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Farewell, chief

UPD Chief Tim Potts reflects on his time at Ole Miss



PHOTOS BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

UPD Chief Tim Potts' last day at Ole Miss is tomorrow. Potts, who has more than 25 years in law enforcement, was hired as UPD chief in June 2015. He is leaving UM to be closer to his family in Indiana.

SLADE RAND MANAGING EDITOR

s he prepares to head north to Indiana, Tim Potts thinks back to his early days behind the badge as chief of University Police. In his first year at Ole Miss, Potts saw the Ku Klux Klan visit campus twice, the state flag lowered for the final time in the Circle and a countless number of beer showers in Swayze's right field.

"I started in June (2015), but I knew in May that it was going to be interesting, to say the least," Potts said on his last full day in the office.

After 2 ¹/₂ years of leading the University Police Department, Potts has resigned and accepted a chief position at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. Ole Miss posted his position to its job site at the beginning of 2018, and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Brandi Hephner LaBanc said a search committee was formed Monday.

"He gave us 2 ^{1/2} years, but he really gave us what a lot of leaders would do in four or five," Hephner LaBanc said. "The man works constantly."

Potts, an Indiana native, said although he has a familiarity with the Purdue campus police system it's really his love of family that's pulling him back home. He said most of his belongings are already moved back home, where his college-aged daughabout the university and department here," he said.

He's headed to a smaller police department at a school without football or on-campus fraternities, but he's not headed there in search of a less hectic environment.

"I'm definitely a person who likes challenges," Potts said. "That excites me. I like the challenge of trying to figure out security and what kind of plan of action we're going to take."

And he was certainly challenged during his time on campus.

Potts said university leaders sought a way to address the growing conflict surrounding Mississippi's state flag in his very first administrative meeting on campus in 2015. That December, CBS' "60 Minutes" reported on the controversial practices of the Lafayette County Metro Narcotics Unit. Through these initial months on campus, Potts said he kept up his commitment to serving "people first."

"I think you have to be people first here and that's easy to say but it's not always easy to do," Potts said. "You have to have a servant's heart."

Still within Potts' first semester, KKK members marched twice on campus in support of the state flag, forcing him to escort them off campus to avoid conflict with count-

Winter weather prompts UM administration to enforce closure policies

BLAKE ALSUP ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Canceling classes due to winter weather can be a slippery slope for UM officials.

Two rounds of winter weather and observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day brought Ole Miss winter intersession classes to a halt for several days earlier this month.

The first closure came Jan. 12 after a winter storm of ice, sleet and snow hit the mid-South. That was supposed to be the last day of class before final exams.

The school was officially open Jan. 13, the day scheduled for finals, but it was left up to professors whether to postpone them or not.

Joshua Conaway, a senior risk management and insurance major, and Nathan Eisenhut, a senior business management major, were both enrolled in an international business course that was delayed.

Their class was canceled a total of three times. Their final exam that was originally scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 13, ended up being several days later.

"These delays were pretty frustrating just because it prevented me from leaving Oxford like I had planned to," Conaway said. "I had to review the material more than I wanted just to keep the information fresh in my mind."

"We were supposed to have our test on Saturday, but then it got pushed to Tuesday, then Wednesday, then Thursday," Eisenhut said. "It didn't necessarily take away from the experience. It was just inconvenient."

Any decision to close the university during winter weather is ultimately made by the chancellor, based on recommendations from the provost and Crisis Action Team (CAT).

CAT is made up of representatives from the University Police Department, Facilities Management, Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost and University Communications.

Provost Noel Wilkin sat in on the meetings this month. He said winter weather closures are made largely based on how a storm may affect road conditions or campus conditions.

"It is important to gather as much information as possible in advance of the storm and

SEE SNOW DAYS PAGE 3



ter Haley lives, but the decision to leave was tougher than he expected.

"It really was a hard decision, and all the credit goes to Ole Miss on that because I'm a family-first person, and I thought that I would have packed up my stuff and left in one week, but it's been difficult to separate and leave because of how I feel

er-protesters.

"Yeah, that first semester was something," Potts laughed.

He said these on-campus protests created additional work for an already stretched campus security force, but the patrols kept up their dedication

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PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Snow and ice blanketed Oxford last week, closing campus for two days.

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Freeze asks for forgiveness

Former head coach makes first public appearance since resignation discussing "private sin"
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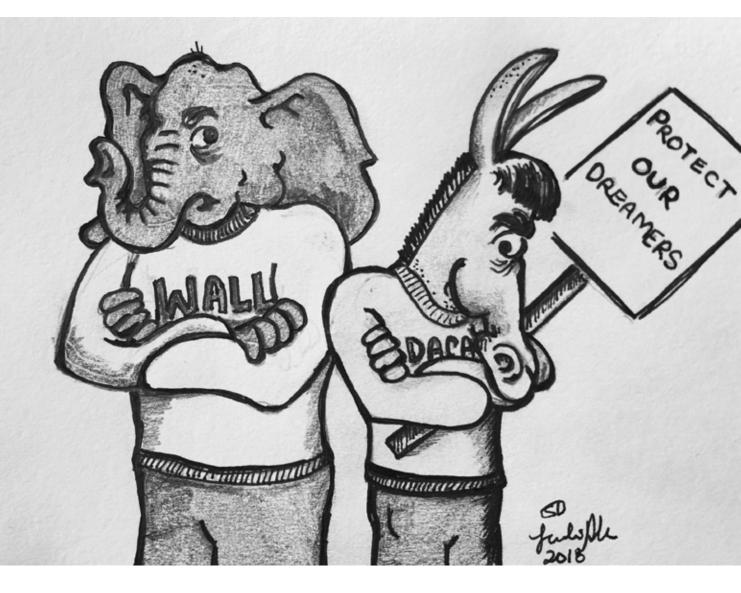
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Join the fight for Ahed Tamimi's freedom



JAZ BRISACK STAFF COLUMNIST

COLUMN

At 16 years old, Ahed Tamimi has become an international icon. Born in the Palestinian village of Nabi Salih, the curlyhaired activist has been protesting the illegal Israeli occupation since she was 9. Now, she is one of more 300 Palestinian than children currently being held in Israeli prisons. The occupation is brutal and harsh. Many unarmed

Palestinians, including children, have been shot and maimed or killed by Israeli troops. Far more are tried in military courts with conviction rates that surpass 99 percent, according to Israeli newspaper Haaretz, or simply detained on undefined charges and incarcerated in Israeli prisons, often for long and arbitrary periods of time.

From bulldozing houses, to restricting travel, to collective punishments, construction of to apartheid walls and illegal settlements, to torture, to extreme and even deadly crackdowns on peaceful protests, to denying water, healthcare food, and electricity, the occupation takes many forms.

determination to become a lawyer, even as she is forced to miss important high school exams - has had the tremendous courage to speak out.

She has been tear-gassed and hit by rubber-tipped bullets and seen many family members arrested, beaten and shot. Demolition orders have been issued against her family home. At 12, she already had nightmares and flashbacks as a result of her experiences.

On more than one occasion, she has tussled with the soldiers who have attacked her family, biting a soldier who beat her brother and, more recently, slapping the soldier who shot her 15-year-old cousin in the face with a rubber

interfering with his duties stone-throwing. and Threatened by Israeli authorities with rape and the punishment of other family members (Ahed's mother and two of her cousins have since been arrested), the teenager has remained steadfast through these days of detention, even as she faces years in prison.

Ahed's trial will begin next Wednesday. The day before, Tuesday, has been designated an international day of protest and solidarity to demand her freedom. Join me at 12:30 p.m. Jan. 30 in the Circle as we rally to free Ahed and every other political prisoner of the occupation.

Jaz Brisack is a junior general studies major from Oxford.

Assistant Dean Student Media Daily Mississippian Faculty Adviser

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Against these injustices, bullet.

Ahed – whose dreams For this last action, of being a soccer player Ahed has been charged have been replaced with with assaulting a soldier,

THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

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The Daily Mississippian welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be e-mailed to dmletters@olemiss.edu. Letters should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words. Letters may be edited for clarity, space or libel. Third-party letters and those bearing pseudonyms, pen names or "name withheld" will not be published. Publication is limited to one letter per individual per calendar month.

Letters should include phone and email contact information so that editors can verify authenticity. Letters from students should include grade classification and major; letters from faculty and staff should include title and the college, school or department where the person is employed.





MEMBER NEWSPAPER

CHIEF POTTS continued from page 1

to the safety and security of anyone on campus. He remembers the first time he confronted Klan members on campus, and said the best way to approach that situation is to be open with everyone involved. Potts said people on either side of the flag protests thanked him for his control.

"If I knew that a group was coming into campus, I tried to work with them and let them know what the guidelines were for campus and let them know what to expect from us," Potts said. Hephner LaBanc said Potts' welcoming nature and warm demeanor defined his role on campus. She said that in many ways, he led with his identity as a parent. Often, Potts went out of his way to calm worried parents who called the school with questions or concerns.

"He has a way of putting people at ease," she said. "He never hesitated – 'Let me call them. Let me talk to



Chief Tim Potts.

them. I'm a dad.'"

Along with earning the respect of parents and campus visitors, Hephner LaBanc said Potts won over his patrol staffs early on. He visited their shifts and looked out for them and even gave up his personal cruiser.

The university offered

Potts a brand-new car when he first arrived on campus, but he never liked driving it. He didn't see how he could comfortably use the new vehicle when many patrol members didn't have official cars of their own.

"I drive whatever," Potts said. "Usually the old one with 100,000 miles on it." PHOTO BY: MARLEE CRAWFORD

Potts officially offered his resignation when school returned from break, but Hephner LaBanc said he let the university know he was in the running for the Indiana job late in the fall semester.

"I was like 'Don't say it!' when he told me he was leaving, but he was very forthright, very appropriate," she said.

Now that the search committee has been charged with hiring a new chief, Hephner LaBanc said her office is beginning to draft a timeline for when a new hire would take over. The process will resemble the way similar university positions are filled, where final candidates will meet with key campus groups. Hephner LaBanc said the Title IX, game day and housing coordinators will hear candidates present, along with day and night shift officers, senior leaders and students.

She said the university is open to an internal hire, but the offer was posted internationally and sent to all graduates of the FBI national academy. Hephner LaBanc said there has been strong interest so far.

"I think it would be great to have someone in place before SEC baseball really gets ranked up," Potts said. "So they can experience it for themselves, you know, 'Welcome, look at what you've got in now.'"

SNOW DAYS continued from page 1

as the event unfolds," Wilkin said.

CAT relies upon the National Weather Service, the Emergency Management administrators for the city and county and the Mississippi Department of Transportation to determine how winter weather might affect road conditions in the Oxford area.

University officials like to make the decision as quickly as possible, but actual weather events do not always match predictions, according to Wilkin.

"In the past, we have seen storms that were predicted to occur but did not materialize, and we also have had weather events create conditions that were worse than what was predicted," Wilkin said.

CAT and provost Wilkin aim to have their recommendations made and communicated no later than an hour to 1 ¹/₂ hours before the workday begins.

"Once the final decision is made, University Communications sends out the messages," Wilkin said. Wilkin suggests everyone on the Ole Miss campus follow emergency.olemiss.edu for updates on campus conditions, schedule and emergency information. The website includes information on how to handle a range of emergencies that could happen on campus.

During an emergency, the university uses various channels to alert students. Announcements are sent out through the emergency website, the LiveSafe app, email, text messages, Twitter and can be heard by calling 662-915-1040.



Snow and ice covered campus last week.



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LIFESTYLES

PODCASTS of the week

ETHEL MWEDZIWENDIRA

DESIGN EDITOR

With the start of the new year comes time to think about making new beginnings and changes to your lifestyle. Get inspired with the following podcasts and transform your negative thoughts into positive ones.

THE SCHOOL OF GREATNESS



Hosted by former pro athlete and world record holder in football Lewis Howes, "The School of Greatness" shares stories from business gurus to influential celebrities. The podcast is purely greatness on demand, and through every episode, Howes brings the best out of each guest and provides listeners with tips and stories on what it means to be great. The podcast is centered around challenges told by guests to inspire listen-

"Happier with Gretchen Rubin" is about

building happier habits, and, like the title,

too. Rubin and her co-host, her little sister

Elizabeth, bring personal experiences on

the show, how to find good habits in your

everyday life and how to be productive. The

overall theme of the show is self-worth and

Gretchen Rubin wants you to be happy,

ers, and Howes himself is no stranger to adversity. The former athlete left college to pursue a professional career in football, and after two games, he collided into a wall and snapped his wrist which ended his football career. Previous guests on the show have included Ray Lewis, Dr. Oz, and recently, Danica Patrick. Every episode brings a learning experience, and there is always something to learn after listening. The messages have taught me that no matter what challenges you face, you can always succeed in something.

HAPPIER WITH GRETCHEN RUBIN



topics about everyday life that we can all PHOTO COURTESY: ITUNES.COM relate to. They provide anecdotes and give a

personal outlook on how to push yourself to be an original person and finding your oasis. Before each episode, Gretchen encourages listeners to post pictures daily on what makes them happy and how they are keeping their good habits.

SAVVY PSYCHOLOGIST



"Savvy Psychologist" takes on questions about science and psychology and makes them entertaining yet informative. Ellen Hendriksen answers listeners' questions relating to mental health, no matter how mild or severe they are. On the show, she's talked about embracing masculine vulnerability and why it can be frightening but necessary, how most resolutions fail and how to stop abandoning projects and follow through with them. A must-listen is Hendrick's most recent episode about

how to stop abandoning such projects. In the episode, she explores reasons why people who take on too much fail to accomplish projects, and like other listeners, I often am guilty of doing the same thing. Sometimes you just need a little pep talk to get you going in the mornings, and afternoons, and well, maybe the evenings, too. It's the ideal podcast that makes you want to tackle life's hardest challenges.

THE HEART OF IT WITH ESTEE LALONDE



PHOTO COURTESY: ITUNES.COM

Lifestyle blogger Estee Lalonde examines topics that are personal and close to her heart. The show, relatively new, focuses on all things women in its first season. Each episode is inspiring for all women as Lalonde welcomes guests from different backgrounds. They share personal stories, from talks about identity, experiences when their strength was tested to what it means to be a woman. In "Travel," her most recent epi-

sode, Lalonde talks about the importance of stepping out of her comfort zone and broadening the mind through her own experiences with traveling and being a homebody.

Oxford Fiber Arts Festival strives to fuse techniques

JACQUELINE KNIRNSCHILD STAFF WRITER

The only fiber arts festival in Mississippi will introduce the community to a combination of cutting-edge technology and traditional folk techniques this week through lectures, children's activities, demonstrations and workshops put on by both visiting and local artists.

The festival kicks off at 6 p.m. Wednesday night at the UM Museum with a lecture by renowned Nebraska-based ikat weaver Mary Zicafoose. Markets, receptions, classes and other events will run from Thursday until Sunday. A full schedule of the festival can be viewed on the Yoknapatawpha Arts website. "I love the fiber arts because it's always evolving," Andi Bedsworth, the organizer of the festival, said. "There's people who still do spinning, weaving and felting; then there's people who are really mixing it up and making mixed media pieces and arts quilts." Bedsworth said that compared to last year, the festival has received many more online class pre-registration requests, so she's expecting a large turnout. She also said that the arts council and the Powerhouse



have been planning for at least used to teach weaving in mental

gin mental one to use an actual photo of

Gerst researched images on Pinterest from that time period then constructed miniature dollhouse-like copies of houses and furniture, which she then juxtaposed with 3D digital animation of the characters – such as the granddaughter, Pollywog, and grandfather, Pap-Paw.

grandfather "My was very close to me and has always been supportive of my art-making and interest in sculpture and woodwork," Gerst said. "He passed away in 2013, so this is me processing his passing and making a love-letter to my childhood." Gerst said she's obsessed with "tiny things" and the sewing, knitting and felting of small objects and quilts "keeps her sane." The Oxford Treehouse Gallery is also hosting a reception from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday at which work from Pauline Crouse, Stephen Threlkeld, Andi Bedsworth, Antzee Magruder and Zita Webb will be on display. Vivian Niell, one of the co-owners of the gallery, said a few of the artists will be there to explain their pieces.

a year now to host Zicafoose.

Students may already recognize Zicafoose's work from her collection "Fault Lines," which has been on display at the UM Museum since Oct. 3.

Zicafoose said she loves the fiber arts for many reasons, one of which is because unlike other art forms, a lot of textiles – such as knitting, crocheting and embroidery – are portable. In addition, she said the process of creating fiber arts engages both the right and left hemispheres of one's brain.

"They're technical but also artistic, and there's something really, really satisfying and successful about that," Zicafoose said. "There's a reason they hospitals – it really quiets people and stimulates healing."

People are drawn to weaving, Zicafoose said, because the technique has transcendental properties that expand one's consciousness. When people are working with fiber, they can slip away to an alternative thinking place.

3D and 2D animator Ashley Gerst will also come down to Oxford from Brooklyn, New York, to demonstrate how to use the computer software GIMP at 10:30 a.m. Friday. GIMP allows users to create custom embroidery patterns and transfer them onto fabric.

Gerst said GIMP is similar to Photoshop because it allows something real as opposed to a template.

"It's so much harder to draw on paper because you can end up not liking the way it turns out," Gerst said. "For example, if I draw my friend's schnauzer and the eye is out of place. I'd have to redo the whole thing, but with GIMP, I can just nudge it over and edit faster."

Gerst attended grad school with the owner of the Oxford digital gallery Misbits and has clips and sets from her upcoming film, "The Spirit Seam," on display there until Feb. 13. The Spirit Seam was inspired by Gerst's grandfather's life in midcentury Appalachian Pennsylvania mining country.

LIFESTYLES

'I, Tonya' retells story of skater's fall from grace

BROCK HUERKAMP STAFF WRITER

"I, Tonya" is a juggling act.

With so many seemingly unrelated themes flying through the air, it is a miracle that the movie doesn't come crashing down like a figure skater falling to the ice. However, despite all odds, "I, Tonya" is a story told through weaving perspectives and recollections, finally giving the American people, and a new generation, the true story of what happened in January 1994.

Detailing the infamous, and many times misrepresented, story of Tonya Harding, "I, Tonya" is told through the perspective of not just our main character but the people in her life who contributed to her highly publicized fall from stardom. Upon viewing, it's hard at first to establish how exactly writer Steven Rogers and director Craig Gillespie have chosen to tell this story. In one scene, a character will be giving a "60 Minutes"-style interview in present day, and the next, the characters will break the fourth wall to address the audience mid-scene. It is a storytelling medium all of its own and lends to the movie's eclectic, too-crazy-to-betrue tone, but it manages to work somehow.

This movie shows Hard-

ing as a victim of the people around her, who are, frankly, idiots. Despite the baffling true-life comedy of her co-stars, Margot Robbie pulls every ounce of sympathy out of the audience with her performance, creating the careful balance of both laughter and heartbreak that is the essence of "I, Tonya." At many times, the movie stumbles and the audience members finds themselves laughing at the characters instead of laughing at the absurdity of their actions and situations. In fact, the characters of "I, Tonya" are so real you could point to one on screen

"Hey, I knew a guy just like that in high school." But the movie's message, in the end, delivers – like a kick in the gut – and makes the audience realize the emotional and physical damage Harding went through her entire life.

and say,

The true star of the movie, although Robbie's work is brilliant, is Allison Janney. Playing Harding's mother, LaVona, Janney is laugh-out-loud funny (the first time she is shown on screen, she wears a massive fur coat, breathing tubes stuck in her nose and a green bird sits on her left shoulder) yet manages

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY: EMILY HOFFMAN



to evoke raw anger and loathing from the audience. LaVona is the main catalyst to Tonya's failure, yet she claims her hatred and abuse was what made Tonya a star. She is the ultimate mother from Hell, and she'll claim that title between rips of a cigarette.

Underneath the surface, "I, Tonya" is a story about the difference between image and reality. Tonya is shamed the entire mov-

ie, by both her skating coaches and competition judges, for not coming from a perfect, wealthy "all-American" family

"all-American" family. Yet, Tonya is so full of raw talent, relentless power and stubborn determination, she doesn't let up. In fact, her desire for the world to love her and give her a chance leads her to make decisions that would cost her the future of her entire career. It's this innate human emotion that sells the premise of "I, Tonya" so well. Every person on this planet can relate to Tonya, who just wants to be loved, and Robbie sells it every time she is on screen.

"I, Tonya," in the end, manages to fly through the air, almost like Harding at the top of her game, and lands perfectly. It is a must-see this season and will be highly decorated at this year's Oscars.

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Ole Miss women's basketball heads to Knoxville

MAGGIE CROUCH

STAFF WRITER

Ole Miss women's basketball will hit the road to take on the No. 10 University of Tennessee on Thursday night in Knoxville, Tennessee, where the Rebels have not won in 31 years.

Coming off of three consecutive conference losses, the Rebels are looking to make a comeback in the SEC standings. The first step is a win against a tough Volunteers opponent in a historic Thompson–Boling Arena that proves tough for visitors to leave victorious.

With a subpar in-conference record of 1-5, Ole Miss is fighting an uphill battle entering the game against Tennessee, who is 4-2 in conference play. Furthermore, the odds are stacked against the Rebels, simply looking at the all-time series record, which Tennessee leads 44-8.

Last season, Ole Miss was able to snap the longest winning streak in the series at 28 wins for Tennessee. The Rebels claimed this 67-62 win over Tennessee holding Tennessee to just 1-of-9 shooting from beyond the arc on the night.

One way Ole Miss can work toward a victory is by forcing the other team into turnovers. Ole Miss has forced at least 14 turnovers in each of its last four games, as well as in 15 of 19 games played this season. The Rebels have proven successful when forcing 15 or more turnovers and have solidified a strong 10-3 recond

than \$20. ©2017 Domine



Alissa Alston takes a shot during the game against Mississippi State earlier this season, in which the Rebels lost 76-45. Ole Miss women's basketball will face the undefeated Bulldogs again at The Pavilion on Sunday.

in those games this year.

In addition to turnovers, a key factor in Ole Miss' success throughout 2017/18 has been getting off to a strong start. This early jump has been crucial for the Rebels this year, going 10-1 in games where they hold a lead at halftime.

Despite its conference record, Ole Miss shouldn't be counted out for the rest of the season. With players like Promise Taylor, who was just named SEC Freshman of the Week for the third time this season, Ole Miss is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

Alongside Taylor is junior Madinah Muhammad, who

has also been a game-changer for the Rebels as she closes in on 1,000 career points. Not only is she on pace to become one of the top scorers at Ole Miss, but with 326 points over the past 19 games, she has plenty of time to surpass her previous career single-season high of 365, set as a sophomore last year.

After opening the season on a historic 9-1 run, the Rebels have hit a tough stretch of schedule against some of the toughest teams in not only their conference but also the nation. Over the last nine games, the Rebels are 2-7, but that includes four ranked losses to No. 9

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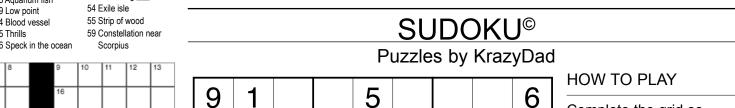
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Oregon, No. 4 South Carolina, No. 3 Mississippi State and No. 11 Missouri.

Thursday night's game is only the beginning of a long road of conference matchups for the Rebels. After returning from Knoxville, they will play their long-time rival No. 2 Mississippi State and then Vanderbilt the following week. Head coach Matt Insell will look to set the tone for the remainder of the season with a prominent road victory against the Vols on Thursday night.

Tipoff will be at 6 p.m., and the game will be aired on SEC Network.



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SPORTS

Rebel outfielders named to preseason All-SEC

JOSH GOLLIHAR

STAFF WRITER

With the season quickly approaching, two of Ole Miss softball's finest, Elantra Cox and Kylan Becker, were both named preseason All-SEC on Tuesday night. The Rebel outfielders were named to the 17-player team voted on by the conference's head coaches and were the first two players in Ole Miss softball's 22-year history to receive this preseason honor.

Coming off a season in which she led the SEC with 93 hits a year ago, Cox is looking to continue her efforts to fill the Ole Miss record books. Her total was the most in a single season, and Cox comes into her senior season in Oxford just seven hits shy of the school record of 216 base hits. Additionally, the electric outfielder produced a .429 batting average during the 2017 season, second-highest in school history, and her 51 runs added to the single-season record she surpassed a year ago.

While the Rebels' lead off hitter is blazing a trail, she isn't alone when it comes to offensive prowess. Alongside Cox in the batting order, Becker accounted for a much of the offensive success that led to the historic season for Ole Miss softball. The 2017 first team All-SEC outfielder hit for a .375 average on 75 hits, a number only second in school history to the person she hit behind in the lineup. Becker took advantage of Cox's on-base percentage, driving



Outfielder Elantra Cox and teammates high-five each other before the start of a game last season.

in 31 runs and scoring 34 runs of her own on the season, and people took notice. She was also named to the USA Softball Japan All-Star Series roster earlier this month, making her the first Rebel in program history to represent Ole Miss on the national team.

Of the 17 players announced to the team, Ole Miss was tied for second in the conference with Auburn, Georgia and Texas A&M also having two players represented on the team, while early favorite Florida led the

way with five players. Becker and Cox were two of the six outfielders named to the team.

The one-two punch of Becker and Cox at the top of head coach Mike Smith's lineup was a large factor in the Cinderella run that ended in the Super Regional round of the postseason in a loss to the UCLA Bruins. With pitcher Kaitlin Lee and many others returning from

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last year's group, Smith will look for a successful follow-up to the incredible run. Coming into the year, SEC media projected the Rebels to finish seventh in the conference, and the six teams ahead of them all finished in

FILE PHOTO: CAMERON BROOKS

the top 15 of the final rankings at the end of last season. Certainly, if the Rebels are to meet or exceed the expectations, Becker and Cox will need to play as well as they did in 2017.



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Week of January 21, 2018

Hugh Freeze preaches on faith at public appearance

GRAYSON WEIR

SPORTS EDITOR

In his first public appearance since his abrupt resignation in July, former Ole Miss head football coach Hugh Freeze made his first public appearance Wednesday, at which he asked forgiveness for his wrongdoing.

"I had to say to people that I loved, 'I am sorry. Please forgive me," he said. "And today is really the first day I can tell the faith family, 'I am sorry. Please forgive me.'

Speaking during a convocation at Liberty University in Virginia, Freeze told the audience his "world got rocked in 2017" after news broke that he made calls to a female escort service using a university cell phone that contributed to what Chancellor Jeff Vitter called a 'pattern of personal misconduct" and ultimately led to his resignation.

"All the walls came crumbling down when what I thought was a private sin that I had struggled with and confessed to my wife and to two of my friends in 2016 ... It became public knowledge in July of 2017," Freeze said. "My world crumbled, and the question started being asked: 'Man, is his faith real? Is his faith genuine?"

In his address, Freeze did not speak on the NCAA violations or what led to the discovery of his phone records, the penalties imposed on his former school, or his future career, and focused solely on his own mistakes. When they became public, he said he questioned why but found that his experience of "true brokenness," and how the aftermath proved his Christian faith was "a solid rock, solid foundation."

"I cannot control what people say, what people think, nor can you," Freeze said. "But I can make up my mind. And my mind is set. It is settled. My eyes are clear. My heart is full. My feet are pointed forward, and I am looking forward with thanksgiving to what God has for me and my family next, because of his great love and his great forgiveness."

Freeze's coaching acumen comes with few questions, but whichever program gives him a second chance will certainly take a PR hit regarding his prior missteps. However, history shows that college football coaches often get a second chance following improper behavior, and his wife, Jill, is among those who believe her husband will someday return to coaching.

"I could look at him and I



FILE PHOTO: TAYLAR TEE

Hugh Freeze looks toward the field during the Grove Bowl, the annual Ole Miss spring football game, at the Vaught-Hemingway Stadium in April 2017.

could automatically see in the beginning that he was believing the lies of Satan - that he's not worthy, that he's blown it, that we can't get past this," Jill said about her husband. "And immediately, God just shored me up, like: 'Oh no, we're getting through this. You are a good man. You are a godly man. This isn't over. We have a glorious unfolding that's coming.

Speaking toward the end of the convocation, Jill vouched for the troubled coach, ensuring that she forgave her husband because she knew "his heart" and said she knows "he is going to do whatever it takes to get right with God."

"For that, it was easy in that moment (to say) 'I forgive you' immediately," she said. "That was the beginning of my healing. It was instant forgiveness for him."

As she spoke, her husband was visibly overcome with emotion and tears were seen rolling down his face.

"Jill and I just came today to share our story with you and to encourage you that by God's grace and by God's power, we can finish well," Freeze added in conclusion.

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