

## Longtime Professor Jimmy Davis Gives Back to University

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Chancellor Robert Khayat presents Jimmy Davis with a framed certificate in appreciation for his gift to fund the James W. Davis Scholarship Endowment in Accountancy. UM photo by Nathan Latil.

### James

W. "Jimmy" Davis' career at UM has spanned more than 44 years and four chancellors. In that time, Davis has helped UM's accounting program grow from a department into the Patterson School of Accountancy, served as dean of the school and watched hundreds of graduates enjoy successful accounting careers. Now Davis has directed part of his retirement funds to the place that has meant so much to him.

"Ole Miss is my whole life," Davis said. "It's been good to me and this is my opportunity to repay the university."

### Davis'

retirement funds will be directed toward the James W. Davis Scholarship Endowment in Accountancy, which was created in 2002 by faculty, alumni and friends to honor the professor for his service to the school.

"Dr. Davis has been instrumental in establishing and solidifying the reputation of the Patterson School with regard to its great reputation for being teaching-oriented and student-focused," Dean Mark Wilder said. "This generous gift to the Davis Endowment only further exemplifies his lifelong commitment to Ole Miss accountancy students."

Davis said he is giving the funds so that Ole Miss can continue to compete for the brightest accountancy students.

"Offering scholarships is absolutely necessary. It gives us a good recruiting advantage," he said. "We're competing with other good schools, and outstanding students get scholarships. So we have to be in the mix."

Carol Anne Marion, a UM accountancy graduate who is the associate director of development for the school, said, "Dr. Davis expects the best from his students and takes a personal interest in their success. I graduated from the accountancy program with such high regard and appreciation for Dr. Davis, but it wasn't until I began visiting with many of his former students through my current position that I came to understand just how deep and widespread his impact has been. Many, many people attribute their success, both personal and professional, to Dr. Davis' dedicated guidance."

Davis, a Panola County native, earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Ole Miss, all in accountancy. Upon graduation, he joined the Houston, Texas, office of Arthur Andersen. He has been a member of the faculty since 1965 and holds the distinguished H. Eugene Peery Chair in Accountancy.

He served as dean of the school from 1993 to 2002. He was awarded the universitywide Outstanding Teacher Award in 1985 and received the Patterson School's outstanding teacher award in 1983, 1988, 1993, 2004 and 2008. He received the Mississippi Society's Outstanding Educator Award in 1993.

Davis, who said his admiration for Chancellor Robert Khayat also inspired the gift, joked about his long tenure at Ole Miss. "Chancellor (J.D.) Williams hired me, Chancellor (Porter) Fortune tenured and promoted me, Chancellor (Gerald) Turner made me dean and Chancellor (Robert) Khayat made me happy."