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Alumnus Creates Partnership Between UM, Newton High School

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Alumnus Creates Partnership Between UM, Newton High School

Students coming to campus for intensive look at college possibilities

FEBRUARY 25, 2016 BY STAFF REPORT

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Randy Cuchens, a minister and community leader in Newton, meets with the Newton High School administrators as they discuss their upcoming visit to UM as part of the Grisham Fellows Program. Cuchens plans to serve as chaperone for a group of Newton High School students who will be on the UM campus March 2-3. Photo courtesy McLean Institute

OXFORD, Miss. – A group of talented Newton High School students is preparing to spend a day-and-a-half on the University of Mississippi campus, a visit that organizers hope will inspire them to better themselves and their community.

Eighteen students from the school have been named as Grisham fellows and will be on campus Wednesday and Thursday (March 2-3) for tours, lectures and a close-up look at the possibilities a college education can provide.

This opportunity was initiated by Bruce Ware, an alumnus of **Newton High School** and 1999 graduate of UM, who worked with the Newton Municipal School District, the **UM McLean Institute for Public Service and Community**

Engagement, and local minister, leader and friend Randy Cuchens to create this competitive program for Newton High School students.

“The Grisham Fellows Program was created to honor Dr. Vaughn Grisham, my dear mentor, favorite college professor, world-renowned sociologist and community development expert,” Ware said. “This fellowship will encourage young leaders to pursue higher education and challenge them to impact their communities by inspiring a lasting commitment to community service.”

Ware, who grew up in Newton, serves on the board of the McLean Institute. He is an executive with **DaVita HealthCare Partners**, which provided a financial gift to fund this partnership.

Founding director of the McLean Institute, Grisham served as director for more than 25 years. In 2012, under the leadership of Albert Nylander, the McLean Institute expanded its mission to promote transformation through service at the university and to fight poverty through education.

“The McLean Institute seeks to have a statewide impact, and this partnership with Newton High School allows us to touch the lives of more young people across Mississippi,” Nylander said. “It is our hope that spending time on a college campus can instill a sense of the ‘what’s possible’ through higher education and inspire these young people to be change agents in their community.”

While on campus, students will get to experience a college lecture by Grisham, meet with one of the university’s vice chancellors, tour Ole Miss athletics facilities (led by Newton High School graduate Rebel football staff member Larandust Coleman) and help with a service project in Lafayette County. They also will attend the Ole Miss-Mississippi State basketball game at The Pavilion at Ole Miss.

Grisham and his wife, Sandy, both retired professors, have remained active in their community development work. They also continue to be active in the classroom, training student leaders in the university’s **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College**.

Many communities have been transformed because of their work, as have the lives of the students who have studied under them, Nylander said. Their students have gone on to become leaders in a multitude of professions, including business, law, medicine, engineering, academia and K-12 education.

The Grisham Fellows Program was pioneered by Donell Wiggins of Dallas and Ware. The idea was sparked in a meeting over coffee, Ware said.

Wiggins’ husband, successful real estate investor Phillip Wiggins, was a student of Grisham’s and serves as chairman of the board for the McLean Institute.

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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.

Since its inception in 2014, the Grisham Fellows Program has fostered college visits to Ole Miss for more than 30 students, many of whom are or will become the first in their families to attend college.

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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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