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Persistence Leads to Perseverance

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Persistence Leads to Perseverance

MAY 11, 2018 BY JESSICA EVANS



Mary Knight, a friend and colleague, has been a tremendous support in my journey. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Communications

"A failure is not always a mistake, it may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying." – B.F. Skinner

The inaugural Red and Blue Celebration for graduating faculty and staff is a testament to those who have worked hard to overcome obstacles of balancing life, work and family, all while bettering themselves through education.

For some of us, such as myself, it was a journey filled with many setbacks.

In 2013, I was ready to graduate. I began looking at graduate programs, took the GRE and even joined the Ole Miss Alumni Association. I even have a brick with my name on it in the circle under the Class of 2013. That's how ready I was to graduate. Then, as it tends to do so, life happened. I ended up lacking one single class and, due to several setbacks, was not able to finish.

Four years would pass before I would finally have a chance to complete my degree.

During my undergraduate years, I was not always the best student. Life tended to get to me, and attempting to balance working 35 hours or more while taking 15 hours of classes was trying on top of other events occurring in my personal life.

I admit I did get lost along the way, briefly, but with time, I grew to understand and learn how to cope with whatever life threw my way. I learned how to better manage my time and how to better cope with circumstances, whatever they maybe.

If college teaches us anything, it is how to adapt to whatever life may have in store. Actually, it teaches us not only to adapt, but never to give up.

I went through every administrative process imaginable during those five years, hoping to finally graduate. Even after the many unsuccessful attempts to finish, I rarely took no for an answer. With the help of an unbelievably gracious friend, I was finally able to take my last class this past fall.

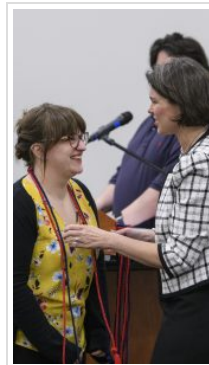
I was so nervous to get back into class after being out for nearly five years and now working a full time job at the university. I knew with the time away, I had been able to reflect on those mistakes and use them as lessons to drive positive change in my life. I was prepared to prove, not only to myself, but everyone, that I am capable.

I am extremely proud to say that in December 2017, I passed my last class with an A to complete my bachelor's degree in psychology. The lesson here: Being patient and persistent pays off.

I immediately applied for a graduate program, only to be rejected. I made connections and voiced how I knew I would succeed in the program and that my undergraduate time is not a reflection of what I can accomplish. I then reapplied and will be beginning my master's degree this summer.

You cannot simply take rejection as the end-all, be-all. I hold strong to the idea that if one keeps pushing and striving, you can succeed.

It will not always go according to plan, but being able to quickly and effectively adapt to what life has to offer is a valuable lesson all its own. If you're willing to accept help and know that you are never alone in your journey, there is a tremendous support system here at



On Wednesday (May 9), I participated in the inaugural Red and Blue Celebration. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Communications

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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.



Without the support of family, like mine here, many faculty and staff members would not have been able to achieve the success celebrated during the Red and Blue Celebration. Photo by Thomas Graning/Ole Miss Communications

the university, and at home with family and with friends.

I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to participate with others in such an outstanding celebration of our hard work. It was the perfect closing to this chapter in my life. It's also the beginning of bigger and better things.

The one thing my family, friends and colleagues have learned from my experience is to believe in yourself, keep pushing and always be patient and persistent.

"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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