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## Scholarships for Chemical Engineering

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## Scholarships for Chemical Engineering

Reagan estate gift funds assistance for Ole Miss students

OCTOBER 22, 2022 BY TINA H. HAHN

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The late Norma and Jim Reagan established a scholarship endowment to benefit UM students majoring in chemical engineering. Estate gifts have brought the total of the endowment to almost \$123,000. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – The late Jim and Norma Reagan held the **University of Mississippi** close in their hearts, and an estate gift ensures their legacies will live on through scholarships for **chemical engineering** students.

The couple established the Jimmy M. and Norma S. Reagan Engineering Scholarship Endowment in 2016, and the recent estate gift brought their total contributions to almost \$123,000.

“The Reagan’s devotion to the University of Mississippi shows the importance of the personal feel of the Ole Miss engineering community and its impact on students,” said Greg Easson, interim dean of the **School of Engineering**. “Ole Miss engineering faculty invest in their students and Jim Reagan is a shining example of that investment.”

The Reagans lived on the Oxford campus while Jim Reagan earned his master’s degree and then moved to Port Arthur, Texas, for his work as a chemical engineer with Texaco. In 1977, they moved to Houston, where they remained for the next 42 years.

“My dad was in the first group of chemical engineers to use computers at Texaco,” said daughter Miriam Wattenbarger, a senior lecturer in chemical and biomolecular engineering at the University of Pennsylvania.

“He volunteered for computer training in Houston in the early 1960s. When he moved to Texaco corporate headquarters in Houston, he forecasted the production of refinery products at Texaco plants using computer programs. He always enjoyed working with computers.

“Dad talked about engineering professor Frank Anderson as being very personable and friendly. He was a mentor, and dad looked up to him. Dr. Anderson was his most influential professor at the university.”

Jim and Norma Reagan had been donors to Ole Miss since 1982, and they had also generously supported the Dr. Frank A. Anderson Engineering Endowment.

Daughter Sarah O’Dell, an organization development consultant and leadership coach at O’Dell Consulting LLC in Asheville, North Carolina, said the university meant a great deal to her parents.

“It was always dear in their hearts because it was one of the first places they lived early in their

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#### 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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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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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

marriage,” she said. “They had their first child there and made great friends. It was a special time for them.”

When asked what they would like future scholarship recipients to know about their parents, Wattenbarger said, “They wanted to give back to Ole Miss because it was so influential in my dad’s career. They greatly supported education and liked to help other people. They always supported charities.”

The couple also believed strongly in supporting education, O’Dell said.

“They were wonderful parents – people of strong faith, very loving and kind,” she said. “Learning was very important to them. My mom graduated top of her class.

“We’re all very happy that they funded the scholarship. I hope students who receive the scholarships can further their education and go on to make an impact on the world. I hope the scholarships make a difference in their lives.”

Jim Reagan grew up in Carthage and graduated with a degree in chemistry from Mississippi College in 1951. He began work at a laboratory in Jackson but was drafted into the U.S. Army to serve in Korea.

Norma Reagan, a native of Laurel, graduated from Blue Mountain College, where she earned double majors in history and English. After college, she went to work as a church secretary in Carthage.

As she reviewed the offerings each week, she saw that one member, Jim Reagan, faithfully submitted his tithe from his station in Korea.

Norma Reagan met her future husband’s parents, Mack and Bonnie Jean, at church and spent an evening at their home. The mom started writing to her son about the new young church secretary. After serving 17 months in the Army and having been promoted to sergeant, Jim Reagan was discharged and returned to Carthage in 1953.

The two met at a pecan shelling party, began courting and were married April 17, 1954. Jim Reagan earned his master’s degree at Ole Miss in 1958.

The couple was active in their church and volunteered for mission work in Mexico and Nigeria. After Jim Reagan retired, they traveled extensively together, touring China, Australia and countries across Europe.

They were married 65 years when Norma Reagan died in May 2019. Jim Reagan died in March 2021.

Besides Wattenbarger and O’Dell, the Reagans are survived by two other children, David Mack Reagan, of Nederland, Texas; and Martha Ellen Reagan, of Santa Fe, New Mexico; and four grandchildren.

The Jimmy M. and Norma S. Reagan Engineering Scholarship Endowment is open for gifts from individuals and organizations. Checks, with the scholarship name written in the memo line, can be sent to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655; or give online at <https://give.olemiss.edu>.

To learn more about supporting the UM School of Engineering, contact Greg Carter, associate director of development, at [gjcarter@olemiss.edu](mailto:gjcarter@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-1849.

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