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UM History Professor Earns Prestigious Fellowship

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UM History Professor Earns Prestigious Fellowship

Jessica Wilkerson to spend coming year completing book on women-led movements in the South

JUNE 2, 2016 BY REBECCA LAUCK CLEARY



Jessica Wilkerson

OXFORD, Miss. – Jessica Wilkerson, an assistant professor of **history** and **Southern studies** at the **University of Mississippi**, is trading Oxford for Cambridge, Massachusetts, during the 2016-17 academic year as part of the Visiting Scholars Program at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The academy's Visiting Scholars Program provides residential fellowships for junior faculty members and postdoctoral scholars in the humanities and social sciences. The fellowship offers scholars a year for research and writing free from teaching and administrative duties, a collaborative work environment and an opportunity to interact with academy members.

"The academy also organizes weekly seminars when we will meet with the other fellows, as well as editors, publishers and senior scholars, to discuss our work," said Wilkerson, who has taught classes on Southern history, women's history, contemporary U.S. history and oral history at UM since fall 2014.

Her research interests include Southern and Appalachian history, U.S. women's and gender history, labor and working-class history, 20th century social movements and oral history. She earned her master's degree from Sarah Lawrence College and her doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In spring 2016, Wilkerson taught a successful graduate class on oral history techniques. The class ended with students performing short pieces from their oral histories.

One of the students in that class, Kate Wiggins, said she learned a great deal about how to capture personal stories of oral history subjects.

"I enrolled in Dr. Wilkerson's class with a curiosity about oral history, and I found that I loved it," said Wiggins, a second-year master's student in Southern studies from Boone, North Carolina. "This work is not easy, and Dr. Wilkerson's guidance and gentle nudging outside our comfort zones made us all better interviewers and students."

Wilkerson will not be required to teach any classes at the academy so she can devote all her energy to writing "Where Movements Meet: From the War on Poverty to Grassroots Feminism in the Appalachian South." The book traces the alliances forged and the grassroots movements led by women in the Appalachian South in the 1960s and '70s.

She received the news just before spring break, and said she was pleasantly surprised.

"My motto is to apply for anything and everything that could support my research and writing, and that means I am used to getting rejection letters," Wilkerson said. "But every now and then, the stars align. I feel very fortunate to have the time to pursue my writing goals, and I am grateful for the support of the academy and the University of Mississippi."

Housed at the academy headquarters, visiting scholars participate in academy-sponsored conferences, seminars and informal gatherings while advancing their scholarly research. The academy provides office space and computer services as well as library privileges in cooperation with the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University.

Nearly 60 academic institutions across the country have become university affiliates of the academy, supporting the Visiting Scholars Program and participating in academy studies on higher education.

Wilkerson said she is looking forward to meeting the other seven visiting fellows in her cohort.

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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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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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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.

"I love being a part of small, focused scholarly communities and writing groups, so it's a perfect fit for me," she said. "And while I enjoy small-town life, it will be lovely to explore a new-to-me city. Is there a more intellectually thriving place than Boston and Cambridge? Museums, bookstores, lectures, exhibits, performances galore. It will be fabulous!"

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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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