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Former Alumni Director James Butler Dies at 86

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Former Alumni Director James Butler Dies at 86

Administrator opened doors for women, black alumni and helped modernize Alumni Association

JULY 2, 2013 BY MITCHELL DIGGS

Fa Tv Li Er Co SM Pr Sr



James N. Butler

OXFORD, Miss. – A former University of Mississippi administrator who helped modernize and dramatically expand the university's Alumni Association is being remembered as an innovator, a compassionate leader and a dedicated friend and husband.

James N. Butler, who served 10 years as director of alumni affairs and nearly two decades in other roles with the Alumni Association, died early Monday (July 1) at his home in Oxford after a long illness. He was 86.

Services are set for 2 p.m. Wednesday at First Baptist Church in Oxford. Visitation precedes the ceremony beginning at noon in the church's atrium. Tutor Memorial Funeral Home of Pontotoc is handling all arrangements.

Butler is remembered by many as a devoted Ole Miss Rebel who helped cultivate many new friends for the university.

"He truly loved people," said Brenda West, former associate director of alumni affairs who worked with Butler for 10 years. "He was strong in his convictions but he would listen, and he made his decisions after he gave a matter serious thought. He was fair, and people respected him. He had high standards for the organization, but he was wonderful to work for."

A native of Pontotoc County, Butler came to the university in 1944 as a freshman guard on the Rebel football team. He served a tour of duty during World War II before returning to campus to complete his bachelor's and master's degrees in education. He served as principal and head football coach at Pontotoc High School for a few years, and returned to Ole Miss in 1961 as alumni secretary. He was named associate director of alumni activities and the Alumni House in 1978.

In 1980, Butler was named the university's third director of alumni affairs, a position he held until his retirement in 1990. During his tenure, the Alumni Association increased its active membership by almost 7,000 members and added two professional chapters and more than 20 new alumni clubs.

"His passing is a terrible loss," said Marion Smith, partner in Truly Smith & Latham LLC of Natchez, who served as Alumni Association president during Butler's tenure as director. "Jim Butler served so long and so well. He was certainly dedicated to his job and performed it to perfection, in my opinion.

"He set some programs in place that led to future accomplishments for the alumni association and brought about an improved cooperation between academics and the association that continues to this day. Jim Butler was a well-rounded individual and it was my pleasure to work closely with him during my tenure as alumni association president."

One of the organization's greatest accomplishments came when Butler took the bold step to buy a computer system for maintaining alumni records early in his stint as director. Before, the association used a primitive Addressograph machine to store addresses and produce mailing labels.

"When we rolled that Addressograph out of the office, it was a celebration," West said. "We hung onto it for a long time in case anything happened to the computer, but it was a big day when we finally got rid of it."

Butler also helped organize the Black Alumni Advisory Council and the university's first Black Alumni Reunion, and he helped open doors for women on campus, West said.

"He gave me professional opportunities that I probably would never have gotten anywhere else," she

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Students Learn 'Real Politics' in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

said. "He was very sensitive to helping women progress professionally, and he was sensitive to the needs of black alumni. He really did a lot for the whole university in reaching out to black alumni."

Despite being retired for more than 20 years, Butler remained active in the Alumni Association until recently.

"I never worked for Mr. Butler, but he had continued to be present in our activities for the 23 years I have worked here," said Tim Walsh, UM executive director of alumni affairs. "He and Mrs. Butler mentored some of our Student Alumni Council members through last semester, and they continued to come to every alumni event to which he was invited. Our staff and alumni always enjoyed seeing Mr. and Mrs. Butler here on campus. He was a great man and will be sorely missed."

Butler also helped attract private support for the university that continues to provide opportunities for students and faculty, said Sandra Guest, vice president of the University of Mississippi Foundation, who knew Butler for 36 years and worked with him for many of those.

"Jim Butler was instrumental in our early efforts to attract private funds to strengthen the university," Guest said. "He was involved in helping promote the annual giving program among alumni and friends. Jim knew that building private support was the catalyst for the university to continually advance to the next level of excellence.

"He was a serious person and very conscientious about his work to further the mission and goals of Ole Miss. If you wanted something done right, you asked Jim to be involved. He was truly dedicated and loyal to Ole Miss, and our alumni and friends loved and respected him. His great love for Ole Miss could be seen in everything he did and said."

Butler was named to the university's Alumni Hall of Fame in 1991, and the Alumni House auditorium is named in his honor. He was active in First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon and lead usher and was active in the Wilds Men's Sunday school class. A former president of the Oxford Rotary Club, he also served as president of the Cancer Society and was honored as Jaycee Man of the Year.

Butler is survived by his wife of 64 years, Bettye; daughters Carole Butler Haney (Hal) of Oxford and Mitzi Butler Linginfelter (Bill) of Atlanta; son Lance Butler of Oxford; two brothers, Tommy Butler (Jeanne) of Nesbit and Allen Butler (Virginia Ann) of Hattiesburg; sister-in-law Lola Butler of Tupelo; four grandchildren, Whitney Haney Harris (Russell) of Memphis, Tenn., Hunter Haney of Oxford, William Butler Linginfelter and Elizabeth Jean Linginfelter of Atlanta; two great-grandchildren, Haney Evelyn Harris and Mallory Carole Harris of Memphis; and many nieces, nephews and extended family members.

Memorial contributions can be made to the First Baptist Church Building Fund, 800 Van Buren Ave., Oxford, MS 38655; the Student Alumni Council, c/o Ole Miss Alumni Association, P.O. Box 1848, University, MS 38677; or to a charity of the donor's choice.

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