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UM Professor to Receive Mississippi Humanities Council Honor

Jodi Skipper to be given Humanities Scholar Award Feb. 10 in Jackson

FEBRUARY 3, 2017 BY EDWIN SMITH

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Jodi Skipper

OXFORD, Miss. – A University of Mississippi anthropology and Southern studies professor is among five people being honored this month by the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Jodi Skipper will receive the Humanities Scholar Award on Feb. 10 during the council's 2017 Public Humanities Awards program in Jackson. The agency recognizes outstanding contributions by Mississippians to the study and understanding of the humanities.

"I was first surprised, and then pleased, by the news," said Skipper, an assistant professor. "The MHC Humanities Scholar Award uniquely recognizes my work with local communities.

"As academicians, our value is largely associated with research and teaching, with community engagement and service often undervalued. The MHC recognizes the significance of public humanities work to academic scholarship."

A public anthropologist who thinks through how to represent difficult pasts in the present, Skipper specifically addresses the underrepresentation of enslaved communities at historic sites in the South. Her research prioritizes collaboration with communities seeking to address these issues at local levels.

"I was selected to receive this award in recognition of my involvement with the 'Behind the Big House' program, a slave dwelling interpretation program started by Jenifer Eggleston and Chelius Carter in Holly Springs," she said. "I have been privileged enough to help with their project, which interprets the lives of enslaved persons through the homes in which they once lived."

The program is the only one in the country established with that specific purpose.

"My future goal is to help develop this program as a model for other sites in the state and beyond," Skipper said.

UM administrators congratulated Skipper on her honor.



UM anthropology and Southern studies professor Jodi Skipper (center) works with the 'Behind the Big House' program in Holly Springs. Submitted photo

prestigious award."

Ted Ownby, director of UM's Center for the Study of Southern Culture and professor of history, concurred with Dellinger.

"She designed a Southern studies class about the politics of cultural tourism in the South, and students in that class both read theoretical and descriptive work about tourism and its meanings, and then they

"Jodi Skipper is a multitalented scholar who brings the skills of an archaeologist, ethnographer and public historian to her work," said Kirsten Dellinger, chair and associate professor of sociology and anthropology. "Her focus on developing programming and research projects that keep community members' interests 'front and center' represents the kind of rigorous publicly engaged scholarship our department is eager to support.

"She is a leader in this field and we are thrilled that the MHC has recognized her with this

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Campus Briefs

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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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.

go out and talk to people involved in thinking about history and how to present it to the public,” Ownby said. “It’s that kind of innovation that helped earn her the humanities award, and I’m very excited for her.”

Skipper joined the UM faculty in 2011. Besides teaching introductory courses in anthropology and Southern studies, she also leads courses on historical archaeology, African diaspora studies, Southern heritage and tourism.

A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, Skipper earned her bachelor’s degree in history from Grambling State University, a master’s in anthropology from Florida State University and a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Texas. Before coming to UM, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of South Carolina Institute for Southern Studies.

Other MHC honorees and their awards are Peggy Preshaw of Jackson, the Cora Norman Award; Richard Grant of Jackson, Preserver of Mississippi Culture Award; Museum of the Mississippi Delta in Greenwood, Humanities Partner Award; and David Morgan of Bay St. Louis, Humanities Educator Award.

Twenty-nine recipients of the 2016 Humanities Teacher Awards, including UM modern languages professor John Gutierrez, also will be honored at the event. A ceremony and reception begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson.

Tickets for the MHC Public Humanities Awards ceremony are \$50 each and may be purchased by sending a check to the Mississippi Humanities Council, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Room 317, Jackson, MS 39211, or online at <http://www.mshumanities.org/index.php/programs/awards>.

For more information about the UM Department of Sociology and Anthropology, visit <http://socanth.olemiss.edu>. For more about the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, go to <http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu>.

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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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