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Women in Leadership Organizes First Summit

PoliSHed kicks off Women's History Month at UM

OXFORD, Miss.– The University of Mississippi chapter of Women in Leadership to sparked a discussion about career advancement for women during the first-ever PoliSHed Summit.

Featuring 15 panelists, the discussion topics ranged from “Leadership 101” to “Superwoman” and “Into New Territory.” Among the guest speakers were notables such as Meg Annison, director of communications at the Mississippi Lottery Corp.; Maura Langhart, senior director of annual giving at the UM Foundation, and Claire Hick, corporate vice president of operations at Oceans Healthcare.

“As a program, we see many female students and we see many females who are successful professionals,” said Ashley McGee, UM Women in Leadership adviser and director of the Ole Miss MBA program, which launched the chapter two years ago.

“As interest has grown, we decided now was the time to launch a larger scale event, PoliSHed, our women’s leadership summit. In order to create good women leaders, put strong women leaders in front of them. It is a simple, yet powerful concept.”

The main theme was about having confidence in yourself and your abilities. Debra Sage, senior product manager at mTrade, recommended trying to have the same confidence that a man would have. She also emphasized the importance of boundaries and knowing when to say “no.”

“Never doubt yourself,” Sage said. “We are women, but we do have limits.”

Another recurring theme centered on career growth. Working at the roller rink and Jamba Juice, or as a babysitter or pharmacy cashier were among the first jobs mentioned during one panel discussion. Others focused on the role of women in leadership and provided advice to students for their future careers.

The panelists met with audience members to network, chat and ask follow-up questions.

“I loved being able to connect with my students and give them the advice I wish I had at their age,” said Hick, also an adjunct instructor of integrated marketing communications in the School of Journalism and New Media. “It is important to have a support system of people who lift you up.”

Working in a male-dominated industry can make it hard to break through, but Tywana Smith, an athlete business coach, sports consultant, wealth specialist, best-selling author and speaker, has carved her own successful path.

“In my industry, women don’t really know how to break into the sports world,” Smith said. “Oftentimes, your network determines that. You can be very talented but still never have the opportunity to break into that space.”

The event’s organizers were pleased with the March 1 summit and plan to make it an annual event.

“PoliSHed, for me, was all about how important it is to know yourself and how you light someone else’s candle does not dim your light,” said Aditi Holkunde, a graduate student in pharmaceutical sciences from Pune, India, and president of the Women in Leadership organization.

“This event also made us realize how important it is to be present in your life in the moment and enjoy life while building it.”

Link to Publication: <https://news.olemiss.edu/women-in-leadership-organizes-first-summit/>

Ole Miss Business Fraternity Offers New Networking Opportunity

The University of Mississippi’s chapter of Alpha Kappa Psi, a national business fraternity, hosted its first-ever “Connect ‘n’ Sip: Business After Hours” event on Nov. 1 at the Gertrude Ford C. Ford Ole Miss Student Union.

The event kicked off with a networking session for students, local business figures and university faculty.

President of the Ole Miss chapter, Erin McNary, a senior general business major from Lebanon, Illinois, expressed her enthusiasm for the event and its impact on the business students in attendance.

“Everything turned out so well,” she said. “I am hoping we can make this an annual event. We are always looking to help make each of our members more well-rounded.”

Following the networking session, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions following a panel discussion with university leaders and members of the Oxford business community.

Below is a list of the panelists:

- Sara Lou Burney, UM lecturer of accountancy
- Keith Carter, UM vice chancellor of intercollegiate athletics
- Blake Dubkinski, CEO and co-founder of GenTeal Apparel
- Dean Douglas, former CEO, Syniverse
- Tiffany Hawkins, senior vice president, FCCI Insurance Group
- Allen Kurr, vice president, OLC Economic Development Foundation

- Bill Salzman, vice president, government relations, Nestle Purina Petcare
- Peyton Warrington, associate administrator, Baptist Memorial Hospital

The group discussion was the highlight of the event, as the panelists delved into various crucial topics relevant to the business world. Their discussions covered personal and professional transformations, the ever-evolving business landscape in the post-COVID pandemic era and strategies to develop leadership skills.

Several key points from the conversation revolved around the importance of associating with individuals who contribute to your personal growth. “You are only as effective as the people you surround yourself with,” said Peyton Warrington. “Furthermore, the dynamic nature of the business environment can make embarking on a career seem daunting, but confronting risks with self-assurance is a fundamental component of achieving success.”

The backgrounds and experiences of the panelists offered the audience a varied perspective on essential business topics and the opportunity to hear various viewpoints.

The event promises to remain a vital platform for students and professionals to connect, learn, and thrive in the ever-changing business landscape as Alpha Kappa Psi sets its sights on making this an annual tradition.

Established in 1917, the Ole Miss School of Business Administration has a mission to improve business and society by inspiring students, business and community leaders through advancing business knowledge and capabilities.

Link to Publication:

<https://www.hottytoddy.com/2023/11/14/ole-miss-business-fraternity-offers-new-networking-opportunity/>

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES DEBUTS AT SONOMA RACEWAY FOR THE FIRST TIME

Sonoma Raceway is set to host its first-ever NASCAR Xfinity Series race in Saturday’s DoorDash 250. Fans have been eagerly anticipating this new event since its announcement last Fall.

Saturday will start with the Historic Trans Am race at 11 a.m. The NASCAR Xfinity Series qualifier will commence at noon, followed by NASCAR Cup Series practice and qualifying at 2 p.m.

Saturday will also feature some exciting events for fans to participate in. Fans can venture over to the main grandstands to meet their favorite drivers at the NASCAR Xfinity Series autograph session at 10:15 a.m. After the on-track action, there will be a post-race concert performed by Tim Dugger at the Fan Zone Stage.

To kick off the main event, NASCAR Xfinity Series drivers will be introduced at 4:35 p.m. To follow, the DoorDash 250 NASCAR Xfinity Series Race (Stages 20/45/79 laps, 156.95 miles) will commence at 5 p.m. as the drivers tackle the challenging twists and turns of Sonoma Raceway's 1.99-mile 10-turn road course.

Link to Publication:

<https://www.sonomaraceway.com/media/news/nascar-xfinity-series-debuts-sonoma-raceway-for-first-time.html>

Taylor Landgraf Student Profile

Taylor Landgraf is a senior from St. Louis, Missouri. She is studying marketing with an emphasis in digital marketing and is also a member of Phi Mu sorority. One of the many things Taylor loves about the business school is the close-knit and supportive community. “Everyone is extremely helpful and we all work together. The professors want everyone to succeed.”

She recently studied abroad on Semester at Sea, where she traveled on a cruise ship to 10 different countries. Some of her coursework included International Marketing, Consumer Behavior and Retailing. “The School of Business made it easy to study abroad. All of my School of Business professors were extremely helpful with helping me find classes on my abroad program to fit my major,” she said.

After graduation, Taylor hopes to expand on her travel background and go into international marketing in the fashion industry.

Link to Publication:

https://www.instagram.com/p/Cyd6HBWRnjW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Dr. Laurie Babin: A Journey from Navy to Academia, Community Engagement, and Leadership

The transition from a career in the Navy to academia can be a remarkable journey, as Dr. Laurie Babin's story illustrates. With her diverse background in engineering and business, she has seamlessly blended her experiences to contribute both to the academic world and her local community.

Dr. Babin's journey into the Navy and ultimately to academia started with a desire to escape the harsh Michigan winters. She candidly shared, "Honestly...It was the opportunity to move to Orlando, FL. The Nuclear Power School at the time was located in Orlando. I was born in Michigan and hated winter my

entire life!" Her introduction to teaching came during her senior year at Michigan State, where she was a teaching assistant for an engineering course.

Her role at the U.S. Naval Nuclear Power School involved teaching thermodynamics and nuclear physics, subjects vastly different from marketing. She noted, "I taught thermodynamics and nuclear physics. The students were very attentive because they really needed to understand how it works. Imagine operating a nuclear power plant inside of a submarine – you better know what you are doing or you could all die."

Dr. Babin's path was unconventional. After her successful Navy career, she chose to pursue an MBA and then a Ph.D. She explained, "While I was in the Navy, I decided to pursue an MBA to learn more about business and ultimately decided to get a Ph.D. because I wanted to teach marketing courses at the university level." Her engineering background played a crucial role in her academic journey. "My engineering background helped because I've always liked the quantitative analysis side of things, and that is really important in conducting and publishing empirical research."

Transitioning from the Navy to academia might seem challenging, but for Dr. Babin, it was a smooth shift from one teaching career to another. She shared, "I transitioned from one teaching career to another, so that was easy." She further explained her academic trajectory, having been a tenured professor at the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of Louisiana Monroe before her current role at Ole Miss.

Dr. Babin's involvement in community initiatives and organizations is an inspiring aspect of her life. She shared her motivation, saying, "I was a Rotarian before I moved here, and I wanted to continue to be part of this great international organization." Rotary, with its global reach, resonated with her values of making a difference. "By being a Rotarian, I can make a difference in my local community as well as the world through the Rotary Foundation."

Dr. Babin played a pivotal role in rechartering the Rotaract Club at the University of Louisiana Monroe, and her dedication didn't stop there. She shared, "When I was looking for a Rotary club to join in Oxford, I was informed that there was a student who wanted to get Rotaract rechartered at Ole Miss. That inspired me to help him make it happen!" Her commitment to fostering the next generation of community leaders is evident through her actions.

While Dr. Babin expressed her desire to see more community service involvement from the Rotaract club at Ole Miss, she acknowledged their participation in projects like the Oxford Rotary Club's golf tournament. Her desire to drive change and engagement within the club reflects her dedication to both Rotary values and the local community.

Dr. Babin discussed the growth of Pi Sigma Epsilon (PSE) since its rechartering. She shared that PSE members have been actively learning about the operations and development of PSE chapters. "We have participated in professional development activities and worked on projects," she said. Dr. Babin also highlighted their participation in regional conferences and national conventions, indicating the bright future of PSE at Ole Miss.

Taking on a leadership role in the Oxford Rotary Club was a natural progression for Dr. Babin. She shared, "I became a Rotarian 9 or 10 years ago when I lived in Louisiana and wanted to continue, so when we moved here in 2019, I joined our local club." She recently assumed the role of president, emphasizing the collaborative nature of leadership within the club.

Dr. Babin outlined her primary goals as president of the Oxford Rotary Club. She aims to keep the club as a premier civic organization in the community. One major project she mentioned is hosting a golf tournament to benefit the Oxford Medical Ministries Clinic. Dr. Babin is also focused on reaching out to former members of another Oxford Rotary club and inviting them to join. Her final goal is to foster closer ties between the Oxford Rotary Club and Ole Miss Rotaractors by inviting them to participate in meetings and service projects.

Dr. Laurie Babin's journey from the Navy to academia, combined with her active involvement in community service and leadership roles, showcases the remarkable impact an individual can have when they are driven by a passion for teaching and making a difference in their community. Her story is an inspiration to us all.

Link to Publication:

<https://www.oxfordeagle.com/2023/12/26/laurie-babin-completes-journey-from-military-to-academia/>
