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A Spirited Creation

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A Spirited Creation

Innovative bottle label earns industry award for UM graphic design professor

OCTOBER 29, 2020 BY KELLIE SMITH

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UM art professor Tyler Barnes has won a gold-medal American Advertising Award for his packaging and branding work for River Basin Distillery. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Tyler Barnes, an assistant professor of art at the **University of Mississippi**, has won a gold-medal American Advertising Award for his achievements in sales and marketing packaging.

The ADDY, the Oscar of the advertising industry, is given annually by the **American Advertising Federation** to celebrate creative achievements in that industry – from graphic design to videography.

Each year, the foundation's regional affiliates review submissions and bestow awards. Barnes won in the Southeastern division of the competition, which was judged by the Advertising Club of New Orleans.

His packaging entry showcased the new branding and label design he created for the New Orleans-based River Basin Distillery, which produces artisanal rye whiskey.

Barnes's design hearkens back to the earliest days of the Crescent City, when it began evolving into one of the world's great merchant ports. He chose a historic map of 18th century New Orleans as the background and on it superimposed two iconic

symbols of the city: a sweep of blue representing the Mississippi River and, beneath it, a crescent moon that cradles the French Quarter.

"I didn't want to go with the standard fleur-de-lis," Barnes said. "That's become a kind of visual cliché for the city. I wanted to evoke a pre-industrial New Orleans that was home to artisans and craftsmen because that's what this whiskey is: handmade in small batches."

As a working design professional, Barnes also guides his students in the nuts and bolts of the graphic design business.

"The creative side of marketing and advertising is a team effort," he said. "Graphic designers work in tandem with art directors, art producers and printers.

"Freelancing acts as a form of research for me and helps me bring a professional perspective to my students so they are prepared for the realities of this work."

He's optimistic about professional opportunities for them.

"Graphic design is a huge industry with plenty of jobs and niche markets. No matter what the product, whether it's in the fashion industry or mountain bikes, there's graphic design involved."

He encourages his students to make work that interests them because there is no substitute for a design position in whatever that market may be.

This semester, Barnes is teaching both face-to-face and in Zoom sessions.

"I've been impressed that the students have responded so well to the adjustment," he said. "I believe the classes as a whole have gained a broader insight into each other's processes and work, and students have been constructive and engaged throughout every step of in-class critique."

A native of Alexandria, Louisiana, Barnes joined the Ole Miss faculty



Tyler Barnes' label design for the New Orleans-based River Basin Distillery features a map of 18th century New Orleans, a sweep of blue representing the Mississippi River and a crescent moon that

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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.

in 2016. He received his BFA in graphic communications from Northwestern State University and his MFA in graphic design from Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi. Between earning degrees, he worked as a design associate at Marc English Design and has operated as a freelancer since 2009.

cradles the French Quarter.
Submitted photo

Barnes hopes that students will be able to graduate and feel confident with their portfolio, which is why he is working on a new class for next semester, Advanced Graphic Design, that will focus on building a professional portfolio.

"This recognition of Tyler for his graphic design is well deserved," said Nancy Wicker, chair of the **Department of Art and Art History**. "He is an excellent instructor who interacts directly with students face-to-face to guide them in learning design principles and mastering the computer software necessary to produce professional-quality work."

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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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