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Lynn Adams Wilkins

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## Pride of the South Night Set for Thursday in Vaught-Hemingway

Ole Miss marching band appears for the first time on the field this season

NOVEMBER 2, 2020 BY LYNN ADAMS WILKINS



Catherine Adams, in her second year as a drum major for the Pride of the South marching band, said she is excited at the opportunity for the band to show off its halftime shows to fans in Vaught-Hemingway Stadium. The Thursday concert will be the band's only on-field performance this season. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Playing on field is the dream of many marching band musicians. The crowd, the music, the spirit, the energy – it's all part of the experience.

Like many beloved public experiences, unfortunately, the on-field halftime show was a casualty of 2020, but the **University of Mississippi** marching band has made other plans, and everyone is invited to a free show.

The **Pride of the South** will take the field at Vaught-Hemingway Stadium at 7 p.m. Thursday (Nov. 5) to perform its halftime shows, pre-game Grove show and a surprise or two. Band members and spectators will abide by normal game day protocols for masks and distancing.

Although the Pride of the South has been performing from the stands at home games, it's been a different sort of experience, says Randy Dale, director of athletics bands for the **Department of Music**.

"The students were very disappointed about the news this year that restricted marching bands to smaller numbers with no on-field performances at football games," Dale said.

"Our students work very hard, and public performances serve as a reward for all of that time and effort. For our senior members, it was extremely important to at least try to get them on the field in Vaught-Hemingway Stadium one last time."

The process was not simple, but all partners were fully behind the idea.

"The UM athletics administration and band staff worked very closely and intently to try to get this done for our students," Dale said. "Once we came up with a good plan, we submitted it to the University of Mississippi's COVID-19 Task Force for approval."

One fan who intends to be in the stands for the performance is Keith Carter, vice chancellor for intercollegiate athletics.

"We are really excited for the Pride of the South Night," Carter said. "It is so unfortunate that they can't perform at the games, but I think it was the best decision. We just felt like we needed to give them the opportunity to perform on the field because they work so hard and are a huge part of our game day

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#### Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

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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#### Thank You To Our Donors

#### 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.

experience.

"While this might not make up completely for not being able to perform during games, our hope is that it will allow them to experience the true feel of being on the field. Hopefully things will get back to normal next year and they will be right back where they need to be."

Band directors responded to the 2020 limitations on capacity and density by dividing the Pride of the South into two bands. This allowed half the band to be in the stands at Ole Miss home games to contribute that classic college football game day sound while observing the strict safety protocols that govern music-making by any Department of Music performing ensemble.

"The Department of Music has gone to great lengths to do everything they can to keep our students' degrees on track during the pandemic," Provost Noel Wilkin said. "Music has faced challenges that go beyond just the classroom setting."

"Once again, they have figured out how to enable the public to enjoy an amazing performance that we have come to expect from the Pride of the South. I am deeply grateful for the hard work and dedication of the faculty and staff of the Department of Music for doing everything they can to enable our students to have these opportunities and experiences safely."

Not being able to perform as a full band, and not being able to play on-field for fans has been a real adjustment, said Catherine Adams, a senior drum major, trumpeter and music major from Saltillo. This makes Thursday's public performance even more special, she said.

"Honestly, it's emotional," Adams said. "It's the last time I'll get to direct, and so it means a lot to me – and to all the seniors."

"We're excited for people to come out and see all the hard work we've put in this year. We have two amazing shows that people will love, and that we have a blast performing."

Adams said she feels the Ole Miss band is lucky.

"A lot of college bands have not even been able to meet because of challenges with capacity in their rehearsal and stadium settings," she explained. "We're fortunate to be able to rehearse and to perform in the stands. Now we're really excited about doing the full show on the field."

Jiwon Lee, a graduate assistant who performed with the Pride of the South for four years as an undergraduate student, agreed.

"I still remember my first step onto the Vaught-Hemingway field," Lee said. "Our freshmen come to us in the summer excited about the opportunity to perform on-field, so for them, and for our seniors, especially, having the chance to perform our full program this season means so much."

The Vaught-Hemingway gates open at 6:30 p.m., and the performance begins at 7. Entry is free.

Spectators are required to wear masks until they get to their seats, at which point they are encouraged to wear masks, but not required, as long as they remain 6 feet or more from other parties. Protocols for this event are the same as for football games in the stadium.

Information is available online at <https://band.olemiss.edu/prideofthesouthnight2020/>.

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"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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