

Spring 2014

Foundations

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Recommended Citation

Brasher, Karen; Cagle, Amy; Cristo, Carmen; McCarty, Jack; Rush, John P.; and Mississippi State University Foundation, "Foundations" (2014). *MSUF Foundations Newsletter*. 12.
<https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/msuf-foundations/12>

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foundations

Volume 14 : Number 1

a publication of the Mississippi State University Foundation

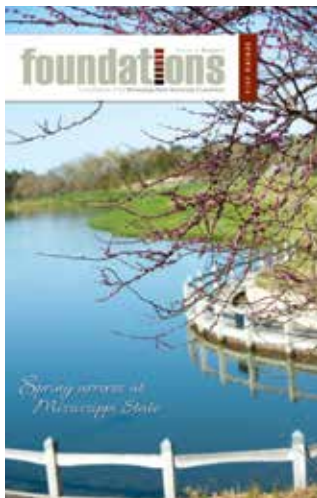
SPRING 2014

*Spring arrives at
Mississippi State*

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**ON THE COVER**

A one-mile walking track at Chadwick Lake is open to the MSU community thanks to a grant for construction from the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation.

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Foundations is published two times per year by the Mississippi State University Foundation. Please send comments and questions to P.O. Box 6149, Mississippi State, MS 39762-6149 or phone 662.325.7000.

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Pursuing better education



JOHN P. RUSH
Vice President for
Development and Alumni

When Southerners meet for the first time, we always ask, “Where are you from?” For many of us, the answer is one of the small towns that comprise Mississippi and the South. As a native of Leakesville, I appreciate the nurturing environment of small towns and rural America where the whole community can help develop your character and work ethic. Fellow Mississippi native and alumnus Jack Hatcher tells some of the best life-lesson stories about growing up in Ripley. Although there are a few years (and miles) of difference between his experiences in north Mississippi and mine in south Mississippi, there are many similarities we all share.

In visiting with Dr. Devon Brenner in MSU’s College of Education, she quickly notes that Mississippi is a rural state which makes our citizens very strong; however, rural America also faces many challenges for education—not the least of which are resources and teacher recruitment. In the United States, we have primarily focused on the challenges to improve urban education; however, it continues to surprise me that there is only one university-based national center, located in Lincoln, Neb., that focuses on improving rural education. In addition, state and regional centers address issues in Kansas, Pennsylvania and Washington state. Although I’m sure they do a fantastic job, it would prove advantageous to have one focused on the uniqueness of the South.

2015 brings this opportunity to us! MSU is pairing with the Starkville Consolidated School District to create a new Partnership School to serve all 6th and 7th grade students throughout Oktibbeha County providing a STEM-education focus. The goal will enable students to be creative problem solvers while exposing them to opportunities in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Not only will the Partnership School be a great opportunity locally, the impact can be infinite. Students in the MSU College of Education can become engaged in the Partnership School throughout their undergraduate experience. The 6th grade component will be a model for our elementary education students, and the 7th grade will serve the secondary education students. Our students will receive hands-on learning, and we can demonstrate the best teaching techniques, curricula and learning environments with an observation station for teachers and administrators across the nation.

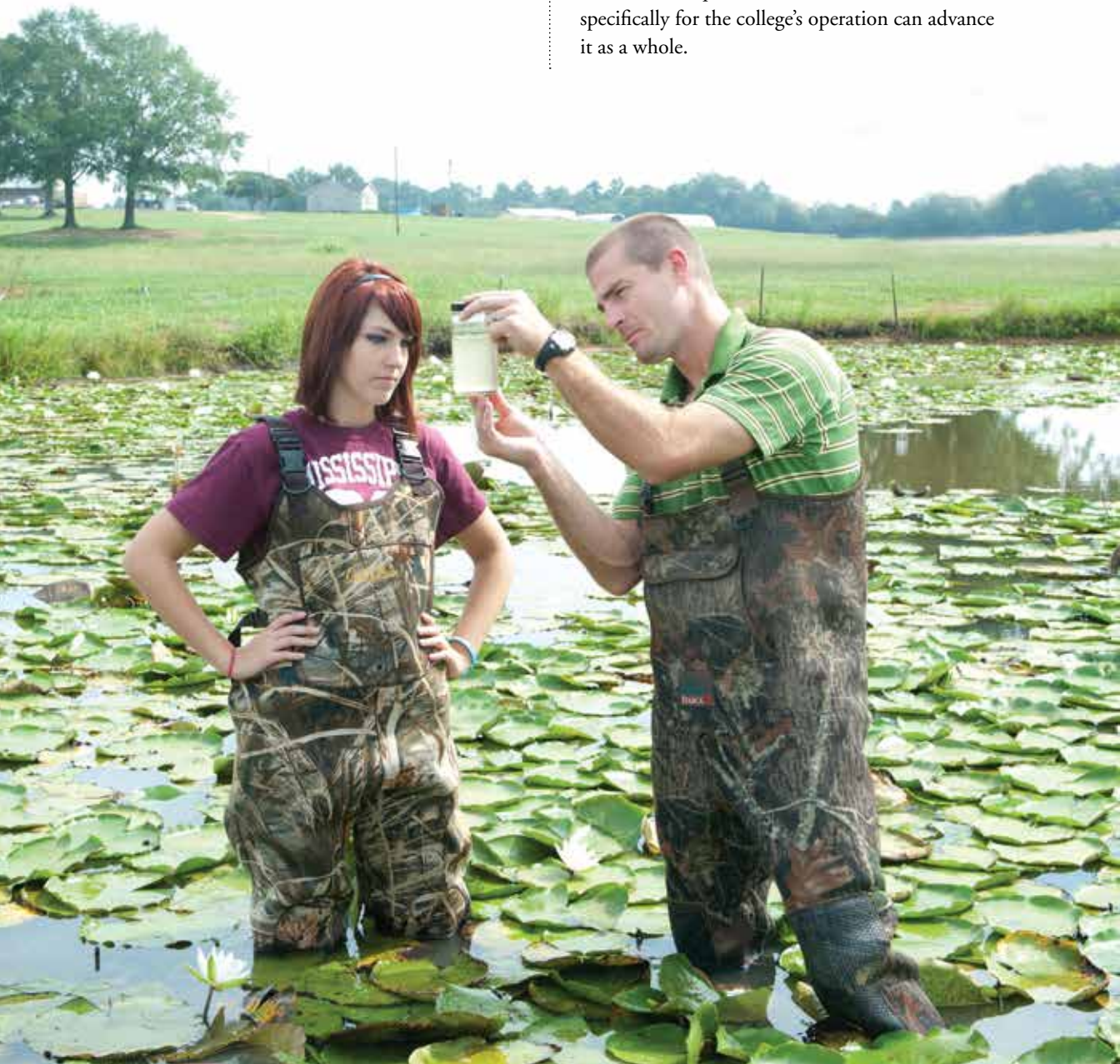
Alumni Tommy and Terri Nusz of Houston, Texas, have stepped forward and made a campaign gift toward making the Partnership School a reality. If you share their interest in this amazing opportunity and want to impact rural education, I would love to visit with you soon.

An **INFINITE** **Impact** continues

College of Forest Resources strengthens impact with gifts through capital campaign

Infinite Impact: The Mississippi State University Campaign is at work in the university's College of Forest Resources. With campaign contributions from alumni and friends, the academic unit can extend its reach worldwide through teaching, research and service.

The College of Forest Resources, over the course of the campaign, will seek \$32 million in endowed and spendable funds. Gifts can continue the college's vision and draw the most promising students with scholarships, while attracting the most renowned faculty in their fields because of its reputation and resources. The College of Forest Resources is the only four-year program in the state offering degrees in forest resources, wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture. An endowment created specifically for the college's operation can advance it as a whole.





The infinite impact of success, discovery, outreach, globalization and experience all start at MSU.

“An endowment would allow our college to continue as a leader in solving issues through teaching of professionals, research that delivers science-based results and outreach to the general public,” said George M. Hopper, college dean. “We are ready to join with alumni and friends to solve the environmental challenges facing us today, tomorrow and beyond.”

At MSU, the College of Forest Resources offers an applied-management—oriented approach to natural resources education, which deviates from the current national trend. An endowment would allow our college to educate students who fully understand the importance of habitat, population, hunting, fishing and timber management.

As environmental issues around the world increase and the number of university-based programs focused on forestry and conservation decrease, the Waterfowl and Wetlands Science and Conservation programs within the College of Forest Resources, in particular, are thriving. The program holds a 100 percent employment rate for its graduates and is cultivating a reputation for cutting-edge research. These achievements would not be possible without donors and faculty who are devoted to the success of the programs’ endeavors, both locally and globally.

“We need professionals astute in the management and utilization of our renewable resources, as well as in the protection of the environment,” said Hopper. “Leaders are needed

in wildlife and fisheries management to extend habitats, and scientists are needed to advance our country into an energy independent future through the development of renewable fuels and bio-products.”

Successful learning is contingent on the quality of instructional and research faculty. MSU competes nationally and internationally for faculty expertise, and private endowments improve the university’s odds in attracting the best scholars, teachers and researchers.

The capital campaign seeks to bring more endowed chairs to the college, particularly in the field of large animal management, which includes white-tailed deer, and renewable energy. The large animal management chair will provide research and mentor future leaders in wildlife management while advocating conservation through hunting. The renewable energy chair, along with licensed technology, will ensure that MSU continues to be a leader in bioenergy. This research will economically impact our state.

Gifts for endowed chairs begin at \$1.5 million, while professorships are typically \$500,000. These positions will be held by distinguished individuals and recognize scholarly excellence, while providing competitive salaries and resources for research, travel and professional development.

More alumni and friends are beginning to invest in these positions universitywide. James C. Kennedy, chairman of Atlanta, Ga.-based



Cox Enterprises, is one of the college's most devoted donors who realize the importance of endowed positions and support for the college in general. Kennedy recently gave a campaign gift of real estate in Carroll County, Miss., valued at more than \$4.7 million. The gift serves as a lead contribution for MSU's Carsie Clark and Diane Worthington Young Wetland Education Theater and increases the endowment for the James C. Kennedy Chair in Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation he created in 2008.

"The environment is something we all have in common, and it's important to educate people today on the impact we can have tomorrow," said Kennedy. "As a land owner and frequent visitor to the state, I'm happy to continue my support of the university and look forward to the completion of a wetland education theater for our future generation of waterfowl and wetlands conservationists."

Although not an MSU alumnus, Kennedy is a fervent conservationist. His commitment to conservation includes founding his company's Cox Conserves national sustainability program that focuses on reducing waste and energy consumption, as well as conserving water.

"This incredibly generous gift from Jim Kennedy is a prime example of how the capital campaign will shape the future of Mississippi State University," said MSU President Mark E. Keenum. "These resources will provide outdoor teaching and research laboratories for faculty and students and also provide a showcase for innovative conservation and management practices for future generations."

The wetland education center will be invaluable to expose Mississippi State students in landscape architecture, forestry, wildlife and fisheries to green infrastructure and sustainable applications such as man-made wetlands.

The theater received initial funding through a bequest of West Point native and longtime conservationist Carsie Clark Young Sr., who was president of Clark Vending Co. Construction of the theater begins this spring.

Additionally, gifts for *Infinite Impact: The Mississippi State University Campaign* also extend to facilities and new laboratories that will foster growth and allow the college to excel beyond its current limits. The College of Forest Resources seeks to expand Thompson Hall, its epicenter, with a gift of \$5.2 million that would provide additional classrooms, laboratories and offices.

Thompson Hall is home to biologists and scientists in the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, Mississippi's USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection



Service, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Forest Service. Many of these professionals from partner agencies serve on graduate committees, provide lectures, and participate with students on research projects.

Student opportunities to learn from and research with the best faculty and engage in service efforts with professionals are essential. Even before they completely immerse themselves in the depth of the college's forestry program, many of them are influenced as sophomores through an applied learning summer field program. Some of the best lessons in forestry are often learned during this 10-week period of field courses. The opportunity exists to endow the forestry summer field program to ensure it remains indefinitely as a component of the undergraduate degree requirement. This field program is the basis of much of these students' success in the college.

Gifts can also bolster student recruitment efforts and engage young people in environmental education, and in the process bring a more diverse student body into the college's curriculum. The College of Forest Resources can fill a future need for professionals in natural resources fields by recruiting students with privately funded annual and endowed scholarships.

With campaign gifts, the College of Forest Resources can educate graduates to become pioneers of discovery and leaders in their fields. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimate that the agricultural, food and renewable natural resources sectors of the U.S. economy will generate nearly 109,000 openings in the next few years for individuals with baccalaureate or higher degrees in food, renewable energy and environmental specialties. Gifts can create the best all-around educational experience and ensure Mississippi State graduates are ready to meet the challenges before them and fill these roles.

Many opportunities exist for alumni and friends to assist the College of Forest Resources to impact the world through its endeavors. For detailed information, contact Jeff Little, development director for CFR and The Bulldog Forest, at 662.325.8151 or email him at jlittle@foundation.msstate.edu.

Gifts boost campaign past \$400 million mark

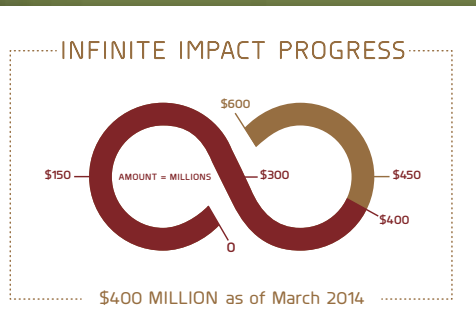
Mississippi State is working to better position itself nationally by raising an unprecedented amount of gifts during its latest campaign in pursuit of its long-range strategic goals. As of March, counting for *Infinite Impact: The Mississippi State University Campaign* reached \$400 million.

"Our efforts in raising \$400 million at this point in the campaign are a testament to the generosity of alumni and friends who feel this effort is a meaningful investment for them to make in Mississippi State University," said John P. Rush, vice president for development and alumni. "There is no better way for graduates of MSU to create their own positive impact than through the strides of their university."

The campaign seeks at least \$600 million for five focus areas of the university—success, discovery, outreach, globalization and experience. The endeavor began in 2010 and will continue through 2018.

The effects of the campaign are rippling throughout campus and flowing beyond our university. Gifts for scholarships, endowed positions, enhanced facilities and endowed excellence funds can help MSU pursue its goal of becoming a top-tier nationally ranked institution.

Giving opportunities exist for areas campuswide—ranging from colleges and schools, the Judy and Bobby Shackouls Honors College, MSU-Meridian, the university's library and MSU athletics. To learn more about the campaign, visit our website at infiniteimpactmsu.com.





Honoring life's work

Dedication to education manifests itself in Saunders scholarship

The inaugural recipient of the Lois Abel Saunders and William Clay Haney Endowed Scholarship will begin an inspiring educational journey at Mississippi State University this fall. Longtime Vicksburg residents Steve and Donna Saunders recently established the scholarship to encourage students to pursue careers as teachers in the field of special education.

Steve Saunders graduated from Mississippi State with a Bachelor of Science in construction engineering technology in 1981, and his wife, Donna Haney Saunders, adopted MSU many years ago. The couple met while working at Entergy in Mississippi, an integrated energy company that also delivers electricity to users throughout Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas.

Steve is a 35-year Entergy veteran, who currently works as project engineering director at the Jackson nuclear operations headquarters. Donna was a special projects coordinator for the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station in Port Gibson until her retirement in 1999. They have been married 30 years.

“We are both strong advocates of special education, and our driving force for establishing the scholarship is to honor our parents’ endeavors and share a belief in the importance of educating individuals with disabilities,” said Donna.

Both Steve and Donna have strong ties to special education through family members and created the scholarship in their honor. With the endowment, the scholarship will be awarded to a junior or senior student enrolled in special education study in Mississippi State’s College of Education. Preference for the recipient will be applicants from Warren County.

In particular, the scholarship honors Steve’s mother, Lois Abel Saunders, and Donna’s father, William Clay Haney.



Haney

Mississippi native Lois Abel Saunders was born near Elliot in 1927. After receiving her bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Millsaps College and a



Make the most of matching gifts!

A matching gift can strengthen contributions given to scholarships, technology upgrades, program enhancements and other areas of Mississippi State University. Individuals who work for an employer who participates in a matching gift program may be able to double or even triple contributions to the university.

In 2013, MSU received nearly \$773,000 from matching gift companies. The top five companies who matched gifts to the university during the calendar year were Exxon, Mississippi Power Co., ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips and Freeport-McMoRan.

To utilize matching gifts, alumni and friends should inquire with their employer's human resources department to see if they participate. For more information, contact Lynn Durr, director of gift administration for the MSU Foundation, at 662.325.8918 or email her at ldurr@advservices.msstate.edu.

Pictured left: Donna and Steve Saunders (center) with their mothers, Margaret Haney and Lois Saunders. Above: Special education student from the College of Education.

Certificate in Social Work from Louisiana State University, she received her master's degree in elementary education from Mississippi State in 1964. She was married to the late James Dewitt Saunders. Of their five sons, Steve and two of his brothers also graduated from Mississippi State, continuing her legacy.

Lois Saunders taught for 40 years in the Mississippi towns of Greenwood and Leland. Later, in Greenville, she helped to establish some of the first special education programs in the Mississippi Delta. Currently, she resides in Duck Hill, and enriches lives with her generous spirit and loving encouragement.

"Her former students still recognize her, and she is loved by so many people whose lives she touched and shaped. She continues to support education through her donations to a small Montessori school with books and other educational material," Steve said.

Additionally, the scholarship memorializes Donna's father, the late William Clay Haney, a native of Daybrook, N.C., who spent 30 years in the U.S. Navy prior to World War II. He was an early contributor to the Navy diving program and retired as a lieutenant commander.

Following military service, William received his bachelor's in education with an emphasis in learning disabilities from the University of Central Florida. He then taught students with learning disabilities in Merritt Island, Fla., for a decade. He died in 2011.

Besides Donna, William and his wife, Margaret, had three other children. Their youngest, Susan, was born with Down Syndrome and now thrives as a resident of Baddour Memorial Center, a community for intellectually disabled adults in Senatobia.

"I believe my father would have been pleased to know this scholarship will benefit students because it honors his life's work and salutes the strides my sister Susan was able to make with her disability. She flourishes because of caring support and that is one reason I am an advocate for special education," said Donna.

Endowments for scholarships may be established at Mississippi State with gifts of at least \$25,000. The Saunders' gift for the scholarship will be matched by Entergy.

"We were able to utilize matching gifts from Entergy in establishing the scholarship which made it affordable. I would encourage anyone to explore this route since scholarships are so vital to achieving an education—their availability can positively impact a deserving recipient's life," said Steve.

Paving the way

Foundation appoints board officers, incoming members



Bagley



Brannan



Bryan



Hall



Lightsey

Under the guidance of a 46-member board of directors, the MSU Foundation administers most of Mississippi State's fundraising activities and endowment funds, which exceed \$400 million.

The MSU Foundation is announcing five new members of its 46-seat board of directors that guides the fundraising arm of the 136-year-old land-grant institution. Having begun their three-year terms in January, the MSU alumni include David B. Hall of Meridian; Malcolm B. Lightsey Sr. of Ridgeland; John R. Lundy of Jackson; Cynthia M. Stevens of Alexandria, Va.; and Anthony L. Wilson of Atlanta, Ga.

First time member Hall graduated from MSU in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science in forestry and an MBA in 2002. He is COO of Hall Timberlands. Fellow new member Lightsey is a 1961 Bachelor of Science mathematics graduate who earned a Master of Science in mathematics in 1963. He is the retired president and CEO of SunTech Inc.

Another first-term holder is Lundy, who earned a Bachelor of Science in agricultural economics in 1983. He is a partner for Capitol Resources LLC. Fellow 1983 graduate Stevens earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science. She is Management Principal Government Relations of Deloitte LLP.

Rounding out the new members is Wilson, who earned a 1987 Bachelor of Science in

electrical engineering. He is executive vice president of customer service and operations for Georgia Power Co.

Through the years, a host of prominent alumni and friends of the university have held board seats. Members may be reappointed after leaving the board for at least a year after their three-year terms end.

Those members reappointed for 2014 include J.W. "Jim" Bagley of Trophy Club, Texas; D. Hines Brannan Jr. of Atlanta, Ga.; George W. Bryan of West Point; James W. Newsome of Washington, D.C.; and J.F. "Bud" Thompson Jr. of Meridian.

Bagley is a 1961 and 1966 electrical engineering graduate and the retired executive chairman of the board of Lam Research Corp. in Fremont, Calif. He received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from MSU in 2005. Fellow engineering graduate Brannan is the retired managing director of Accenture. He earned an industrial engineering degree in 1970 followed by an MBA in 1971.

College of Business graduate Bryan earned a general business administration degree in 1967. He is owner of Old Waverly Golf Club.

For the past five decades, the Foundation has been assisting the university in attracting support from private sources.



Lundy



Newsome



Stevens



Thompson



Wilson

Fellow returning member Newsome is a 1985 Master of Science in agriculture graduate who earned a Doctor of Philosophy in agricultural economics and nutrition in 2001. He is a partner at Delta Strategy Group.

Also returning is Thompson, who earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics education in 1962. He is a partner with Thompson Limited Partnership of Meridian who has served numerous terms.



Shackouls

In addition to board members, the Foundation reelected last year's officers to another one-year term. The 2014 officers include Bobby S. Shackouls, president; E.W. "Earnie" Deavenport Jr., vice president; and Mary M. Childs, treasurer.



Deavenport

Shackouls of Houston, Texas, is a 1972 Bachelor of Science chemical engineering graduate who was awarded a 2010 honorary Doctor of Science by MSU. He is the retired chairman, president and CEO of Burlington Resources Inc.



Childs

Deavenport of Kiawah Island, S.C., is a 1960 MSU

chemical engineering graduate who was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science by MSU in 2011. He is the retired chairman and CEO of Kingsport, Tenn.-based Eastman Chemical Co. He also holds a master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Childs earned a bachelor's degree in banking and finance in 1980. She is president, CEO, COO and vice chairman of The Peoples Bank in Ripley, where she resides.



Rush

Rounding out the 2014 group is John P. Rush, MSU vice president for development and alumni, who is the foundation board's CEO; David Easley, executive director of finance, its chief financial officer; and Jack McCarty, executive director of development, board secretary. They, too, are MSU graduates.



Easley

More information on the work of the MSU Foundation and a complete list of its board of directors and financial statements may be accessed at www.msufoundation.com.



McCarty

Best laid plans

Whitmires' philanthropy always includes MSU



Mississippi natives Don and Peggy Whitmire have lived in many places throughout their 35-year marriage, but because of MSU, Starkville is the one place they call home.

W“We have traveled so much that Mississippi State has become a place for our three sons to call their hometown,” said Peggy. “As a parent, I’m thankful MSU has provided them with a strong connection.”

Currently, Don and Peggy live in Scottsdale, Ariz. The couple has three sons, Brian of New Orleans, La., Paul of Nashville, Tenn., and Mark of Starkville; all three are proud Bulldog graduates.

“Oddly enough Peggy and I are from Jackson, but first met on a trip to Italy by traveling with different high school groups,” said Don. “The rest was a love story that happily continues for us.”

After high school graduation, Peggy enrolled at the Mississippi University for Women and graduated in 1978 with a business administration degree. Peggy appreciates her education, and explains, that in her heart, she is also a Bulldog. She held several positions with the U.S. government before beginning her favorite “job” as a full-time mom.

Don began his connection to Mississippi State while in high school, declining a scholarship offer to attend another Mississippi university. His decision to enroll at MSU came after witnessing a crushing Bulldog victory over Vanderbilt in football.

While at MSU, Don served as president of the Student Honors Council under the leadership of Dr. John Tilley. He graduated with special distinction from MSU in 1978 with a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

Don believes his time under the teaching of outstanding faculty at MSU prepared him for a successful career that has blessed his family with many rich and varied life experiences, for which they are grateful. Over the course of his 25-year career with Freeport-McMoRan, the Whitmire family relocated to Louisiana, Indonesia and most recently to Arizona.

“Never underestimate where an MSU degree will take you,” said Peggy, who continued, “Our family benefited from going places outside of our comfort zone.”



Don is vice president and controller for financial reporting at Phoenix, Ariz.-based Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc., the world's largest publicly traded copper company. Prior to joining Freeport-McMoRan, he worked in the energy audit practice of Arthur Andersen in Houston, Texas.

According to Don, working and living nearly four years at Freeport's mine in Papua, Indonesia, was great for his family. He said he's always been challenged during his career, particularly with Freeport-McMoRan.

"Indonesia was a great cultural experience and helped me realize we have to embrace learning and change in an interconnected global world. When kids today graduate from college, they won't be confronted by their parents' world, but with a global economy in which they must eagerly participate," said Don.

Regardless of where they relocated, Don and Peggy's Mississippi roots and deep affection for the state's largest university remained intact.

"Both of our families instilled in us the desire to give, and the company I work for has strongly encouraged employees to give back to their community. To me, this extended to my university," said Don, who utilizes employer-matching funds with his MSU giving.

At MSU, the couple's philanthropy extends to the Don and Peggy Whitmire Endowed Scholarship in the Richard C. Adkerson School of Accountancy and the Don and Peggy Whitmire Endowed Faculty Fellowship in Accounting. They also support MSU athletics.

The Whitmires established the scholarship to honor their parents and manifest their deep appreciation for the life opportunities Mississippi State has helped them provide their family.

Additionally, they want other students to have the educational opportunities their three sons

have had at MSU, who Don says benefitted firsthand from similar scholarships.

"The fact that MSU is still sometimes considered an 'underdog' helps me understand that all students need opportunities. There is no reason why our graduates can't go out in the world and compete equally with others from 'big name' universities, and contributions from MSU friends and alumni help make this possible," Don said.

The endowed faculty fellowship was established to assist in attracting and retaining outstanding faculty and administrators in the Richard C. Adkerson School of Accountancy. Available earnings from the endowment may provide a salary supplement and/or a support fund for the holder of the fellowship.

"My professors were excellent, practical, pragmatic teachers in accountancy—from Dora Herring to W.A. "Billy" Simmons. Through our gifts we want to help make it possible for MSU to continue to attract and retain both motivated students and qualified faculty who desire to excel, knowing that public educational funding needs to be supplemented with private gifts to achieve this," said Don.

Besides financial support, Don volunteers his time with MSU by participating on the advisory council for the Richard C. Adkerson School of Accountancy, for which he served as chairman in 2006-2007. In 2010, he was honored by MSU as an Alumni Fellow for his professional accomplishments.

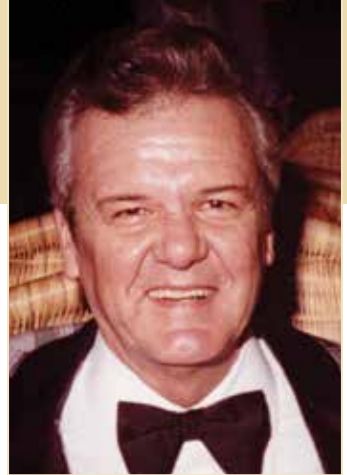
For the Whitmires, their best laid plans will continue to include support for their hometown university for many years to come.

Below: Don and Peggy Whitmire (center) with their sons. From left are: Brian, Mark and Paul.



Clark planned gift creates legacy through scholarship

More than 50 years after he received his Mississippi State degree, Eugene T. "Jeep" Clark made a generous deferred commitment to his alma mater. He established a trust and named the MSU Foundation a beneficiary of that trust.



Clark

Although Clark did not reveal how much the university would receive upon his death, he provided documentation of the gift's existence, leading to his inclusion in the prestigious Old Main Society. The society recognizes individuals who have included MSU as a beneficiary in their wills or made other planned gifts.

"Thanks to Jeep Clark letting us know about his generous gift, we were able to give him some much-deserved recognition and outline the terms of his future namesake scholarship while he was still alive," said Vance Bristow, director of planned giving. "These are just two of the many benefits of making a bequest to Mississippi State."

The bequest enabled Clark to cement his legacy with Mississippi State before he passed away in June 2011 at age 85. After his wife Barbara's death in 2012, the MSU Foundation was pleased to receive almost \$1 million from the Clarks. The money created a general university scholarship called the Eugene T. and Barbara B. Clark Endowed Scholarship.

Clark first attended then-Mississippi State College in 1942, where he was secretary of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and a cartoonist on the Reveille student yearbook staff. He left the university before graduation to serve in the U.S. Army. After being honorably discharged in 1946, he returned to MSU and graduated in 1948 from the College of Business.

Throughout his career, Clark worked for USF&G and F.W. Williams State Agency, where he was a partner until he retired. He also enjoyed fishing, hunting and woodworking.

Donors, like Clark, who make a bequest to Mississippi State have the benefit of knowing that they are making a meaningful gift. Bequests through a will can take several forms from a specific dollar amount, a percentage of an estate, or specific assets. In addition to bequests, there are many other ways to support Mississippi State with deferred gifts.

For convenient assistance with gift planning, visit the MSU Foundation website at msufoundation.com. Select "Planned Giving" from the right-hand column to browse our featured articles and learn how to make a planned gift of your own.

The MSU Foundation Office of Planned Giving is available to assist alumni and friends, as well as their professional advisors, with estate planning. Along with our central office, development directors are housed throughout the MSU campus to assist with tailored giving plans benefitting colleges, schools and other areas.

For personalized assistance, simply contact Bristow directly at 662.325.3707 or email him at vbristow@foundation.mstate.edu.

Foundation Ambassadors build lasting connections

The Mississippi State University Foundation Ambassadors are in the midst of a busy year. Membership for the organization has doubled, and its service activities are extending the reach of philanthropy across campus.



These student liaisons also help with fundraising initiatives and are responsible for educating their fellow students about the importance of private gifts.

The Foundation Ambassadors, which began in 2011 with an inaugural 22-member class, now includes nearly 40 students “with the desire to serve the mission of the MSU Foundation,” said new president John Stuart of Senatobia.

Along with Stuart, other 2014 officers are: Sherman Thomas of Starkville, vice president; Caroline Martin of Meridian, treasurer; and Caitlyn Chapman of Ocean Springs, secretary. These student leaders promote and encourage leadership and service activities that will stimulate commitment and philanthropy at Mississippi State.

This year, the group has a slate of university-related activities on the horizon. One of which is Donor Appreciation Days that take place in both the spring and fall semesters.

“These events are our chance to promote the importance of giving back to the university by allowing students to write thank-you notes for donors,” said Stuart.

Stuart also said that the organization is laying the groundwork for a greater emphasis on philanthropy among fellow MSU students with a proposed student giving society and the Senior Class Gift program. The ambassadors have been heavily involved in Hail State Day this year, too, and will have a presence during homecoming festivities this fall as they promote *Infinite Impact: The Mississippi State University Campaign*.

The 2014 Foundation Ambassadors include:



Front row (left to right): John Stuart, Kelley LaFleur, LeeAnna Hill, Spencer Pipitone, Elizabeth Shapley, Luz Eleane Martinez and Jackson Teubert. **Second row:** Sarah Ashley Jolly, LeeAnn Pacific, Sameer Hasnoo, Christian Henry, Olivia Sanguinetti, Caitlyn Chapman, Shelby Norris and Tia Kirkland. **Third row:** Caroline Martin, Erica Austein, Shelby Hedgepeth, Chandler Moore, Kaitlyn Byrne, Haley Bodden, Allison Parker, Brittany McCrary and Kameron deVerteuil. **Back row:** Caroline Ritter, Terah Winborne, Jasmine Bogard, William Jackson, Garrett Somers, Russell Goodman, Emily Mealins, Jay Jackson, Allison Stennis and Thomas Sherman.

Memorial trees celebrate life on MSU's historic campus



Alumni and friends can honor and remember a friend or loved one with a creative and enduring "living gift" — a new tree on one of the most beautiful college campuses in the Southeast with support for Mississippi State's beautification endowment.



Ford

One of the most recent gifts for a memorial tree comes from the Donald Ford family. Ford was a Kerrville, Texas, resident who died in February. He was a 1960 MSU agriculture graduate and Mississippi native who credited Mississippi State with providing him the education necessary for a successful career in the agriculture industry. Ford was the longtime chairman of the board and president of American Plant Food Corp.

A Magnolia tree memorializing Ford will be centrally placed on campus. The tree is a fitting tribute since Ford attended Mississippi State by way of a football scholarship and played offense and defense for the Bulldogs.

"A gift for a tree like the one in memory of Donald Ford is a thoughtful way to celebrate a person's life and accomplishments with a living tribute," said Jana Berkery, associate director of annual giving.

Gifts for the Campus Beautification Endowment enhance the general appearance of Mississippi State's historic 136-year-old campus, including landscaping. In particular, memorial trees can improve the community, bringing Bulldogs together through tradition while benefitting the environment.

Trees can be named with a minimum \$5,750 gift to the Campus Beautification Endowment, which includes the cost of the project. In particular, gifts for memorial trees will cover the cost of the tree, a plaque and care during the tree's first year of growth. The gift also provides for replanting and replacement of the tree over time.

The Office of Annual Giving within the MSU Foundation accepts gifts for memorial trees, and the university's campus landscape department assists donors with tree selection and location. Dedication ceremonies are held upon request. Other items in proximity of the tree, such as a bench, may be added for an additional project cost if these items can be integrated into the overall landscape.

An 8" x 10" plaque will display the name of the honoree and the donor name, along with the common name and scientific name for the tree. Besides Magnolia, trees planted with best results at Mississippi State include Bald Cypress, varieties of Ginkgo, Red Maple, and varieties of oak trees such as Nuttall Oak, Water Oak and Willow Oak.

Mississippi State offers other naming opportunities through support of the Campus Beautification Endowment, such as outdoor plantings and structures. Individuals may invest in the beauty of MSU with memorial trees or other outdoor opportunities by contacting Berkery at 662.325.5977 or emailing her at jberkery@foundation.msstate.edu.

Make a college education possible



JACK MCCARTY

Executive Director
of Development

The life of a university ebbs and flows. New buildings, stronger academic programs and great athletics are examples of priorities discussed from time to time. However, one consistent priority remains at Mississippi State—investing in the core of our university—our students.

In decades past, students could work during the summer and earn money to cover a large portion of tuition and books; however, that is no longer the case. The cost of living expenses alone require much more than wages earned from summer employment. By creating scholarships, you can help students alleviate some of their educational debt. Furthermore, you can motivate them to study diligently and begin their futures on a solid path.

The Compass Scholarship Program is among MSU President Mark Keenum's most recent priorities. It was launched in 2013 to award scholarships to a larger group of students, regardless of their area of study. Gifts of any size help us meet Dr. Keenum's Compass Scholarship Challenge (\$250,000 in matching funds) to create a pool of annual spendable scholarships for immediate recruitment and retention. Donors continue to invest in Compass at many gift levels.

The Promise Scholarship Program assists students from low-income families, and the program has proven to literally change lives. A support program and mentors keep students on track. As a result, the retention and graduation rate of these recipients is incredible. With your support, we can "bridge the tuition gap" and provide academic support to students striving to obtain an MSU degree who have proven themselves in high school or at the community college level.

MSU's Presidential Scholars are the "brightest of the bright" students. Endowment gifts for these scholarships begin at the \$250,000 level and produce a sizeable award to attract top academically talented students nationwide. Several donors just invested in this elite program, increasing our total endowments for Presidential Scholarships to 23. These highly competitive, full-ride scholarships attracted nearly 400 applicants during the 2013-14 academic year.

College and school specific scholarships are awarded to students majoring in degree programs within MSU. If you are interested in this area, we have development staff knowledgeable of these needs and dedicated to discussing opportunities with you.

Supporting scholarships is a great way to invest in our future, because you are helping educate the leaders of tomorrow. Now that is *Infinite Impact!*



DONORS: *Shirley F. Olson & Walter J. "Duke" Olson III*

HOMETOWN: *Jackson, Miss.*

Shirley and Walter Olson are longtime Mississippi State supporters. The two met as MSU students and married in the Chapel of Memories on a Friday the 13th—a good luck date for them since their 45th anniversary is this spring.

Shirley is originally from Greenwood, Miss., while Walter hails from San Francisco, Calif. He discovered MSU through Col. John Thames, a family friend who was head of the campus ROTC. After Walter completed his military commitment with the 101st Airborne, Thames helped him enroll at MSU and find work as manager of the baseball team from 1965 to 1968 under Coach Paul Gregory.

The Olsons proudly hold degrees from Mississippi State. Walter graduated in 1968 with a Bachelor of Science in business, while Shirley earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in management in 1969, followed by a doctorate in finance in 1978. Their daughter is also a proud MSU alumna.

Shirley and Walter fondly recall their days as students and have created endowed scholarships in their names for first generation college students—just as they were in the College of Business. An MBA classroom in McCool Hall also honors their legacy.

Both Shirley and Walter are invaluable volunteers. Shirley has served numerous terms on the College of Business Advisory Board and the MSU Foundation Board of Directors. Walter has served on the business college's Finance and Economics Advisory Board and, since 1968, has been a member of the M-Club in baseball.

Shirley, who taught at Millsaps College and later spent over a decade in the construction industry, now owns Olson Consulting Group. Walter is the retired vice president and chief investment officer for Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Co. Prior to his career in the insurance industry, he was a stockbroker.

Loyalty. Pride. Passion.

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