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Surprise Gift Benefits Two UM Programs

Johnsons make major gift in honor of their graduates

DECEMBER 17, 2022 BY BILL DABNEY

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Evelyn (from left) and Jeff Johnson have established two endowments at the university, both honoring their children, Ole Miss graduates Abigail and Drew. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Siblings Abigail and Drew Johnson both treasure their experiences as students at the **University of Mississippi**, and the two programs that sparked their passions are poised to benefit from their family’s gratitude.

Parents Evelyn and Jeff Johnson, of Monroe, Louisiana, are honoring their children’s collegiate experience with a \$200,000 gift to Ole Miss, which will be divided to equally support programs within the schools of **Applied Sciences** and **Engineering**.

The couple’s gift established the Abigail Johnson Dietetics and Nutrition Support Fund and the Drew Johnson Center for Manufacturing Excellence Support Fund.

“Both of our children were blessed with a great education and wonderful experiences at Ole Miss,” Jeff Johnson said. “Drew always spoke fondly of his time at the CME and Abigail is most passionate about nutrition. It just made sense to donate to these entities.

“We hope these gifts will allow both programs to continue – and even expand – the education and experience Drew and Abigail received.”

The siblings learned of the gift when they each received a letter, thanking them for supporting the university.

“I was confused at first when I opened it better,” said Abigail Johnson, a 2019 UM graduate who majored in dietetics and nutrition.

“Once I realized what it meant, I just felt very grateful toward my parents for understanding how much my field of study means to me, and that my name gets to be on something that goes toward supporting and making the School of Applied Sciences.”

Her brother was equally surprised.

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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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Thank You To Our Donors

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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Ole Miss In the News

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

"I had no clue about it until I received a letter in the mail, thanking me for supporting the CME from Chancellor Boyce and Scott Kilpatrick, the CME executive director," said Drew Johnson, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the **School of Business Administration** in 2017 and 2021, respectively. "It was an exciting and humbling feeling to hear about the gift."

The **Haley Barbour Center for Manufacturing Excellence** provides engineering, accountancy and business students with the experience needed to be successful leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs in modern manufacturing. The LEED-certified facility includes a 12,000-square-foot manufacturing floor where students learn the importance of safety in the industrial environment, the value of teamwork and how to turn ideas into tangible products.



Attending the 2022 College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska, are (from left) Jesus Diaz, of Kansas City, Missouri; Todd Rhodes, of Cincinnati, both Chi Psi fraternity brothers of Drew Johnson (center); his sister, Abigail Johnson; mother, Evelyn Johnson; and family friend Chris Edwards of Monroe, Louisiana. Submitted photo

"Our intercession classes that gave us consulting experience were especially helpful, because they taught me how to apply what we learned in the classroom to real-world scenarios and then present solutions to leadership in a clear, concise and effective manner," said Drew Johnson, a Jackson resident who works as an analyst for the PEER Committee of the Mississippi Legislature.

After graduating from Ole Miss, he completed an international internship with Tadano Ltd., a heavy equipment manufacturer in Takamatsu, Japan, and worked as a leadership consultant for the national office of Chi Psi fraternity.

"The CME was such a unique experience, and I feel so lucky to have been a part of it because it has had a lasting impact on me and my career," he said. "Hopefully this gift can help others have a similar experience in this awesome program."

After Ole Miss, Abigail Johnson completed a dietetic internship, passed the registered dietitian exam, earned a master's degree in human nutrition from the University of Alabama and is working toward a doctorate in curriculum and instruction at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, where she also serves as an academic adviser for undergraduate students.

She previously worked as a senior nutritionist for the Mississippi State Health Department with the Women, Infants and Children program.

"My time at Ole Miss in the School of Applied Sciences made me realize my passion not only for nutrition but also for nutrition education, and because of that I am now working toward my goal of one day becoming a nutrition professor," she said.

"I absolutely loved my time studying nutrition through the School of Applied Sciences. The opportunity to have such wonderful professors and experiences is something that I appreciate even more now that I have left the university and learned just how lucky I am to have received such a great education."

The Johnsons' gift will be counted in Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss, which seeks to secure \$1.5 billion to strengthen the university for generations to come. The Johnsons also have made major gifts to Ole Miss athletics in support of player lounges for football and baseball.

Jeff Johnson is executive vice president and COO at Scott Powerline and Utility Equipment in Monroe. He graduated from Louisiana State University at Shreveport in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in secondary education and teaching. He then joined the U.S. Army, serving as a field artillery officer for three years.

In 1994, he was hired by his wife's grandfather to serve as human resource manager for their family business, Scott Equipment Co., and made the move to Scott Powerline & Utility Equipment, a spin-off of the parent company, in 2000. In his 20-plus years with the company, he has also worked as collector/credit manager and sales manager.

Evelyn Johnson attended UM but after marrying during her senior year and moving to Kansas, where her husband was stationed for his Army career, she graduated from Kansas State University. She is actively involved in her community, serving on several charity foundations and boards.

Both endowments are open to support from businesses and individuals. Gifts can be made by sending a check, with the fund's name noted on the memo line, to the UM Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. Or to make a gift online to the Abigail Johnson Dietetics and Nutrition Support Fund, **click here**. To make an online gift to the Drew Johnson Center for Manufacturing Excellence Support Fund, **click here**.

To support scholarships, schools or programs at the university, visit <https://give.olemiss.edu> or contact Nikki Neely Davis at nneely@olemiss.edu or 662-915-6678.

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