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## Satisfying Their Wanderlust

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## Satisfying Their Wanderlust

**UM law alumnus Oliver Diaz and wife explore the world in retirement, one country at a time**

JUNE 29, 2019 BY **STAFF REPORT**

**FaTvLiErCoSMPSt**



Oliver Diaz stands on Table Mountain earlier this year in South Africa. Photo courtesy of Oliver Diaz

OXFORD, Miss. — A law degree can open a door to so many opportunities. For Oliver Diaz, a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Law, a storied career has led to him telling his own stories of travel.

Diaz earned his degree from the law school in 1985 and later received a Master of Laws from the University of Virginia. He practiced law on the Gulf Coast while representing Biloxi and D'Iberville in the Mississippi House of Representatives for seven years.

After serving as city attorney for D'Iberville, Diaz was elected to the Mississippi Court of Appeals in 1994. He was appointed to the state Supreme Court in 2000 and elected in 2001. In 2008, he returned to private practice.

With children grown and out of the house, Diaz and his wife, Jennifer, toyed around with the idea of traveling the world.

"We'd always talked about traveling places and doing something like that but never had the time while I was working," Diaz said.

As a lawyer and retired judge, he was often asked to speak in different locations around the United States. However, Diaz had never really spent much time traveling outside the country.

"It's hard to take time away from clients," he said.

After one family friend was diagnosed with cancer and another suffered a heart attack, the Diazes realized that if they wanted to experience the world, the time was now. But the Diazes aren't just taking weeklong trips to Europe. They are exploring every corner of the world, about eight months at a time.

He loved practicing law, and leaving that behind was tough at first.

"I decided to take a sabbatical and thought if travel didn't work out, I could always return to my practice," he said.

Last year, the Diazes explored eight countries in South America. They flew from New Orleans to Colombia and began the journey.

When the couple travels, the itinerary is flexible; they don't want to have too much set in stone. The Diazes are also not booking luxury resorts. When traveling, they want to see and experience the culture, so they stay at local hotels and hostels to meet locals and other travelers.

They also book travel arrangements during off-peak times, so locations are less crowded.

"Traveling most of the year is cheaper than living at home," Diaz said. "The most expensive part of travel is getting there."

Colombia became one of their favorite locations. The initial plan was to stay about a week, but they fell in love with Colombia and stayed seven weeks.

During their time in South America, the couple visited the Galapagos Islands, hiked in the mountains of Argentina, visited Chile's southernmost city, saw the Antarctic Circle and more.



Oliver and Jennifer Diaz attended an Ecuadorian

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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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### 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

"We've done some pretty cool things," he said.

celebration during his travels through South America.  
Photo by Oliver Diaz

Diaz, whose hobby is photography, documents all his travels on their blog, "Ol Around the World."

"I get to practice my photography skills, and the blog has a pretty decent following now," Diaz said.



Oliver Diaz is hugged by elephants during his journey through Africa this year. Photo courtesy of Oliver Diaz

The Diazes love the outdoors, so they'll often spend a few weeks hiking through the mountains and exploring the natural landscape. They usually also spend a week or so in a major nearby city.

"The best part of this has been meeting the people," he said. "We met one man who was very fluent in English and asked him for tips on what to do, and he ended up driving us around with his family for a week. We went on his family vacation with him."

Not knowing what their day is going to hold is something the Diazes look forward to.

"I don't know what city I'm going to be in when I wake up the next day, and that's exciting," he said.

This year, Diaz and his wife are traveling through the Middle East and Africa. They've already visited Jordan, seen the pyramids in Egypt and went diving with great white sharks in Cape Town.

To keep up with all their adventures, visit <https://www.olaroundtheworld.com>.

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