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School of Applied Sciences Enrolls First Student in Gerontology Program

New interdisciplinary degree provides academic preparation, practical experience

SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 BY [SARA WHITE AND SARAH SAPP](#)



Clark Ross (right) thanks his grandmother, Gloria McGregor, for encouraging him to pursue the new Bachelor of Science in Applied Gerontology. Photo by Sarah Sapp/School of Applied Sciences

OXFORD, Miss. – The **School of Applied Sciences** at the **University of Mississippi** recently welcomed its first student into the school's new interprofessional degree program for applied gerontology.

Clark Ross, a junior community college transfer from Oxford, was exploring academic majors at UM when his maternal grandmother, Gloria McGregor, recommended considering a new interdisciplinary degree that provides students with preparation for a range of aging-related careers and graduate study.

McGregor was familiar with the quality associated with programs in the School of Applied Sciences and the types of students they attract. With 32 years of service at the university, McGregor worked in the school from its inception in 2001 to her retirement in 2007 with roles ranging from records coordinator to assistant to the dean.

"Students in applied sciences are all about people," McGregor said. "They interact with people. They care about people.

"I see this new program being one that is really needed because we are an aging population. We will need services and people who are compassionate, not just looking at it as a job. We need people who really know what is expected of them. This is a great and much-needed program."

The compassion McGregor described as inherent in the school's students is easily spotted in her grandson.

"When my grandfather was diagnosed with leukemia, hospice care came in," Ross said. "They helped him quite a bit. I was kind of like, 'I like what these people do. They're providing a needed service.'

"I've always known I want to help people, so I looked into this major."

Longer lifespans signal an imminent population shift. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job market for aging-related occupations is projected to grow 17 percent from 2014 to 2024 across health care, education, government agency, community and private practice settings, much faster than average.

The Ole Miss program is designed to meet career goals of a broad spectrum of students and give them

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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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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Ole Miss In the News

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

a competitive edge in the job market. Ross aims his career aspirations toward counseling.

"If you have a sick or dying family member, your mind is going a million miles an hour; you really don't know what to do," Ross said. "You may say you do, but it helps to have someone there for you.

"If I could be there for someone who has an aging or sick family member, they could count on me."

Coursework across diverse disciplines such as communication sciences and disorders, nutrition, social work, exercise science, legal studies, and sports and recreation administration offers a holistic approach to understanding the many facets of aging.

Besides 35 hours of general education courses, students must complete 33 hours of professional applied gerontology core courses and 27 hours of additional support courses for applied gerontology to earn their **Bachelor of Science in Applied Gerontology**. Students will have exposure to additional disciplines while completing the general education and minor requirements.

They will graduate with career-ready skills or may choose to pursue graduate study. The degree was designed to fulfill many of the requirements for graduate study in programs across applied sciences.

The program's interprofessional educational structure provides students with a comprehensive educational foundation, which includes program-directed seminars and diverse community engagement experiences.

"For students, the practical experiences and skills learned through community engagement and practicum include the opportunity to observe and interact with professionals engaged in day-to-day activities in an agency working with older adults or needs of the aging population," said Marcia Cole, lecturer and director of internships and community engagement for the program.

The program includes experiential learning opportunities in diverse public and private organizations that advocate for and serve older adults. This will include organizations providing services to healthy older adults as well as those serving elders with long-term care and family support needs, veterans and elders with disabilities.

Along with Cole, the program is under the leadership of Teresa Carithers, the school's interim dean, who serves as program director.

"It is so exciting to be involved in education with such relevance for the future," Carithers said. "While the majority of applied gerontology graduates will migrate toward the elder care workforce, the broad scope of experiential internship opportunities will prepare students to enter almost any occupation or graduate school venue with abilities to provide leadership in policy development, customer service and discipline-specific quality of life engagement to older adults, who will constitute a much larger portion of the population in the near future."

To provide expanded academic exposure, all applied gerontology majors must complete an official minor or declare a second major. Ross found his minor in cinema studies.

"It kind of sounds like a weird pairing, but film is one of the best ways to preserve a piece of history," said Ross, who expresses a deep reverence for the elderly, especially his grandmother and great grandmothers.

"I think it might be fun if someone wanted to film an aging family member and have them talk about what they lived through and their experiences," he said. "As people, we want to feel important and we want to have a purpose. Your story needs to be told; otherwise, people will stop caring.

"If you can get some of that on film, you have that for future generations. You never know who can benefit."

For more information about the applied gerontology program, call 662-915-7900 or email applsci@olemiss.edu.

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