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Whitwells Support Ole Miss Students

Oxford couple makes major commitment to Magee Center

AUGUST 25, 2018 BY TINA H. HAHN

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Ginger and Quentin Whitwell, of Oxford, are supporting their alma mater and future Ole Miss students through a gift to the William Magee Center for Wellness Education. Photo by Bill Dabney/UM Foundation

OXFORD, Miss. – Ginger and Quentin Whitwell have found that living in Oxford, home of the **University of Mississippi**, gives them an opportunity to see the needs of college students “up close and personal,” inspiring their major support of the William Magee Center for Wellness Education.

“It’s personal,” Ginger Whitwell said. “The University of Mississippi is part of who we are.”

The Whitwells’ \$100,000 gift will build on the endowment for the new **William Magee Center for Wellness Education**, which is intended to heighten the focus on drug and alcohol education and prevention. Opening in early 2019, the center will be housed in the university’s new South Campus Recreation Facility.

The two donors join other alumni, student organizations, friends, faculty, staff, a foundation, a corporation and a church congregation that have collectively given almost \$1.3 million in an 18-month period to establish the Magee Center, with the hopes of making a difference in the lives of young people who struggle with substance misuse.

Reaching and exceeding a \$1.5 million minimum endowment goal will undergird the center’s programming and operations for years to come.

The Magee Center is named for William Magee, a 23-year-old Ole Miss alumnus and former **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College** student who lost his life to an overdose in 2013. His parents, Kent and David Magee, of Oxford, are devoting efforts toward sharing their family’s experiences in order to help others and attract support for the center.

“Kent and David are longtime friends, and we think the world of them,” said Quentin Whitwell. “When we reconnected with them after several years, we were touched by William’s story and how they are working to make sure other individuals don’t end up faced with the same circumstances.

“We admire the Magees because they have found a powerful purpose despite their tragedy. Ginger and I are in the position to help support the Magee Center and efforts to provide more support to Ole Miss students, and we are pleased to do so.”

College students across the nation are using substances to fit in, manage anxiety, manage stress and help with sleep. Among the goals of the Magee Center is increasing students’ knowledge and skills related to responsible consumption of alcohol and medicines using harm-reduction approaches.

“Kent and I expected that sharing our son’s story would be received with empathy because almost

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Students Learn ‘Real Politics’ in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates’

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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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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 abate. The Federal Reserve’s

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everyone knows or loves someone who faces the challenge of addiction,” David Magee said. “However, we have been overwhelmed by the positive responses to the Magee Center and are grateful to Quentin and Ginger for this very generous gift.

“The Whitwells are deeply committed to seeing the Oxford-University community thrive and thus have embraced this center as a means of helping students.”

The center also will seek to engage students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni and the Oxford community in alcohol- and drug-related issues and concerns – a goal the Whitwells embrace.

“The development of the Magee Center makes me proud of our university – that leadership would take a stand and address issues head on,” said Quentin Whitwell, a founding partner of the law firm Harper Whitwell PLLC and a government affairs operative. He and a partner formed The Talon Group, a lobbying firm, and Whitwell also served on the Jackson City Council, representing northeast Jackson as Ward I councilman, before moving his family to Oxford, which is also his hometown.

The gift will affect students on several fronts, said Brandi Hephner LaBanc, UM vice chancellor of [student affairs](#).

“As we approach a new academic year, our efforts to re-educate students about the risks of alcohol and other drugs will be front and center,” she said. “Wellness education is never-ending and is deeply rooted in student success.

“I deeply appreciate the Whitwells generosity – their gift will help us educate students and serve those in need. Above all, this couple’s support will help us elevate William Magee’s story so other students can make healthy decisions and excel academically.”

The Whitwells each enjoyed their undergraduate experience at Ole Miss, where Ginger Whitwell, a native of Forest, was an Ole Miss Ambassador, active on the Student Alumni Council and a member of Phi Mu sorority. Quentin Whitwell was Associated Student Body president, a Student Hall of Fame inductee and Sigma Nu fraternity member – like William and David Magee.

After graduation, Ginger earned a master’s degree in education from the University of Southern Mississippi, and Quentin earned a Juris Doctor from the [UM School of Law](#).

“Ginger and I hope to see the Magee Center become a model for other universities and other college towns to mirror,” Quentin Whitwell said. “We are very pleased that student organizations at Ole Miss, and particularly our own sorority and fraternity, are participating in funding the Magee Center and helping address the seriousness of abuse and addiction.”

To honor their support, a large wellness classroom in the new South Campus Recreation Facility will be named for the Whitwells. Ginger Whitwell has a vision for what she wants the wellness classroom to provide.

“I hope it will be a safe place for students, a place where they feel comfortable talking about the issues they face and know those issues are important,” she said. “So many times, young people think they are going to be judged and keep problems to themselves.”

It’s natural for the Whitwells to be concerned about support to students, as they are the parents of daughter Davis, 18, who is a freshman this fall at the College of Charleston. Their son Gordon, 15, is a student and athlete at the Smith Stearns Tennis Academy in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

“We talk forthrightly to our children about the issues of drugs and alcohol,” Quentin Whitwell said. “Our daughter recognizes the importance as a female leader of the need to be in control of situations that involve her.

“Our son spends so much time on fitness and understands the negative impact of drugs and alcohol on the body.”

Although the center has not opened, in-depth planning and curriculum development is underway as part of the initiative, and efforts continue to seek additional financial support to sustain the program, said Brett Barefoot, development officer for parent and family leadership.

“William’s Story” can be found at <http://www.oxfordeagle.com/2016/08/28/my-son-williams-story-shared-to-help-others/>.

The William Magee Center for Wellness Education is open to receive gifts from individuals and organizations by mailing a check with the center’s name in the memo line to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655; or online at <https://www.umfoundation.com/makeagift/>.

For more information contact Brett Barefoot, development director, at bmbarefo@olemiss.edu or 662-915-2711.

