

Financial Experts Discuss Economy, Wealth Management During Annual Banking and Finance Symposium

Contributed by Lindsey Phillips
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Program also included alumni and student award presentations
OXFORD,
Miss. - The global economy was the focus at the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration's eighth annual Banking and Finance Symposium, "Looking Toward the Future: The Business of Wealth Management."

Industry experts from Stanford Financial Group, Hancock Bank and the University of Mississippi Foundation, as well as UM finance professors, spoke Friday to some 100 students, local professionals and alumni about the future of wealth management. They also discussed factors leading to the current economic state and how the industry is handling the resulting hardships.

"It is a tough environment," said Jaret Seiberg, Stanford Financial senior vice president. "Small banks are failing. We're having one or two a week, which is probably the capacity of the government to actually shut them down, but the best part about all of this is we'll start right back up again in a year or so. The banks will start expanding, and as they come back, they're going to look for new people and they're going to look for new people coming in at the ground level."

Stanford Financial Chief Investment Officer Laura Pendergest addresses attendees of the University of Mississippi School of Business Administration's Banking and Finance Symposium. UM photo by Kevin Bain

The symposium also included awards presentations. The business school presented its Distinguished Alumni Award to Edward Robinson McGraw, Renasant Bank CEO. Senior Camille Steiner of Gulfport received the Mississippi Young Banker Scholar Award, and senior Andrew Cotter Norris of Collierville, Tenn., was handed the Banking and Finance Council Award. Also, nine senior business students were presented with scholarship awards. (See list at end of this news release.)

Stanford Financial Group, a global network of financial services companies, was the symposium's title sponsor and brought both Seiberg and Laura Pendergest, Stanford's chief investment officer, to speak at the event. Stanford's involvement also allowed the business school to offer Continuing Education Units to attendees for the first time.

"It was a great partnership, which I think helped create this great event for us," said Ken Cyree, interim dean of the business school. "The symposium was very informative, cutting edge, with information that most people are not privy to. I was very pleased at the progress we've made over the past few years, as well as the education that we had at this event to better help financial professionals and students learn more about the industry."

Besides Seiberg and Pendergest, symposium speakers were Carl Chaney, CEO and board president of Hancock Bank; Clif Saik, executive vice president of Hancock Bank; Robert Van Ness and Bonnie Van Ness, associate professors of finance at UM; Wendell Weakley, CEO and president of the UM Foundation; and Sandra Guest, vice president of the UM Foundation.

Paul Mason Wages, a senior banking and finance and real estate major from New Albany, said he found the symposium helpful and was relieved to note a tone of optimism among speakers.

"It's comforting to know how optimistic they are, even though we are in a terrible economic time," Wages said. "Going through all the bad parts of the economy, there is still room for optimism. We'll come out of it."

Senior business students who received scholarships and their benefactors are: James Turner Fisher of Laurel, C.C. Eason; Homer Graham of Metairie, La., L.L. Bethay; Shakitha Harden of Waterford, Robert Kennington; Michael Nicosia of Germantown, Tenn., Clint and Ellen Johnson; Julio Quintana of Marietta, Ga., Leonard Wesson; Danielle Schopp of Southaven, Merchants & Farmers Bank; John Summers of Germantown, Tenn., W.P. McMullan; Jackson Robert Vaughan of Birmingham, Ala., BancorpSouth; and Paul Mason Wages of New Albany, Dudley Moore.

For more information about the School of Business Administration, visit <http://www.olemissbusiness.com/> .