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Author Kiese Laymon to Deliver Honors Convocation Address

Staff Report

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Author Kiese Laymon to Deliver Honors Convocation Address

Reception and book signing to follow Feb. 4 event at the Ford Center

 JANUARY 27, 2020 BY [STAFF REPORT](#)

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Author Kiese Laymon, a University of Mississippi faculty member, will give the address for the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College Spring Convocation at 7 p.m. Feb. 4 in the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – The [Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College](#) Spring Convocation, set for Feb. 4, features lauded author and [University of Mississippi](#) faculty member Kiese Laymon, whose memoir “Heavy” has garnered international attention and won some of literature’s highest awards.

The event, which begins at 7 p.m. in the [Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts](#), is free and open to the public. Tickets are not required, and a reception follows the event, along with a book signing.

Laymon, who serves as UM’s Otilie Schillig Professor in English and Creative Writing, has seen “Heavy” recognized as a top book by multiple outlets, including The New York Times, NPR, The Washington Post and Publishers Weekly. It has been honored with several of the highest awards in literature, including the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction.

Laymon’s keynote address will cover the topic, “What unites us?”

“To hear from the voice of Kiese Laymon, one that already commands national and international attention, is an incredible treat for our Honors students,” said Douglass Sullivan-González, dean of the Honors College. “We are honored to enjoy professor Laymon as our SMBHC Spring 2020 Convocation speaker and look forward to hearing from a colleague and a distinctive leader on our campus.”

Laymon’s book describes, often with brutal honesty, the successes, failures, happiness and sadness of growing up as an overweight black child in Jackson, and the adult that upbringing eventually created. His savage humor and clear-eyed perceptiveness have earned him comparisons to Ta-Nehisi Coates, Alice Walker and Mark Twain.

Besides “Heavy,” he is also the author of the groundbreaking essay collection “How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America” and the genre-defying novel “Long Division.” He is also working on another novel, “And So On.”

In addition to Gawker, Laymon has written for Esquire, Guernica, The Oxford American, Lit Hub and many others. A graduate of Oberlin College, he holds a master’s degree in creative writing from Indiana University.

For more information about the event, or assistance related to a disability, call 662-915-7294.

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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.



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"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UIM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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