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Mentor, Supporter and Red-and-Blue Through and Through

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Mentor, Supporter and Red-and-Blue Through and Through

Lila Neely retires, leaving a legacy of MBA graduates and success stories

DECEMBER 1, 2021 BY STELLA CONNELL

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Lila Neely (left) works with Walter Davis, faculty director of MBA programs; Ashley McGee, director of administration of MBA programs; and Amy Johnson, records coordinator, at the School of Business Administration. Photo by Stella Connell/School of Business Administration

OXFORD, Miss. – Lila Neely believes she was diapered in red and blue, and her deep-seeded love for the **University of Mississippi** was with her at birth.

Neely comes from a devout Ole Miss family – her mother was Miss Ole Miss in 1946 and also was a cheerleader with Neely's two aunts. Her father played football following World War II and her uncles were both All-Americans.

Neely was a student from 1967 to 1971, and all five of her daughters graduated from UM. It's fair to say this group means business when they say they are a part of the Ole Miss family.

In 2005, Neely returned to the university to work as a part-time career coach. Later, she moved into various staff assistant roles until she landed firmly in the **Master of Business Administration** office as the program coordinator. She will retire at the end of the year.

"Lila starting work for us in 2007, and she immediately made a lasting impact on the MBA students, alumni and staff," said Ken Cyree, dean of the **School of Business Administration**. "Her dedication and love for Ole Miss, helping our students, and connections to alumni have been instrumental to the MBA program's success.

"She is passionate about helping our students and alumni, and always with a smile and great attitude. We will miss her dearly, and I hope that she will be able to spend lots of time with the grandkids and her family."

For 14 years, she has coordinated huge events such as the annual Speaker's Edge competition, the Friday Speaker Series and many professional development events for students.

"Lila makes coming to work each day enjoyable," said Ashley McGee, director of administration of MBA programs. She is a team player and has been an asset to our MBA team. I admire her dedication and commitment to our students. She is truly invested in the success of our MBAs."

Neely's biggest contribution has been developing the mentoring program, drawing from all the alumni she knows that she generously connects with MBA candidates to help them professionally.

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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



Lila Neely

"I believe that the joy in life evolves from the relationships we build both professionally and personally," she said. "In the beginning, I simply strived to bring people that I knew into the MBA family by introducing them to the MBAs as mentors or speakers.

"We have had some very successful matches that have grown into lifetime relationships."

The job placement rate of the program is very successful, and it ranks highly among American public universities. For 2021, Bloomberg ranked the campus program at No. 33 and U.S. News & World Report ranked the online program in seventh place for public universities.

"Lila has always shown caring and professionalism in everything she does," said Walter Davis, faculty director of MBA programs. "It has been a pleasure for me to witness firsthand the positive impact she has on the

students, faculty and staff of the MBA program.

"So many of our students benefit from her leadership and career counseling, accompanied by her amazing network in the professional community. It's been a great honor to work with her, and her impact on our program will be felt for years to come."



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