

# The Applied Approach



## Q & A with the dean and the chancellor

**S**chool of Applied Sciences Dean Linda Chitwood sat down with UM Chancellor Dan Jones in the Lyceum on Nov. 30 to learn firsthand Jones' thoughts on the status and future of the university and the School of Applied Sciences. Jones, who became chancellor in fall 2009, previously was vice chancellor of health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine at The University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

**LC:** In the short time that you've been chancellor, what have been your most unexpected opportunities and challenges?

**DJ:** The unexpected opportunity was to get off to a fast start in relationships. I really thought it would take longer, particularly because of Chancellor [Robert] Khayat's very, very long and successful tenure (1995-2009). I have seen the deans, the chairs, the faculty



Photo by Nathan Latil

Dean Linda Chitwood and Chancellor Dan Jones converse in the Lyceum.

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## Prestigious fellowship funds doctoral student's research in Delta

**A**bigail Gamble, believed to be the first doctoral student at UM to receive a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation dissertation fellowship, is using the award to study the physical activity of schoolchildren in the Delta.

"We would like to determine how state, district and school-level policy, and the built environment of school recreational spaces influence in-school physical activity and weight status of children ages 6-11 years in the Mississippi Delta," said Gamble, who was awarded the fellowship in September and is working on her Ph.D. in exercise science. "I decided to focus on children's in-school physical activity because children spend most of their day at school and have the potential to be influenced by the opportunities they are given while at school."

Jeff Hallam, associate professor of health, exercise science and recreation management, is Gamble's dissertation adviser for the project,

"The Role of Policy and the Built Environment on Children's In-school Physical Activity in the Mississippi Delta."

Gamble and Blake Goldman, a UM student working toward a master's in health promotion, are traveling to 11 elementary schools in the Delta to collect height, weight and waist-circumference measurements on about 1,200 first- to fifth-graders. They are also assessing the built environment, or spaces where children play, and observing the children's physical activity during both recess and physical education classes. Each school that participates will be given funds to purchase physical activity equipment to be used by the children during recess and/or physical education class. In addition, Gamble is conducting telephone interviews with state, district and school-level personnel regarding physical-activity policy.

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engage in a meaningful way early on in important conversations. That's been a very pleasant surprise for me that I didn't have to spend more time treading water, building relationships. A big challenge I have faced in the early days has been the budget situation. Certainly I knew there was a recession when I took the job. I knew that the state was going to give us less money. This challenge has provided an opportunity to have meaningful conversations, and I've had a lot of meaningful advice from administration, faculty, staff, alumni and students.

**LC:** I know you have only been here a short time and your 10-year vision is being formed, but can you articulate your hopes for the university?

**DJ:** If we can make as much progress in the next 10 years as we have in the last 10 years, that would be a great accomplishment for the university. I'd like to see us be stronger academically than we are today but not to sacrifice access so we would

be able to make financial decisions that we need to make and have recruitment strategies that allow us to not lose ground on diversity. I'd like us to continue to improve on our diversity in every sense of the word. Another part is our opportunity to move our state forward. We do provide a lot of leadership for our state now, but I'd like to see us play an even larger role not just in higher education but also in improving education for the state. Health care, I think, is a critical problem for our state, and there are opportunities for providing leadership for improving health for all Mississippians, as well.

**LC:** What would you like to tell the alumni of the School of Applied Sciences about the importance of their service to the state of Mississippi?

**DJ:** For those who have taken on that responsibility, thank you. They are fulfilling what I think is the appropriate role for our graduates, and I'm grateful for that. I like for people to have a burning

passion for our state to be all it can be, to see that, with the right leadership, this state can and should be a great place to live and work. There are those of us who love Mississippi and want to be a part of this state, but we have large challenges that make it difficult to recruit people to join us here. So we all have to be committed to providing a good educational opportunity for every person in Mississippi and to creating an environment where every profession is practiced at the very highest level. Graduates of The University of Mississippi, I believe, have those two words I use a lot together: opportunity and responsibility.

**LC:** What changes would you like to see in the School of Applied Sciences, or what would you like us to do better?

**DJ:** I would like for every department to have a plan in place, as I suspect you do already, to understand what the market for Mississippi is and to ensure that we are training professionals neces-

sary to meet the state's needs. I would love to see every department in the school have a plan for building our research program, and I'd love to have sufficient numbers of faculty in every department to allow those things to happen. I do think that there are research opportunities for your school that, because Mississippi has such unique needs, create a unique laboratory for research. Where inequalities exist within our population, I'd like that to be at least one of the issues the research programs address.

**LC:** Is there anything [else] that you want to talk to us about?

**DJ:** One of the things I think I said to your faculty when I met with them is that I probably feel more connection to your school because you are closer to who I am and what I've been about. I'm glad to know that your school is here to meet needs in our state, and your presence makes me feel more comfortable on this campus. ✱

## Delta, continued from Page 1

"My hope for this project is to uncover what some of the barriers and facilitators are to providing opportunities for children to be adequately physically active while at school," Gamble said.

She said she hopes that the results of this investigation will be directly relevant to state, district and school policy makers and administrators, and that the outcomes will be used to directly impact children in rural underserved communities.

"Specifically, researchers will have more knowledge and a better understanding of the social-ecological factors that influence physical activity among children and how these factors relate to the weight status of children aged 6-11 years in the Mississippi



Abigail Gamble measures the waist circumference of a child for her research on children's in-school physical activity in the Delta.

Delta. With this knowledge base, school administrators and program coordinators will be able to identify key points for intervention, while physical education instructors will be better equipped to deliver

effective programs to alter children's physical activity."

Gamble said she is doing what she always meant to do.

"As a junior working toward my undergraduate degree in elementary educa-

tion, I finally realized what I wanted to do with my life. My passion is to help people of all ages to live healthy and with quality of life regardless of the length of one's life span." ✱

# Hospitality management internship takes student to South Africa

A hospitality management major chose an internship that was part learning experience, part globe-hopping adventure.

Garrett Nesbitt, a senior from Shreveport, La., spent July through September 2009 in South Africa, interning for Mubula Safaris. A family friend helped set him up with an interview with the company's owner at the Dallas Safari Show in January.

"The internship was related to hospitality management because the main focus of my job was to keep the clients happy," Nesbitt said. "The happier they were, the better job I was doing."

During a typical day, he said his responsibilities included everything from serving coffee to clients in their luxurious tents to taking them big-game hunting. Traveling by air and land, Nesbitt's journey included a 14-day safari in Botswana and a trip to Kruger National Park, where

he viewed lions and elephants that often were only 10 yards away.

"It was a great opportunity for me to see things that I may never have a chance to [see] again. I got to see more of South Africa than most South Africans do," Nesbitt said.

"I learned how to live and interact in a culture of people that is completely opposite of what I'm used to. My only friends over there were the guys that I worked with [from the Zulu tribe]. They taught me so much about appreciating what you have. Those guys don't have much, but they wake up with a smile and a good attitude each and every day."

In addition to 3 credit hours, Nesbitt's internship provided him with experience in several key areas of the hospitality management industry, said Tanya Ruetzler, assistant professor of hospitality management and internship director for the program.



Garrett Nesbitt (back row, middle) and crew pose with a kudu after a hunting expedition.

"He was a tour guide, worked with food-and-beverage service and overnight accommodations, and, most importantly, interacted with a diverse guest base in a country that was completely foreign to him. Really, you could not ask for a more well-rounded experience. All students should have this type of multicultural experience." ❖

## CSD Fall Institute sees largest turnout to date

by Edwin Smith

More than 200 speech-language pathologists and audiologists packed The Inn at Ole Miss for the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders' annual Fall Institute in September.

Registration for the two-day event doubled from last year, thanks in part to the hard work of UM students, who have planned and conducted the institute since 2002. The guest speaker and her topic, enhancing the skills of children with highly unintelligible speech, also contributed to the event's success.

"Having Barbara Hodson, who is professor and doctoral program coordinator at Wichita State University, is an incredible honor," said Brad Crowe, director of UM's Speech and Hearing Clinic. "I'm certain that once word got out that she was coming, many more people began



Photo by Kevin Bain

Barbara Hodson

making plans to be here."

The author of English and Spanish phonological assessment instruments, Hodson is also the developer of a copyrighted software program used to analyze phonological patterns. A frequently published scholar, she has received the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Foundation's Kleffner Lifetime Clinical Career Award.

Hodson discussed with

participants how to identify phonological and metaphonological deficiencies of children with highly unintelligible speech. (Phonological deficiencies refer to problems with creating the sounds necessary for speech; metaphonological deficiencies are problems with comprehending and thinking about rules for putting those sounds together for speech.)

"These children have difficulty understanding and implementing the rules for creating speech," said Stephanie Beebe, an instructor and speech-language pathologist who, along with Crowe, is co-advisor of UM's campus chapter of the National Student Speech, Language and Hearing Association (NSSLHA). "Once their strengths have been assessed, pathologists and audiologists can create plans that help them put together understandable speech."

Besides hosting a successful conference, members of

NSSLHA were also excited that fees received from institute registration were enough to fund all of their travel expenses to the ASHA meeting, which took place in New Orleans in November.

"We put forth a great deal of effort to publicize this event to ensure its success," said Jamie Malone of Nettleton, president of UM's NSSLHA chapter. "Several months of preparation and hard work finally paid off, and we are extremely excited about the turnout."

One new approach that paid off was the manner in which the group promoted the event, Crowe said. In lieu of the usual paid advertising in trade publications, the chapter sent a mass e-mail notification to several hundred professionals and students in the South and beyond.

Those completing the institute earned continuing education credit from ASHA. ❖

## School's career fair expands

Students are cleaning up their resumes and preparing to pitch their skills to 80 potential employers at the third annual School of Applied Sciences Career Fair Feb. 11.

This year's fair, set for 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at The Inn at Ole Miss, will include a research symposium and evening reception, as well as networking opportunities for students and potential employers. Research posters created by faculty and students also will be on display.

In the evening, a networking reception will be hosted by the school and the Ole Miss Alumni Association, and will include a brief research presentation by a student and either an alumnus/alumna or faculty member.

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## HESRM professor tackles underage drinking

The University of Mississippi is working with Mississippi State University and Mississippi University for Women on a project designed to reduce alcohol use and binge drinking by students under 21, the state's minimum drinking age.

The program, Stay Dry! Mississippi Coalition of Partners in Prevention, is funded with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education and will focus on alcohol-abuse education, peer education, media campaigns and the promotion of alcohol-free social events on and off the campuses. The coalition also comprises Mississippi Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Mississippians Advocating Against Underage Drinking.

"[The program] will help us target the under 21-year-olds who are drinking illegally. They shouldn't be drinking, but they do," said Jeff Hallam, UM associate professor of health, exercise science

and recreation management. Hallam and Ellen Schafer, assistant director in the Office of Health Promotion, are co-investigators for the UM grant.

Alcohol-related fatalities among U.S. college students increased from 1,440 deaths in 1998 to 1,825 in 2005, and binge drinking and drunk driving are on the rise as well, according to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

The coalition's objective is to demonstrate a reduction in 30-day alcohol use and binge drinking among underage students at the three campuses. This objective will be measured by face-to-face interviews, focus groups and written questionnaires. Measurement of objectives will also be supported by the campus alcohol-incidence offenses data reports generated by each institution.

Hallam said he and Schafer are looking at the university's programs that are in place now



Jeff Hallam

to reduce alcohol use among students younger than 21, such as alcohol.edu, and the Basics and Jade programs available through the Office of Health Promotion. They will also test new strategies to reduce underage drinking such as increasing knowledge about drinking through class curricula, developing a resource directory, working with local landlords to address drinking by students who live off campus and hosting at least one alcohol-free activity per semester. ✱

Photo by Robert Jordan

## Planning grant targets early intervention

A professor of communication sciences and disorders is developing a comprehensive plan to better train Mississippi's early intervention personnel.

Carolyn Wiles Higdon, an associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, received a one-year, \$184,475 grant to develop a center of excellence model for the state of Mississippi's early intervention (EI) program for newborns to 3-year-olds who need speech-language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy and special educa-

tion. The grant was awarded by the Mississippi Department of Health with federal stimulus funds.



Carolyn Wiles Higdon

Higdon said she will look at data across the state that compare current services to needed services, and she will look at what the state needs to improve its service delivery.

"We have excellent service providers in this state, but the challenge is [to develop] a cohesive model [to include prevention, screening, evaluation and assessment] for early intervention in Mississippi," Higdon said. "The primary purpose of this grant

is to develop a comprehensive profile of current training needs by identifying critical gaps in current knowledge regarding personnel prep for EI professionals in the local health districts of Mississippi, as well as to gather data about the current and projected supply and demand for personnel in EI."

Following completion and depending on the outcome of the one-year data collection phase, Higdon said she envisions a center of excellence that could be expanded to include teletherapy for families in rural areas; a library for parent education; on-site play-based assessments and treatments;



A new grant will help to better train early intervention personnel in Mississippi.

specific training in autism spectrum disorders, hearing impairments and other at-risk issues for newborns to 3-year-olds; and a plan for increased centralized billing in Mississippi for Medicaid, private insurance and alternate funding sources for children in the early intervention program. ✱

# Legal studies professor works to prevent sexual violence

**A**rmed with a \$300,000 grant, The University of Mississippi is working to address a national problem of sexual assault on college campuses.

The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women awarded a three-year grant to establish the new UM Violence Prevention Office, which is located in the Department of Legal Studies. The funds will be used to implement education programs, de-

velopment victim-services programs, create more effective campus policies and support improved coordination among administrators and law enforcement. The aim is to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

The issue is prevention, not reaction to violence, said Linda Keena, UM assistant professor of criminal justice and grant co-director. To emphasize this message, Keena will help organize a summit on violence

prevention, tentatively scheduled for spring 2010. The summit will introduce the Green Dot campaign, which encourages people to stand up against violence rather than merely stand by.

"The Green Dot strategy is an exciting new way to help reduce violence by educating bystanders about what they can do to keep violence from occurring," Keena said. "The underlying philosophy is to inspire people to take action in situations where they see that

someone may be harmed."

In collaboration with Family Crisis Services of Northwest Mississippi and the Oxford Police Department, the university's Violence Prevention Office will offer resource referral, training, information, coordination, prevention programming and advocacy for students, faculty, staff and parents. A feature of the new program includes coordinated efforts between the Department of Legal Studies, University Judicial Council, University Counseling Center, Office of Health Promotion, Family Crisis Services, University Police Department and other local law-enforcement agencies.

"I believe it is my responsibility as project co-director to make certain that victims of violence are receiving assistance or referrals to the proper resource agencies and criminal

justice entities in the community or on campus," Keena said.

The need for the grant is based, in part, on statistics that indicate one in six college women nationwide falls victim to rape or attempted rape, more than 10 percent of women are forced to have sex in a dating situation, and four out of five sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance of the victim.

"All of these statistics would lead you to believe that there are a great number of rapes being reported or charges brought against the assailants," said Leigh Ann Bynum, a UM doctoral student in pharmacy administration. "But, in reality, only about 5 percent of rape and sexual assault cases are even reported to police. That's a marked difference."

Ellen Schafer, associate director of UM's Office of Health Promotion and project co-director, said the program is uniquely structured for The University of Mississippi environment and culture.

"We want to help the university prevent violence, protect victims and hold offenders accountable, as well as change social norms and myths regarding safety and violence against women for the entire University of Mississippi community," Schafer said. ✱

**"The underlying philosophy is to inspire people to take action in situations where they see that someone may be harmed."**

— Linda Keena

## Alumni Induction



A reception was held in honor of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association president Sue Hale (BAEd 72, MCD 75, SpecCD 78) and president-elect Tommie Robinson (BA 84, MS 86) at the ASHA convention in New Orleans Nov. 19-21.

## Career Fair, continued from Page 4

"We feel this will enlighten industry on our strengths and diversity, and provide student and faculty researchers a unique opportunity to showcase their productivity," said Teresa Carithers, associate dean of the School of Applied Sciences and chair of the Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management.

For more information about the Career Fair, contact Jennifer Chambers at [jlchamb1@olemiss.edu](mailto:jlchamb1@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-1081. ✱



# NHM, Delta Health Alliance join forces to fight childhood obesity

by Edwin Smith

**T**he Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management\* is encouraging adolescents in Delta-area schools to choose healthier foods and increase their physical activity—two important lifestyle changes in the Magnolia state's ongoing battle with the bulge.

man County school districts. "The program is achieving promising results in the Mississippi Delta," said Lacy Dodd, health educator and project manager. Dodd and Janie Cole, the program's registered dietitian, spend time in classrooms educating students and in local parent centers and PTA associa-

1,200 students and their families served through the program by the close of the 2008-09 school year indicates that 77 percent of the participants either started exercising or increased their physical activity after completing the curriculum. Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported they had increased their intake of fruits and vegetables, and 40 percent said they drink low-fat milk or eat low-fat milk products.

Equally encouraging are statistics that show 53 percent of the children are decreasing the amount of food they consume.

Eighty-eight percent said they learned things in the program that will influence their eating habits as adults.

"The early results support the importance of nutrition education in the fight against obesity and disease among residents in the Mississippi Delta region," said project investigator Charlotte Oakley of NFSMI.

With another year's funding from DHA, the program has expanded to Bolivar County to provide hands-on nutrition education activities, including healthy cooking classes and gardens at participating schools, said Kathy Knight, co-project investigator and associate professor of nutrition and hospitality management. Students grow tomatoes, okra, squash, corn, peas and peppers.

Program administrators, school officials and dietitians are acutely aware that economics can play a role in poor nutrition. Fresh foods are often more expensive than fast foods, so while fresh is always the first choice, frozen and canned

foods are emphasized as suitable alternatives.

They're also careful to remember to avoid words such as "fat" and "obese" when dealing with children at an age when appearance and self-esteem are inextricably linked.

"We tell them, 'We're not here to make you skinny; we're here to help you be healthy,'" Dodd said.

In at least one instance, students have used tools provided by the program to influence parents to offer healthier meals.

"We had a parent call and ask if she could bring a fruit tray to her child's birthday party at school," recalled Pope Middle School Principal Susan Vance. "Cupcakes are usually what they bring, so I think they're learning and changing as well."

NFSMI takes its programs and services nationwide through seminars and workshops, satellite presentations, teleconferences, participation at professional meetings and conferences, and via its Web site. This state-of-the-art facility provides professional development opportunities to child nutrition professionals.

The Delta Health Alliance is a partnership founded by Delta State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi Valley State University, the UM Medical Center and the Delta Council. The alliance's primary goals are to coordinate and provide oversight for community-based programs that address critical health-care and wellness gaps in the Delta.

For more information about "Eating Good ... and Moving Like We Should," contact Lacy Dodd at [lamyrick@olemiss.edu](mailto:lamyrick@olemiss.edu) or Janie Cole at [jwcole@olemiss.edu](mailto:jwcole@olemiss.edu), or call 800-321-3054. ☐

*\*Editor's note: The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences is now known as the Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management.*



Janie Cole (left), a registered dietitian with the "Eating Good ... and Moving Like We Should" program, and Kathy Knight (second from left), UM associate professor of nutrition and hospitality management and project co-investigator, talk with church members at Quitman County St. Matthew Church of God in Christ in Lambert about healthy foods and portion sizes at the church's Health Night.

Obesity in children and adults is a major factor in Mississippi's high rates of heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

The Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management and the UM National Food Service Management Institute are partners in the "Eating Good ... and Moving Like We Should" program. Funded last year by a grant from the Delta Health Alliance, the program teaches children to make healthy choices based on their individual food and nutrition needs, and encourages them to engage in a more active lifestyle. The project serves schools in the South Panola and Quit-

tions educating parents, caregivers and school personnel.

Besides classroom education, Dodd and Cole have conducted workshops, training seminars and individual counseling sessions in community churches and parent centers. Topics have included nutrition and lifestyle factors associated with chronic disease risk factors, especially those associated with obesity.

"Many students have a family member with diabetes, so they think it's something they're just going to have," Cole said. "We're teaching them that it doesn't have to happen."

A survey of the more than



Capt. Libby Lytle, Lt. Chris Robertson and Investigator Jimmy Williams of the Oxford Police Department have enrolled in UM's Master of Criminal Justice Executive Cohort Program. Michael Wigginton Jr. (left) is program coordinator.

## Master's in criminal justice specialized for professionals

**A** new program allows professionals to pursue a master's degree while holding onto their jobs.

The Master of Criminal Justice Executive Cohort Program is designed for students from such backgrounds as criminal justice, homeland security, public safety and the military. It offers four two-week residencies over the course of two years, which are held during intersessions on the Oxford campus, and consists of 30 hours of course work and 6 hours of thesis or practicum.

"Some of the challenges of the program are that it's very intense and requires a lot of work, as it should, but the rewards are that it accommodates my busy schedule better than regular classes," said Capt. Libby Lytle with the Oxford Police Department. "It also gives me the opportunity to learn about a multitude of topics that can assist me with my present position serving the Oxford community."

The 36-hour degree em-

**"... [The program] accommodates my busy schedule better than regular classes."**

**—Capt. Libby Lytle, Oxford Police Department**

phasizes homeland security and includes topics such as fraud, scams, intelligence planning and terrorism. These courses prepare students for work with law enforcement, private security and homeland security agencies, as well as careers as policy analysts. The curriculum also prepares graduates for doctoral programs and teaching at the community college level.

The first session began in January 2009 with 10 graduate students, said Dr. Michael Wigginton Jr., program coordinator and assistant professor of criminal justice. He said most students use their vacation time to attend class, and others

are granted administrative time from their employers. While fulfilling their residencies, executive cohort students stay at The Inn at Ole Miss.

Shannon O'Toole, special agent with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, entered the program in August 2009 and plans to teach part time and eventually earn a doctoral degree. He said he likes

that his classmates are fellow practitioners in the field.

"We all relate to each other very well, which will allow for what I can see being many long-term friendships," O'Toole said.

For more information about the program, contact Dr. Mike Wigginton at [mpwiggin@ole-miss.edu](mailto:mpwiggin@ole-miss.edu) or 662-915-1737. \*

## Students Throw Down



Nutrition and hospitality management students prepare desserts for the local community during Chef Throwdown, held Dec. 1 in Lenoir Hall.

# University steps up with mandated training for social workers

by Edwin Smith

In response to the demand for highly qualified, skilled social work professionals, a new partnership between The University of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Human Services is providing social workers with needed education and training.

The university's Department of Social Work and the MDHS Division of Family and Children Services are working together to help participants earn their master's degrees in the field. Under the Master of Social Work Partnership, 19 social work field supervisors from across north Mississippi are attending daylong classes every other Monday for three years. Upon completion of the curriculum in 2012, students earn master's degrees in social

work.

"We're very pleased to accept the State Department of Human Services' offer to assist them in their training needs," said Carol Boyd, professor and chair of the Department of Social Work and principal investigator for the program in the UM School of Applied Sciences. "Collaborative partnerships such as this are beneficial for all involved."

DHS was mandated to increase the number, hiring standards and training of social workers in the 2007 settlement of the *Olivia Y. et al. vs. Haley Barbour, et al.* lawsuit, said Linda Millsap, director of the Division of Family and Children Services. Other terms of the settlement include DHS's becoming accredited by

the Council on Accreditation, increasing educational and therapeutic services for foster parents and children, and adding a 24-hour hot line for reporting abuse and maltreatment of children throughout the state.

"The University of Mississippi is the latest institution to assist MDHS-DFCS in its compliance requirements," Millsap said. "With the assistance being given, we expect to see some major improvements in the services provided by those in the social work profession."

The initiative is an example of how the university is helping meet the state's critical needs, UM Chancellor Dan Jones said.

"The University of Mississippi is working hard every day to move our state forward," Jones said. "Mississippi needs more master's-prepared social workers, and the university's Department of Social Work is responding by providing innovative programs to meet this need."

The program's participants are enthusiastic about the collaboration.

"Being a parent, working full time and going to school have been a real adjustment," said Wendy Bryant of Falkner. "The university has been great about accommodating course work to my busy schedule."

Gina Hairston of Hernando said she is excited to be learning more about her profession. "I'm somewhat amazed by the amount of new information I'm learning about a field I thought I knew so well."

Applying theory to actual tasks done on her job is "challenging yet rewarding," said Sandra Panzo of Ashland. "The greatest reward comes when I am able to go to that next level for the greater good of the people I serve."

For more information about UM's Department of Social Work, visit [www.olemiss.edu/depts/socialwork](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/socialwork), or call 662-915-7336. ✖

# Alumni board expresses devotion to school

The School of Applied Sciences Alumni Chapter board members follow diverse paths and interests, but they all seem to agree on one thing: The school has grown by leaps and bounds since its inception nearly a decade ago, thanks to its strong programs and engaged alumni.

The board comprises two representatives each from the departments of Communication Sciences and Disorders; Nutrition and Hospitality Management; Health, Exercise Science and Recreation Management; Legal Studies; and Social Work. Its members, who all prize service to the community, agreed to share a little bit about themselves, as well

as their thoughts about the school and their role in supporting its continued growth.



**Suzan Brown Thames** (BA 68) serves as president of the School of Applied Sciences alumni

board. Once Thames becomes involved with something, it's a long-term commitment. She was a diagnostic audiologist for Jackson Ear, Nose and Throat Clinic for 34 years and has been married for 37 years. She also has been chair of the board of Friends of Children's Hospital for 15 years and a member of Northminster Baptist Church for 40 years.

She has served on various advisory boards, including the UM Foundation and UM's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. After graduating from Ole Miss, she received a master's degree in audiology/speech pathology from Tulane University in 1971. She and her husband, John Herschel Thames Jr., have three children and four grandchildren.

"This board has watched an increase in growth of the School of Applied Sciences of almost 90 percent," Thames said. "Of course, like any other school on campus, there is a critical need for more monies to expand. The input and influence of a board that is committed to these goals is of

vital importance—and all of our School of Applied Sciences board members are!"



**Jimmy Warren** (BA 69, JD 72) is president-elect of the School of Applied Sciences alumni board. A lifelong resident

of Marshall County, Miss., and third-generation law-enforcement officer, he is an investigator with the Marshall County Sheriff's Department and also serves on a joint FBI/ATF tobacco task force. He was assistant U.S. attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice from 1989-2007. Previously, he was a partner in the law firm of Warren and Jones and municipi-

pal judge for the city of Holly Springs. Warren was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army ROTC at Ole Miss in 1969, promoted to first lieutenant in 1972 and served in the Mississippi National Guard from 1973-75. Among his affiliations, he is an officer of the Holly Springs Fire Department and a member of Phi Kappa Psi. He was honored as the Outstanding Criminal Justice Alumnus by the UM Department of Legal Studies in 2007. He and his wife, Susan, have been married 27 years and have a daughter and a grandson. Their son, Robert Thomas Warren, died at age 24 in 2006.

"I joined the alumni board to assist the School of Applied Sciences and give back to a program of the university that has given me so much," Warren said. "Legal studies is a part of my life, and I am honored to be one of the earlier graduates of the program. I applaud and commend Linda Chitwood for the excellent job she has done as dean of the School of Applied Sciences. Dean Chitwood, in her gentle and gracious way, has moved the school and its programs forward in a manner [in which] students and alumni should be proud."



**Karen Corban** (BS 75, MA 77) is the immediate past president of the School of Applied Sciences alumni

board. She is co-owner of and a designer for Murray Corban Commercial Foodservice Design Consultants. She was a member of the American Dietetic Association from 1977-2002 and was Lafayette County emergency feeding coordinator for the American Red Cross from 1990-95. She and her husband, Randy Corban, have two children and five grandchildren.

"The School of Applied Sciences is growing at a rate that

exceeds many other schools on campus," Corban said. "I believe the success of this school is due to the professional and enthusiastic leadership of Dean Chitwood and the department chairs. I also believe the growth of this school is due to the increasing number of students with a desire to assist in making people's lives better."



**June Overstreet** (BS 74) worked as a social work consultant in the nursing home industry for

24 years. She is owner of The Kaleidoscope on the Square in Oxford and is president of the board of directors for Angel Ranch, an emergency shelter for abused, abandoned or neglected children. She and her husband, Larry Overstreet, have three grown children: Angel, Will and Jennie.

"It has been my pleasure to serve on the alumni board and see the tremendous growth in this school," Overstreet said. "As a former social worker, I am very proud of the accomplishments and staff of the Department of Social Work. The board has helped to keep alumni as well as others informed of these accomplishments."



**Jeff Davis** (BPA 80) is a judicial security inspector for the U.S. Marshals Service, Northern District of

Mississippi. He started his law-enforcement career at the Oxford Police Department in 1979, holding the positions of patrolman, detective and narcotics agent. He is a member of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Lafayette County Law Enforcement Officers Association and the Ole Miss Alumni Association. He enjoys running, watching Ole Miss sports and teaching at the

Lafayette County Law Enforcement Reserve Officers Academy. He and his wife, Linda, have been married for 19 years.

"As a career law-enforcement officer, I have seen the growth of the criminal justice program affect law enforcement in the state in a positive way," Davis said. "Ole Miss students in the criminal justice program are graduating more prepared than ever for a career in law enforcement. The program has also reached out to the law-enforcement community to provide in-service training that has been lacking in the past. This has advanced the reputation of the school as a leader in the criminal justice community."



**Carolyn Hopkins** (BS 63) is a sales associate with Sales Concepts in Memphis, Tenn., and Jackson,

Miss. After earning her undergraduate degree, she received a Master of Science from the University of Alabama in 1967. Her professional experience includes working as associate director and acting director of education and training at UM's National Food Service Management Institute from 1991-98. She has held honorary and appointed positions with the Mississippi Home Economics Association, American School Nutrition Association, Delta Gamma Alumnae Association and American Dietetics Association. She is a member of First Presbyterian Church and has one son and four grandchildren.

"I have particularly enjoyed seeing the progressive work that is taking place in the School of Applied Sciences, and that knowledge has assisted me in encouraging potential students as well as business persons," Hopkins said. "I feel that the school is definitely going in the right direction as it goes with the forward progress that is taking

place on campus."



**Nycole Campbell Lewis**

(BSW 94) is a social work faculty member at Jackson State University and a

constituent services and legislative assistant for health and welfare policy for Mississippi Lt. Gov. Phil Bryant. Previously, she was chief of staff for the Division of Medicaid and a presidential management fellow in Washington, D.C., where she was an aide to Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.). After earning her bachelor's degree, she received a master's degree in social work from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1996 and a Ph.D. in public policy and administration from Jackson State University in 2002. She and her husband, Craig Stevenson Lewis, reside in Florence, Miss.

"[Being on the alumni board] is an opportunity to stay connected to my alma mater and advocate for the resources needed to ensure that the School of Applied Sciences continues to provide quality education for all diverse groups and communities. The leadership and insight of the dedicated leaders, faculty and staff have made a difference in the school and impacted the lives of many students."



**Debra Helms**

(BME 73, MEd 75) served as director of therapeutic recreation at the North Mississippi

Regional Center in Oxford for 35 years. She is now a consultant for the Yalobusha and Tallahatchie nursing homes and the Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi acute rehabilitation unit, and is an adjunct instructor for UM's Department of Health, Exercise Science and Recreation Management. Helms is a certified

*continued on Page 12*

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therapeutic recreation specialist, public manager and mental retardation specialist. She is a member of several professional and service organizations, including the Oxford Park Commission board, UM's park and recreation management board and Mississippi Special Olympics. She has a daughter and three grandchildren. She enjoys golf, travel, outdoor activities and Ole Miss sports.

"After years of being around faculty members who work to make the best possible educational setting for [UM] students, it was a vision realized when the School of Applied Sciences was established," Helms said. "This union of departments from across the university formed one of the most promising and exciting schools, allowing for endless possibilities."



**Sherri DeLashmit**  
(BS 84, MEd 85, PhD 91) has worked as director of the Heart Care

Center at Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi for the past 24 years. She is on the Marshall Academy board of directors, secretary-treasurer of the Marshall Academy Booster Club and men's soccer and track parent liaison. She is a graduate of Leadership Lafayette and has served on several community boards and fundraising projects. She and her husband, Reno DeLashmit, have two children: a daughter who is a nursing major at Ole Miss and a son who is a junior at Marshall Academy. She enjoys watching high-school and Ole Miss football games, sewing antebellum dresses

for pilgrimages, gardening and water sports in the summer.

"My favorite thing about serving on the School of Applied Sciences board is staying in touch with students and helping mentor them," DeLashmit said. "I get to meet students who are really on top of things in their fields and are so filled with excitement about their major and upcoming careers."



**Timeka Davis**  
(BS 99, MS 01) is an audiologist at North Mississippi Regional Center. She

has been a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association since 2001 and was captain of Relay for Life in 2006. She is an active member of the

Oxford Church of Christ, Alpha Kappa Alpha and the Parent Teacher Association at Bramlett Elementary School in Oxford. She and her husband, Josh Davis, have three daughters: Reagan, Farryn and Brooklyn. In her spare time, Davis enjoys photography and "Groving."

Davis said she joined the School of Applied Sciences alumni board because she "wanted to be able to contribute in some capacity to the growth of my field of study and work. The school [recently] has been enhanced in two major ways: by the opportunity to offer students hands-on experience in true business by partnering with The Inn at Ole Miss' host of hospitality positions and by the creation of the Center for Intelligence and Security Studies."