](mailto:jason@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-1757.

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