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Moon Landing Scientist Speaks with UM Students

Josephine Howard offers problem-solving advice to UM students

APRIL 29, 2015 BY DENNIS IRWIN

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Josephine Howard talks with students during a recent visit to campus.

OXFORD, Miss. – A veteran scientist who helped NASA achieve one of the crowning achievements of the 20th century visited the University of Mississippi recently to challenge students to face life’s problems by first checking their assumptions.

UM alumna Josephine Howard, who helped put Apollo 11 on the moon in 1969, discussed relating mathematical studies to life applications during a lighthearted gathering April 21 in Hume Hall. Howard recalled sitting behind James

Meredith in one of her classes, then talked about one of her first jobs, which involved developing programs to guide a spaceship through the Earth and moon’s orbits for the first lunar landing. She also talked about some of her current projects, which include writing a novel.

Overall, her main goal was to inspire. She encouraged students to understand that problems, just as in mathematics, will always be present, but they should look past their assumptions when solving them. She challenged students to revisit their assumptions and evaluate choices from other angles.

“Whatever you do in life, whatever you think, your choices are based on your assumptions,” Howard said. “On all your choices, go back and check your assumptions; if your assumptions are wrong, you may discover you are way off base.”

Howard’s visit offered students a different perspective on subjects related to mathematics and suggested that students should branch out of their subjects and learn as much as possible for the value that knowledge will have in their long-term careers.

The lecture provided an incredible opportunity for students to speak with a veteran scientist, said James Reid, professor and interim chair of mathematics.

“Howard reminds me a lot of our students because she is very industrious,” Reid said. “This is one of the most exciting speakers our undergraduates will have an opportunity to hear.”

Howard has worn many hats throughout her career. She worked on design trajectory for the Apollo lunar missions, programmed data management programs for oil and gas companies, wrote control language for data management systems, and organized and implemented successful political campaigns for 18 years.

She also has taught junior high and high school, operated her own real estate company and helped found Living Water International, an organization that helps provide clean water in 26 countries. She also assisted with typhoon relief in countries affected by a 2013 typhoon.

Howard graduated from UM in 1964 with her bachelor’s degree in mathematics and minors in psychology, French and education. She earned her master’s in combined science of mathematics and biology from UM in 1967.

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OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children’s play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith’s Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school’s first African-American student.

“James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier,” a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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