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5-21-2014

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Recommended Citation

Garrett, Erin, "Pharmacy School Honors Distinguished Alumnus" (2014). *University of Mississippi News*. 4026.

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Pharmacy School Honors Distinguished Alumnus

Syed Abidi honored for professional accomplishments, service

MAY 21, 2014 BY ERIN GARRETT

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Pharmacy dean David D. Allen (left) and Syed Abidi

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi **School of Pharmacy** recently honored alumnus Syed Abidi, CEO of **Pharmaceutics International Inc.**, for his outstanding career and service to the school.

Abidi, who earned a doctoral degree in pharmaceuticals in 1980, was presented with the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award April 5 during the school's annual Alumni Weekend awards banquet.

"I think this award is an honor, and I'm really humbled by accepting it," Abidi said. "It shows that the university thinks I've contributed something to the sciences and to the school."

After receiving his Ph.D. from Ole Miss, Abidi joined Duquesne University's School of Pharmacy as an assistant professor of pharmaceuticals. He then worked for Schering-Plough as a senior scientist for six years before moving to Applied Analytical Inc. as principal scientist from 1989 to 1990.

"It was always in the back of my mind that one day I would have my own business," Abidi said. "When I went to AAI, I saw the president of the company had a similar background. I thought that if he could do it, so could I."

In 1994, Abidi created Pii, which quickly became one of the leading pharmaceutical development companies in the world.

"Pii is recognized as one (of the), if not the most, high-quality pharmaceutical development companies out there," said Walt Chambliss, UM director of technology management. "I think that's what Syed set out to do."

Chambliss first met Abidi when they were both in graduate school at Ole Miss. As a senior graduate student, Abidi served as a mentor to Chambliss.

"I think he's a prototype of the kind of research scientist that we like to create at Ole Miss," Chambliss said. "He's a pharmacist, he's dedicated to the pharmaceutical sciences and he's given back to the university in a number of ways."

Abidi has remained active in the university's pharmaceutical education programs over the years. His company supports the university's Distinguished Research and Creative Achievement Award and sponsors the School of Pharmacy's Alumni and Friends Luncheon, which is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists.

In 2012, Abidi's company made a gift to the school to support pharmaceutical education for graduate students and to create the Pii Center for Pharmaceutical Technology, a center devoted to research related to hot-melt extrusion and other pharmaceutical-processing technologies.

David D. Allen, the pharmacy school's dean, presented the award to Abidi at the banquet.

"I was thrilled to honor Dr. Abidi with our Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award," Allen said. "He is a remarkable individual who has accomplished a great deal over the course of his career. We are grateful for his dedication to our school and pharmaceuticals department."

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