

ELEVATE

WOODWARD HINES EDUCATION FOUNDATION • 2019-2020 IMPACT REPORT



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Photos that picture students or staff members without masks were taken before COVID-19.

We would like to thank the following schools for allowing us to use their photos: Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and Itawamba Community College.



A LEGACY OF ELEVATING COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS

In 1961, Jack Woodward was appointed by the bishop to teach religion and serve as the Director of Religious Life at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, for a period of two years—but he stayed for many more. He was later named Director of Financial Aid and, in 1986, became Dean of Student Aid Financial Planning, serving in that position until his retirement from the college in 1999.

Over those 30-plus years, Woodward met many bright students who longed to attend college but simply did not have the means. Moved by their plight, Woodward envisioned an organization that would help more Mississippi students get to college. In 1980, he joined with J. Herman Hines, then CEO of Deposit Guaranty National Bank, to lead an effort to create that organization.



The efforts of Woodward and Hines resulted in the formation of Mississippi Higher Education Assistance Corporation, a nonprofit created to provide a secondary market for student loans, and later the establishment of Education Services Foundation, a nonprofit created to increase the level of appropriate quality education in Mississippi. Education Services Foundation was later named Woodward Hines Education Foundation in honor of its key visionary founders. Both Woodward and Hines remained active in the organization until their deaths, Hines in 2010 and Woodward in 2018.

In helping so many others realize their dreams, Woodward and Hines fulfilled their own.



ABOUT THE WOODWARD HINES EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Woodward Hines Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization working to help more Mississippians obtain the postsecondary degree, certification, or credential that will allow them to improve their quality of life, strengthen their communities, and contribute to a vibrant and prosperous future for all of Mississippi.

Our mission is rooted in the idea that access to and success in higher education is critically important for all people; however, at critical points in Mississippi's history, African American students and other students of color have been denied equal access to educational opportunities and placed in separate and unequal schools and school districts. Currently, our state continues to be hampered by the effects of long-term structural racism.

Events over the past two years have elevated and reaffirmed our commitment to equal access to an education for everyone. We believe this pursuit of equality will ultimately help fulfill our mission to strengthen Mississippi.

PROGRAMMING PRIORITIES

Access and Entry

Strengthen the pipeline between high school and postsecondary education by improving college advising, sharing information on college options, and increasing access to financial aid assistance.

Persistence and Completion

Increase college completion rates by working to improve course completion and credit accumulation, providing support to working students and students transferring between institutions, and increasing the overall attainment of postsecondary degrees and credentials of value.

Connection to Family-Sustaining Work

Strengthen postsecondary alignment with workforce needs, build relationships with business and industry to align curricula to meet job demands, connect students with work skills, and provide learn-and-earn opportunities.



MISSION

The mission of the Woodward Hines Education Foundation (WHEF) is to help more Mississippians obtain postsecondary credentials, college certificates, and degrees that lead to meaningful employment.

VISION

We envision a Mississippi where all people can secure the training and education beyond high school that will allow them to enhance their quality of life, strengthen their communities, and contribute to a vibrant and prosperous future for our state.

VALUES

Integrity in Our Actions

We commit to honest work that respects and strengthens the well-being of our grantees, community, coworkers, and partners. Daily, we work with humility and acknowledge our responsibility in acting as stewards of the human and financial resources entrusted to us, in support of WHEF's mission.

Relationship Building and Collaboration

We recognize that our resources are only a small part of what is needed to achieve our goals and that our work has greater impact when we work alongside others. We believe in cultivating relationships and developing partnerships that allow us to both lead and follow, as we work to further the mission of WHEF.

Recognize the Value of All People

We recognize the value of all people and will respect everyone with whom we work, inside and outside the foundation, valuing each person's unique background, experiences, and perspective. We align our policies, practices, and resources so that all people have genuine opportunities to thrive.

Communicate Courageously

We candidly and courageously share what we learn with others in an effort to serve as advocates and impact systems change.

Excellence in All That We Do

We commit to continuous learning and strive for excellence in everything we do so that WHEF is synonymous with quality, best practices, and trustworthiness. We believe giving anything less than our best work would be a disservice to our grantees, community, and partners.

Increase Educational Equity

We are committed to serving all Mississippians and believe that every person—regardless of race, income, or circumstance—deserves an equal opportunity to access the resources and supports that will help them enroll and succeed in higher education.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Too often, I have heard it said that not everyone needs to go to college, but at the Woodward Hines Education Foundation, we see things differently.

We think of college as any education beyond high school that leads to financial stability. It can be a four-year degree or beyond, but can also be a two-year community college degree, a certificate or industry certification. White collar, blue collar, no collar—there is value and dignity in every job well done and every job that provides for families to participate and contribute to the overall economy.

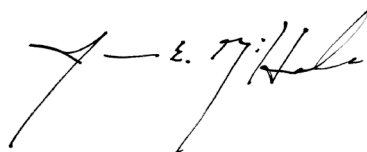
A study by Georgetown University estimates that more than 65 percent of all jobs in the United States will require a postsecondary degree or credential by the next decade. If every high school senior in Mississippi attends and completes college—every single one—our state would still not meet the demand for jobs. We need, not only high school students, but also working-age adults of all races and ethnicities to connect with the training and education that will allow them to meet the current and future workforce needs of the state while also working towards social upward mobility and economic self-sufficiency.

Nationally, 51.3 percent of working-age adults hold some kind of postsecondary degree or credential. In Mississippi, we are at 45.2 percent, but that's only part of the story. The current gap in postsecondary achievement between White and African American Mississippians is 13 percentage points—with White Mississippians earning a postsecondary degree or credential at a much higher rate. As we have important conversations about increasing the rate of educational attainment in the state, we must be intentional about also working to close these very real achievement gaps.

Nationwide, 44 states have established formal educational attainment goals, which means that they have set a timeline and specific numeric goal for the percentage of individuals they want to see complete an education beyond high school. Mississippi recently became the 45th state to establish a formal postsecondary attainment goal.

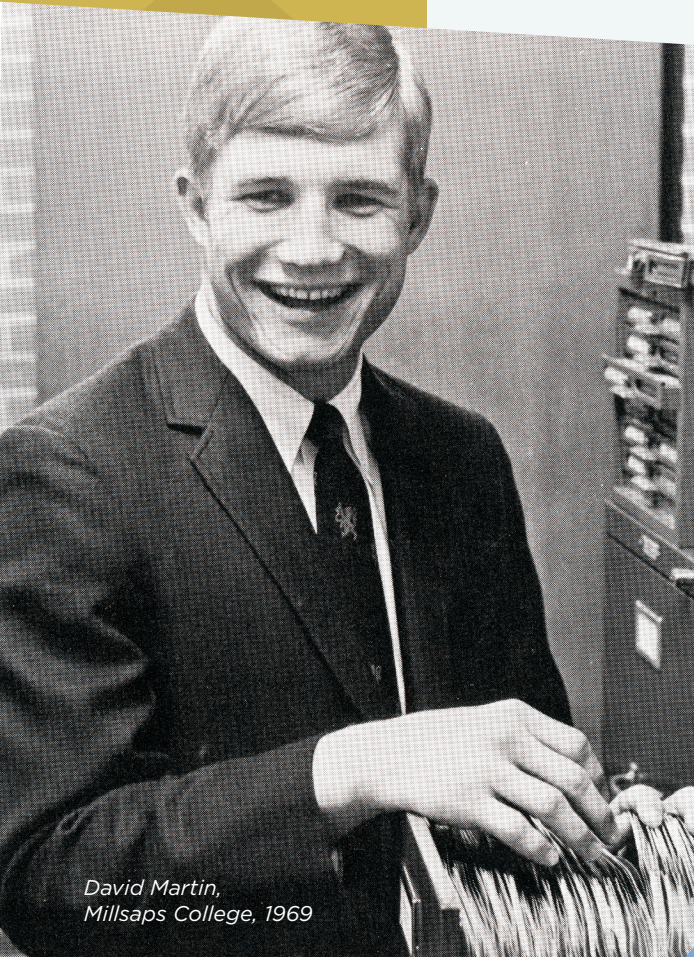
Ascent to 55% aims to strengthen the quality and quantity of Mississippi's workforce by increasing levels of postsecondary educational attainment among working-age adults to 55 percent by 2030 and 60 percent by 2035.

This work has never been more important or more relevant. As we look towards recovery from a global pandemic and at the overall health and well-being of our citizens and state, we believe that education has to be at the center of Mississippi's economic recovery plan in order to elevate Mississippi to a higher degree.



- JIM MCHALE, WHEF President and CEO

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



David Martin,
Millsaps College, 1969

My connections to the Woodward Hines Education Foundation and its namesake founders are deep and long. In 1965, Jack Woodward was the Director of Financial Aid at Millsaps College, and I was a high school senior with a dream to attend and graduate from college, but no way to pay for it. As he did for so many other Mississippi students, Jack found a way to finance the cost of my education at Millsaps, making me the first college graduate in my family.

In 1969, Herman Hines was a senior officer at Deposit Guaranty National Bank, and I was a recent graduate of Millsaps College. At that time, I had the opportunity to work briefly at Deposit Guaranty where Herman made a lasting impression on me.

Fast forward to 1976. As fate would have it, I had the opportunity to work with Jack and Herman to begin work on creating a nonprofit secondary market that would bring together Jack's commitment to always "find a way," with Herman's ability to always "make it happen." Their combined skills and vision created the organizations that we now know as the Mississippi Higher Education Assistance Corporation (MHEAC) and the Woodward Hines Education Foundation (WHEF).

In 2020, we celebrated milestones for both of these organizations. MHEAC, established in 1980 to serve as a secondary market for federally-guaranteed student loans, celebrated its 40th anniversary. WHEF (formerly Education Services Foundation), which was established in 1995 and now aims to increase access to and success in college for Mississippi students, celebrated its 25th anniversary. I can't help but reflect on the legacy of our visionary founders—Jack and Herman—and the profound impact each of them had on my life. Through WHEF, I am privileged to work alongside others to extend that same vision to Mississippi students who are where I was in 1965—just a kid with a dream.

“Over those many years, many things have changed, but one thing that hasn’t—our steadfast commitment to finding a way for more Mississippi students to elevate themselves, their communities, and the state of Mississippi through education.”

- DAVID MARTIN, Board Chair

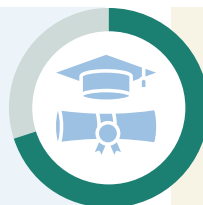
ELEVATING MISSISSIPPI



IMPACTING MISSISSIPPI'S WORKFORCE through Educational Attainment



The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) predicts that more than 65 percent of all jobs will require a postsecondary degree or credential by the next decade.



Mississippi's current rate of postsecondary attainment—a degree, credential, or industry certification earned beyond high school—for adults is 45 percent. That rate is six points lower than the national average and 20 points lower than the CEW prediction.

The Mississippi Education Achievement Council (EAC) was established to bring attention to the need for a statewide goal to increase the educational attainment and skill levels of Mississippians. The primary goal of the council is to strengthen the quality and quantity of the state's workforce by increasing levels of postsecondary educational attainment among working-age adults.

With support from WHEF and through the EAC's work, Mississippi now has an educational attainment goal highlighting the imperative to increase the percentage of working-age adults holding a high-value certificate, college degree, or industry-recognized credential to 55 percent by 2030 and to 60 percent by 2035, with a particular focus on meeting Mississippi's future workforce needs.

In addition to closing the current gaps in educational attainment rates, the EAC is focusing on populations traditionally underrepresented in higher education as a result of inequities, including but not limited to people of color, adult students, and the economically disadvantaged. This focus is important because, according to the College Board, citizens with postsecondary education lead healthier lifestyles, earn more, pay more in taxes, and are more likely to be employed than those with only a high school diploma.

"When Mississippi education, policy and business leaders established a postsecondary attainment goal, we committed to work together to prepare our future workforce for fulfilling careers that will advance the progress of our state and nation. This goal strengthens and aligns our efforts so we are all aiming for the same target."

- CAREY M. WRIGHT, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education

"As more Mississippians acquire a credential of value beyond high school, our state will be more attractive to business and industry determining where to locate and expand their operations. While reaching the Ascent to 55% goal is a challenge, it is certainly attainable if we all work together with focus and determination."

- AL RANKINS, Jr., Ph.D., Commissioner of Higher Education,
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

"The Woodward Hines Education Foundation has made a commitment to make Mississippi a better place through improving the educational attainment of our citizens. The recent adoption of the "Ascent to 55%" initiative by the state's Education Achievement Council will help guide education policy in the coming years."

- DR. ANDREA MAYFIELD,
Mississippi Community College Board Executive Director

IMPACT : By the Numbers

Counselors and teachers from

185 MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOLS
participated in Get2College
trainings during 2019-20.



In 2019, more than

3,500 STUDENTS
participated in one of our
free ACT Workshops.

In 2019, Get2College
served more than

33,000 STUDENTS
across the state of Mississippi.

CLASS OF
2019

MISSISSIPPI HIGH
SCHOOL SENIORS

51.2%

completed the FAFSA
by the March 31 HELP
Grant deadline.

74.1%

completed the
FAFSA by August 31.

Ranked #3 in FAFSA completion nationally

CLASS OF
2020

MISSISSIPPI HIGH
SCHOOL SENIORS

50.2%

completed the FAFSA
by the March 31 HELP
Grant deadline.

70.6%

completed the
FAFSA by August 31.

Ranked #5 in FAFSA completion nationally



During the 2019-2020 academic year,
Get2College reached almost

1000 EDUCATION
PROFESSIONALS
through training events.

In response to COVID-19,
WHEF provided emergency
support to students at all

15 MISSISSIPPI
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES.



ELEVATING ACCESS: GET2COLLEGE

Get2College, a program of WHEF, is a boots-on-the-ground college planning program that works to increase the chances that more Mississippians of all ages will have access to a postsecondary education. Across three centers in Southaven, Jackson, and Ocean Springs, Get2College counselors provide students and families with free college counseling, ACT prep, and hands-on assistance completing the FAFSA and Mississippi Aid applications.

Get2College staff members also offer professional development to educators and school leaders that centers around creating a college-going culture for students. Topic areas include training in FAFSA completion, ACT Teacher Training, College and Career Readiness Teacher Training, and how to better help students engage in the college-planning process. The work of Get2College is grounded in the belief that all Mississippians should have the opportunity to go to college and receive the help they need to get there.





Pictured from left: Kierstan Dufour, Von Jackson, Senator Roger Wicker, and Lisa Potts

ELEVATING STUDENTS' VOICES in Public Policy

Public policy influences and sways nearly every aspect of culture—including how people view going to college. Get2College was among 12 National College Attainment Network (NCAN) members to receive a grant that helped organizations across the country engage more deeply in state and federal policy advocacy.

Kierstan Dufour, G2C assistant director and project manager, says the grant enabled Get2College to look for ways to elevate student voices in Mississippi and influence the policy conversation around college access. WHEF engaged Vonkerius “Von” Jackson, a junior political science major at the University of Mississippi from Indianola, MS, to help lead a yearlong effort to educate and engage state and federal policymakers.

In March, Von and two WHEF staff traveled to Washington, DC, to attend a NCAN advocacy training and meet with Mississippi’s congressional delegation. Upon returning home, Von continued his outreach virtually, meeting a broad range of stakeholders. WHEF continues to explore the possibility of a broader student engagement strategy, and Von is writing a series of blog posts on his financial aid journey—while he considers someday returning to Capitol Hill.



Get2College Corps is an internship/scholarship for Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society students. The outstanding scholars assist with FAFSA completion in high schools, on their community college campuses, in the three Get2College centers, and virtually.



Macia Outlaw

Macia Outlaw says Get2College changed her life.

During her senior year at Brandon High School, she attended a FAFSA workshop, where she met Daniela Griffin, assistant director and college counselor at Get2College.

“Ms. Daniela explained what the FAFSA was and how it helped families and students applying for grant funding,” Macia recalls. After the workshop, she assessed her current financial situation and decided starting at a community college was the best option for her and her family.

Macia says the FAFSA workshop helped her understand the complex financial aspects of going to college. “It made me realize what I would put myself through—what I would put my family through—by going to a four-year university,” she shares.

She attended Hinds Community College for two years before transferring to Mississippi College, where she is currently a biology and pre-med major, and a National Transfer Student Ambassador. She was recently accepted into the prestigious Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program, which identifies college students from rural communities who aspire to return to their roots to practice medicine.

However, Macia isn’t waiting until she graduates or finishes medical school to start giving back to her community. She’s already started a business dedicated to helping students like her—a business she says was inspired by Get2College.



Meghan Nguyen

When Meghan Nguyen’s parents immigrated to the United States, she says college was a foreign concept to them. Since her parents were unfamiliar with the college process, Meghan believed her future was “up in the air.”

But during her sophomore year in high school, she met with a Get2College counselor who helped clarify the process of getting into college.

After enrolling at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Meghan continued her relationship with Get2College as a member of the Get2College Corps. Over the course of a year, she helped students and parents complete the FAFSA, plan their college journey, and understand how to pay for a college education.



“Being a member of the Get2College Corps helped me realize my love for service and understand the financial situation of individuals in my state,” Meghan says.



ELEVATING HIDDEN VOICES

Part of Get2College's work involves creating a clear picture for Mississippians about the benefits of obtaining higher education. This work can be challenging, especially in areas of the state that have limited resources. Greenville is one of those places. Greenville sits in the heart of the Mississippi Delta and is the county seat of Washington County—a county where only one in four residents have earned a high-quality credential beyond high school.

Greenville Voices, a project led by Mississippi State University (MSU), supported by Get2College, and funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, engaged residents and local stakeholders to identify college access services available in the community. The project also used civic engagement strategies to create a supportive college-going culture within the community.

"Civic engagement strengthens communities," says Dr. Carol Cutler White, lead researcher for the project and assistant professor at MSU. "Research shows that communities with strong citizen participation enjoy positive economic, social, and health benefits."

As part of the project, Dr. White worked with a small group of local high school and college students, who served as co-researchers for the project. Using a research method called PhotoVoice, the students captured photographs that expressed their questions and concerns about college, and that brought awareness to the limited college access resources they have in their communities. The photos were then shared with community members, who offered information about local college resources and identified possible ways to increase the availability of college-planning resources in the Greenville



"The research in Greenville expands the boundaries of college access by elevating the community as a partner in the work. What we accomplish here can be used to help communities across the state. I'm proud to be a partner with WHEF in this work."

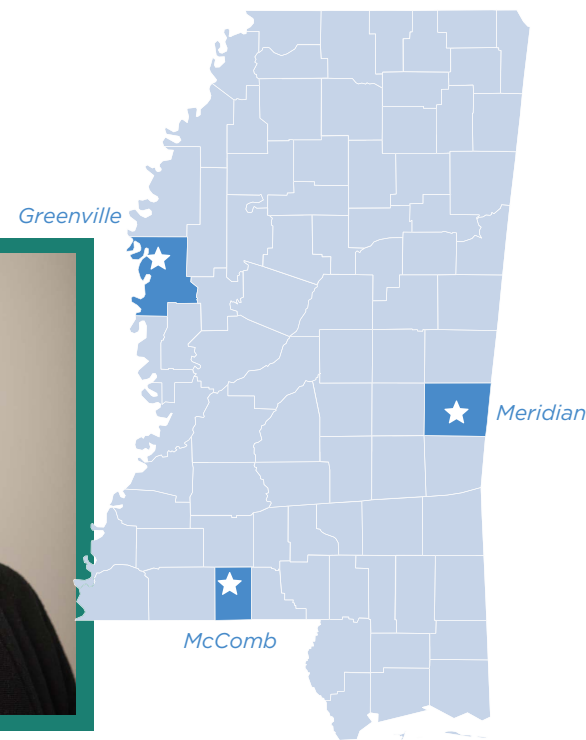
- DR. CAROL CUTLER WHITE, Greenville Voices
lead researcher and MSU professor



Brandi Lyndall, Director of GEAR UP Outreach, says the most rewarding aspect of her work is “truly making a difference in students’ lives.”

The U.S. Department of Education’s Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) provides funding to organizations across the country to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in college. Through the GEAR UP MS effort, Get2College has been able to expand its work to support students in Greenville, McComb, and Meridian—places where the poverty rate is between two and four times the national average.

“GEAR UP has allowed Get2College to do more good work. It’s allowed us to take a deep dive into three school districts that are in need,” Brandi explains. “These are school districts that truly need assistance.”



According to data from the Lumina Foundation, Lauderdale (Meridian), Pike (McComb), and Washington (Greenville) counties have a college completion rate that is between 11 and 19 points lower than the state average—and between 17 and 25 points lower than the national average. Within the next five years, 60 percent of Mississippians will need some type of high-quality credential beyond high school. In order to do that, Mississippi will have to “maintain current rates of attainment” and “significantly increase the number of people who enroll in programs and earn all types of credentials beyond high school,” according to Lumina. The seven-year GEAR UP grant will help the state reach that goal by funding programming that supports students from seventh grade through their first year of college.

ELEVATING STUDENT SUCCESS

Mississippi is leading the nation in elevating student success. A 2020 report from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) notes that Mississippi is the only Southern state to increase the first-year persistence rate among first-time, full-time students at public, four-year colleges and universities between 2012 to 2017. In a nutshell, that means more students are returning to college for a second year.

However, nearly a fourth of freshmen at four-year college and universities are not persisting to their second year, and more than half of bachelor's graduates in the state leave college with staggering student loan debt. WHEF's work with partners continues to focus on identifying, implementing, elevating, and scaling programs and initiatives that further improve persistence rates in all postsecondary programs and reduce the burden of student loan debt on graduates.



ACHIEVING THE DREAM

Nearly half of all students seeking higher education choose a community college, but less than half of those students complete their associate degree.

In 2017, WHEF partnered with Achieving the Dream (ATD), a national nonprofit that helps community colleges improve student success, to help more Mississippi students complete their degrees.

WHEF awarded a four-year grant of \$900,000 to ATD that enabled Coahoma Community College and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College to become the first community colleges in the state to join the ATD network of more than 277 community colleges in 44 states.



COAHOMA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



ATD is conducting on-site coaching and training for the schools' leadership teams, sharing information on successful practices used by peer institutions, and providing access to research and technology. This support proved to be particularly important at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. ATD grant evaluator, Dr. Tait Kellogg, says "MGCCC was able to easily transition to online student advising during the COVID-19 pandemic" due in part to the support provided by ATD.

Melvin Newson, special populations coordinator and instructor at Coahoma Community College, believes the support from ATD has helped bring "student voice to the forefront" and provide opportunities for students to be "involved in decisions related to student success." According to Achieving the Dream CEO, Dr. Karen A. Stout, both community colleges were able to quickly pivot to design and develop virtual courses and online advising platforms to engage with their students based on elements of their ATD Action Plans.

"I am very pleased to see how both colleges participating in this important initiative—Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College and Coahoma Community College—leveraged their work with Achieving the Dream's leaders and coaches to address the unforeseen challenges they faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Dr. Stout. "They used the national ATD Network to connect with colleagues to talk about shared experiences and develop data-driven strategies to foster student success. We are proud that we are able to help colleges like Mississippi Gulf Coast and Coahoma through the generous support of Woodward Hines Education Foundation and look forward to our continued work together."

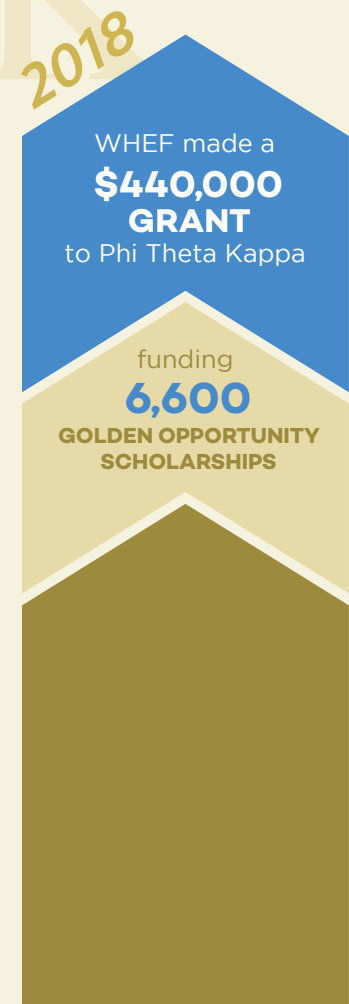
A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

For many students, a scholarship is the difference between being able to earn a degree from a four-year college or university and being forced to end their academic pursuits. Community college students who join the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, the international honor society for community college students, have access to millions of dollars in transfer scholarships. Yet, only about one out of ten students who are invited to join Phi Theta Kappa actually do.

One of the immediate questions WHEF asked is: why aren't more students joining? The answer was startlingly simple. A membership fee of \$60 stood in their way.

In 2016, WHEF made an initial \$50,000 grant to Phi Theta Kappa that funded 750 Golden Opportunity Membership Scholarships for talented students from economically disadvantaged communities. Ninety-nine percent of those students have completed their degrees or are still enrolled in college.

Based on those promising results, WHEF approved a three-year grant of \$440,000 in November 2018, to extend support to 6,600 additional students in Mississippi. Between January 2019 and December 2020, overall membership among Mississippi PTK chapters has increased 26 percent as a direct result of the Golden Opportunity scholarships WHEF funded.



ΦΘΚ

Johnna Davis

Ever since she can remember, Johnna Davis has wanted to help others. “I always knew I wanted to be a social worker,” she says, “I love getting to know people and being an advocate for them.”

Johnna grew up in Flora, MS, a small town just north of Jackson. When it came time to enroll at Holmes Community College in Ridgeland, Miss., she remembers being overcome with emotion. She refers to her mother as both her best friend and biggest role model. “I cried leaving home,” Johnna recalls.

While at Holmes, she learned about the opportunities available through Phi Theta Kappa. Johnna applied and received a Golden Opportunity Scholarship, which covered her membership fee. Her experience in the honors society over the next year proved transformative.

“Once you’re in PTK it opens a whole new field of opportunities,” says Johnna. “It teaches you about leadership, about stepping up and expressing your opinions.” With her peers, she led a volunteer initiative to support Holmes students struggling with where to focus academically.

Phi Theta Kappa also encouraged her to excel academically. Johnna maintained an impressive GPA at Holmes and was accepted to the Mississippi All-State Academic Team, which recognizes the scholarly achievements and leadership accomplishments of community college students.

After she graduates from Mississippi College, Johnna plans to secure an internship and eventually serve as a social worker in Jackson Public Schools. “I want to work in schools to help younger students who may not have the best grades to push themselves,” says Johnna. With support from Phi Theta Kappa and WHEF, she’s well on the way to achieving her college and career goals.

ΦΘΚ

Savannah Barnes

To talk to Savannah Barnes is to enter a world of possibility. “We only have one life on earth and if we have opportunities to try new things, we should take them,” says the recent graduate of Pearl River Community College. “There are opportunities hidden in the bushes as long as you’re not afraid to look.”

The first in her family to pursue a college education, Savannah credits her teachers and her Phi Theta Kappa chapter with encouraging her to reach for her dreams. “I absolutely loved my time in PTK,” says Savannah. Her Phi Theta Kappa membership, which was funded through a Golden Opportunity Scholarship, has contributed to a stronger sense of self-worth.

“When I first came to community college, I was afraid. It was thrilling, but also terrifying,” she says. “Having a PTK chapter behind you really helps you prepare for the difficult times, like around finals and exams. The people in the chapter loved me as their own. It’s like a big family.”

The confidence Phi Theta Kappa has inspired has helped Savannah excel to even greater heights. The Petal, MS native was one of 50 students nationwide to be awarded a 2020 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. Savannah will not only receive generous financial support to complete her bachelor’s degree at the University of Mississippi but will also enter a national network of over 2,400 Cooke scholars.

“Growing up I read a lot of books and watched a lot of films,” she says. “I loved art and writing short stories. My goal was to make something that could inspire people.” Now, through her example, Savannah is doing just that.

MAN UP

Student engagement and support can have a huge impact on college success, but many students of color feel isolated on college campuses, making it difficult for them to get the support and resources they need to complete their degree.

WHEF funded the MAN UP (Minority Achievement Network for Upward Progression) program on the Fulton Campus of Itawamba Community College (ICC) to identify ways to improve persistence and completion rates among students of color at colleges throughout Mississippi.

Dr. Emily Tucker and Dr. Bobby Solomon created the ICC program to close the achievement gap for students of color and bring students together from all walks of life. WHEF's \$40,000 grant has enabled MAN UP to publicize its efforts, host numerous success-oriented workshops, and offer incentives, including book vouchers to participants and compensation for peer tutors.

"Some students are learning to master study strategies, some are learning how to put together a resume, and some participate simply for the comradery," says Solomon, director of admissions and registrar at ICC. "Our goal with this program is to develop students who are well-rounded. We want them to develop skills they can use in and out of the classroom."

MAN UP uses a three-pronged approach of academic support services, personal development workshops, and a mentoring program to improve academic performance, develop employment skills, and promote positive values and healthy life decisions.

"We are constantly thinking of new ways to spark interest," says Tucker. "The data has proven that MAN UP has a positive impact, and we want to support as many students as possible."



TJ McIntosh

When the college president calls you one of the school's "best and brightest," you know you're doing something right. Wren, MS native and Jack Kent Cooke scholarship recipient, TJ McIntosh, excelled as a student and a servant leader at Itawamba Community College. Among his many contributions to his school community were the seven to eight hours a week he devoted to tutoring peers in the MAN UP program.

TJ participated in MAN UP recruitment lunch sessions and informal events where speakers reflected on their careers and shared how they overcame obstacles. He attributes his motivation to give back to the many people who supported his own journey, including his parents, teachers, advisors, and even doctors who invited TJ to shadow them. He also credits his membership in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, with its emphasis on leadership development and service to the community.

"My parents always pushed me to pursue anything I put my mind to," he says, adding that other minority students may not be as fortunate. TJ's advice for addressing the achievement gap among minority male students is straightforward. "You need to remain committed to them—to let them know you're there for them."

“I’m so glad [Dr. Tucker] had the vision to start a program like this. Minority males don’t always have the leg up in the real world or the academic world. I’m glad she gave us our own space to encourage each other in our choices.”

- **TJ MCINTOSH**, Jack Kent Cooke scholarship recipient





DELTA MINI-GRANTS - Hernando Youth Council

Almost 300 miles separate the City of Hernando from the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), and although there are a few college campuses that are closer to Hernando High School, the distance between many students and college can still seem impossible to navigate.

Through a partnership with the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, WHEF funded several mini-grants focused on increasing college awareness and creating pathways to postsecondary education among high school students in 18 Mississippi Delta counties, including DeSoto County where Hernando is the county seat. The results were promising and demonstrated that sometimes even a mini-grant can have a huge impact.

Gia Mathany, the program lead for the Hernando Mayor's Youth Council, understands some people may think \$1,250 is a small amount, but from her perspective, the mini-grant was more than enough for the youth council to expand its work.

"We were able to take our kids to USM for free, and we know many of them had never seen a college campus in person before," Gia says. "We got to show them what was possible and let them know that their goals are attainable."

Twenty-five students from Hernando visited the State Capitol and toured the USM campus. They were able to see what happens during a legislative session firsthand and met with one of their legislators, Senator Michael McLendon.

"For students to be successful in college, they need to find a 'good fit' college," says Ann Hendrick, Get2College Director. "Visiting a college in person is a great way to know if a college is a good fit."

Riley Box, former president of the Hernando Mayor's Youth Council, says the USM tour was valuable because many of her later campus visits were postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19. "We toured Southern Miss on a bright, breezy day and absolutely loved our tour guide," says Riley. "I know of some council members who are now hoping to attend Southern Miss as a result of the tour."

Hendrick notes that taking a campus tour, seeing a residence hall, sitting in on a class, eating on campus, and chatting with college students helps high school students visualize what it would be like to attend the school. She believes providing these opportunities for students helps put college success within reach for students in Mississippi.



"We were able to take our kids to USM for free, and we know many of them had never seen a college campus in person before. We got to show them what was possible and let them know that their goals are attainable."

- **GIA MATHANY**, Program Lead, Hernando Mayor's Youth Council

MISSISSIPPI DELTA AFTER-SCHOOL COLLABORATIVE

The Mississippi Delta After-School Collaborative (MiDAC) spans four Mississippi communities—all of which have high rates of poverty and low rates of educational attainment. The members of the collaborative—Spring Initiative, Sunflower County Freedom Project, Meridian Freedom Project, Rosedale Freedom Project, and Griots Arts—provide college mentoring and guidance for students after school and during the summer.

WHEF made a \$40,000 grant to help MiDAC expand its work to improve educational and economic opportunities for youth and young adults in under-resourced communities. WHEF's President and CEO, Jim McHale, emphasizes the barriers many of these students face, including the high cost of education, lack of information and family support, and a failure to believe that they are college material. Despite these barriers, these "students have dreams and aspire to earn a degree or credential that will help them reach their goal," says McHale.

MiDAC helps students reach those goals by providing weekly educational programming focused on increasing student empowerment in the college admission process through individualized tutoring and counseling, campus visits, college bridge courses, and one-on-one guidance through the application and financial aid processes.

These high-touch, high-intensity efforts proved successful as 100 percent of MiDAC students reported an increase in their knowledge of the college decision process, and every recent graduate who participated in the program matriculated into the college of their choice and qualified for state and federal aid. MiDAC also used the funding to develop a college prep curriculum

that addresses topics ranging from building a college-bound mindset to understanding financial aid offers. The curriculum also includes six family workshops built in to educate and assist families as they prepare to send their students to college.



"There are a lot of great resources out there, but no resource includes every aspect of the college preparation and admission process. This grant has allowed us to develop a detailed college preparatory curriculum that is tailored to our students' needs and includes everything a student, along with their family, needs to prepare for college."

- BIANCA ZAHARESCU, Co-founder, Spring Initiative



100%



of MiDAC students reported an increase in their knowledge of the college decision process, and every recent graduate who participated in the program matriculated into the college of their choice and qualified for state and federal aid.



IMPACT - Improving Mississippi's Persistence and Completion Together

Since 2010, the number of Mississippians earning a high-quality credential beyond high school has increased by more than 15 percent. But that number is still six points lower than the national average—according to the Lumina Foundation.

Increasing the educational attainment rate would have a tremendous impact on the state's economy and on the quality of life in communities from Booneville to Biloxi. WHEF launched the IMPACT (Improving Mississippi's Persistence and Completion Together) initiative to identify and implement data-informed approaches to strengthen retention, persistence, and completion of students that face the most obstacles to completion.

"IMPACT has allowed us to put a spotlight on Mississippi student success," says Shanell Watson, WHEF's program officer and IMPACT project lead.

In May 2020, WHEF approved funding of \$3,075,000 to support persistence and completion efforts in Mississippi's four-year colleges. The following schools received funding: Delta State University, Mississippi State University, the Mississippi University of Women, Mississippi Valley State University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi. These schools have developed data-driven plans to increase student retention and completion rates, specifically among Mississippi students.

"Our goal is to help as many Mississippi students as possible," says Watson. "In addition to grant awards, we are supporting biennial IMPACT convenings for all Mississippi public baccalaureate institutions, with the goal of creating a state-specific, facilitated community of practice for the exchange of findings, insights, and ideas. The WHEF team has already begun collaborations with the grantees with an eye toward the Spring 2021 convening, collecting ideas about topics for discussion and content experts that can lead or facilitate discussion among the participants.

WHEF is also providing access to high-quality professional development opportunities for college faculty and staff and platforms for peer learning. According to Watson, the IMPACT learning community will offer a series of in-person and virtual convenings, where representatives from each of the grantee institutions will contribute to the design and content of the learning opportunities.



"Mississippi's history, educational resources, and political environment create particular barriers for students pursuing postsecondary credentials. WHEF believes there is a lot of value in providing our colleges a space to candidly address those challenges and create approaches that can lead to systemic improvement."

- SHANELL WATSON, WHEF Program Officer



MILLSAPS SCHOLARSHIP

In celebration of WHEF's 25th anniversary, a \$100,000 challenge grant was given to Millsaps College. The funds, given to honor the legacy of Jack Woodward and Herman Hines, will be used to establish an endowed scholarship fund to provide financial aid for Mississippi community college students wishing to transfer to Millsaps.

The grant to Millsaps strengthens historic ties by honoring the legacies of WHEF founders Jack Woodward and Herman Hines, both of whom played significant roles at Millsaps and in creating the nonprofit Mississippi Higher Education Corporation and later the nonprofit Education Services Foundation, which is now known as the Woodward Hines Education Foundation.

While Millsaps has a number of endowed scholarship funds, there are none currently set aside specifically for students transferring from Mississippi community colleges.

“Today’s students enter college expecting more than a college degree. They want a sense of assurance that they can obtain a good job and graduate with a minimal amount of debt, if any. This generous support from the Woodward Hines Education Foundation will play a critical role in providing that assurance for many Mississippi students.”

- **DR. ROBERT W. PEARIGEN**, President of Millsaps



ELEVATING EQUITY:

RESPONDING TO COVID-19



“I remember when Woodward Hines came to the presidents’ meeting and started talking about their vision and their goals. And my thought back then and still is today is, ‘That’s just what we need to be doing. That’s what’s important for all of us right now.’ It’s not just getting people in the classrooms or the labs or the training, but also getting them prepared and successful in what they do.”

- DR. RONALD NETTLES,

Executive Director, Mississippi Community College Foundation

MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION: COVID Emergency Relief Grant

"Even in the best of times, you may have students who are one flat tire from dropping out of school," says Dr. Ronald Nettles, executive director of the Mississippi Community College Foundation. "Or maybe it's a childcare issue. Or maybe it's some other type of home disruption."

Or maybe it's a pandemic that disrupts everything from the economy to education.

Community colleges serve students who are often first-generation or from economically disadvantaged communities. These Mississippians were some of the hardest hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. WHEF made a \$310,000 grant to the Mississippi Community College Foundation to help qualifying community college students affected by COVID-19 stay on track toward graduation.

"The amazing thing is how quickly this happened," Dr. Nettles recalls. "There are not many scenarios where you can go from a phone call at the end of March to getting money within three weeks to the colleges and ready to start distributing to students."

The grant to the Mississippi Community College Foundation established student relief funds at all 15 community colleges in the state. The funds were used to help cover expenses that may have been a barrier to completion, such as in-home internet and technology access, transportation, and credential fee stipends.

"[Community college presidents] are always looking for an opportunity to help students," says Dr. Nettles. "And anybody who gets \$50 or \$500 at a time when they need it, it makes a difference."

Dear Jim Mattale,

Thank you for providing emergency funds to me through NEMCC. These funds helped offset the cost of shifting all of my classes to online during my last semester at NEMCC. This pandemic changed the dynamics of not just education but our day to day lives, and receiving these funds helped ease the changes.

Again, thank you so very much.

Mallorie Rackley

Dear Jim Mattale,

I would like to personally thank you for the money sent to me during these tough times. I really appreciate what you and your team are doing.

-Dana Malone

RESPONDING, ADAPTING, AND LEARNING

In mid-March, the Council on Foundations issued a call to action for philanthropic organizations “to act with fierce urgency to support our nonprofit partners as well as the people and communities hit hardest by the impacts of COVID-19.” WHEF was one of the first 12 foundations—and the first Mississippi foundation—to sign the pledge.

WHEF has kept staff and students at the center of every decision made during the pandemic. Even after transitioning to remote work, the priority remained supporting students and grantees, offering them the flexibility and stability they needed to continue their education and their work.

Remote learning seemed to drain the excitement and motivation from many high school students, especially seniors who missed traditional proms and graduations. WHEF used data to assess the pandemic’s impact on college access in Mississippi and recognized the state was below the target of students transitioning to college based on FAFSA completion numbers. The Get2College team swiftly moved to contacting students by phone and distributing information about scholarships and grants by mail.

The state’s recovery from COVID-19 has remained slow, but the reality is that higher education has to be at the heart of any viable economic recovery strategy for Mississippi. Ninety-nine percent of all new jobs created after the 2008 recession required some type of postsecondary certificate, credential, or degree. Our state

cannot forget the need and importance of a degree, and we must not forget to place students at the forefront of this recovery. As an organization, WHEF will come out this pandemic stronger, more innovative, and more creative. We recognize it will take some time for Mississippi to become stronger, but we plan to be a part of the solution. Our mission is unchanged. Our commitment is unwavering. WHEF will continue to invest in ideas and initiatives that help more Mississippians access the type of education they need to secure family-sustaining work and have the quality of life everyone deserves.



WOODWARD HINES LEADERSHIP: Board of Directors



Nathan Slater

*Vice President, Government and
Education Sales, C Spire*



Haley Fisackerly

*President and CEO,
Entergy Mississippi, Inc.*



Camille Young

*Principal and Director, Cornerstone
Governmental Affairs*



W. Stan Pratt

*Retired, Chairman of the Board
of Valley Services, Inc. and Canebrake
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Andy Mullins, Jr.

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Chancellor Emeritus,
University of Mississippi*



Robert Leard

*Market Executive,
Regions Bank*



Debra McGee

*Senior Vice President and
Director of Minority Business
Development, BankPlus*

COVID-19 prevented the WHEF Board of Directors from getting a 2020 group photo. In the spirit of creativity, we asked each member to submit a “college days” photo.

WOODWARD HINES LEADERSHIP: Staff

WHEF

Jim McHale, *President and CEO*

Nikki Jackson, *Executive Assistant*

Minette Ketchings, *Director of Operations and Controller*

Marilyn Lewis, *Grants Specialist and Accountant*

Diane Covington, *Human Resource Assistant*

Angeline Hobson, *Receptionist*

Bill Alvis, *Chief Financial Officer*

Margaret Saffold, *Loan Portfolio Manager*

Shanell Watson, *Program Officer*

Courtney Lange, *Director of Communications and Impact*

Lisa Potts, *Communications and Impact Coordinator*

GET2COLLEGE

PROGRAM STAFF

Ann Hendrick, *Get2College Program Director*

Shannon Grimsley, *Assistant Director and Director of Outreach*

Kierstan Dufour, *Assistant Director and Project Manager*

Stacy Sneed, *Assistant Director and Data Coordinator*

NORTH MISSISSIPPI CENTER

Tommy “TJ” Walker, *North Mississippi Get2College Center Director*

Lauren Livingston, *Assistant Director and College Counselor*

Charlie Herrington, *Assistant Director of Outreach*

Tracy Bender, *Administrative Assistant*

JACKSON CENTER

Brian Thomas, *Jackson Get2College Center Director*

Daniela Griffin, *Assistant Director and College Counselor*

Stephen Brown, *Assistant Director of Outreach*

Angela Wade, *Administrative Assistant*

GULF COAST CENTER

Kimberly Trosclair, *Gulf Coast Get2College Center Director*

Mollie McCarroll, *Assistant Director of Outreach*

Malcolm Williams, *Assistant Director and College Counselor*

GET2COLLEGE GEAR UP

Brandi Lyndall, *Director Get2College GEARUP Outreach*

Tori Holloway, *Assistant Director Get2College GEARUP Outreach*

Danny Thompson, *Assistant Director Get2College GEARUP Outreach*

2019-2020 GRANTS AND PROGRAM FUNDING

College Access Services for Get2College | \$5,727,331

For the program Get2College

Community Foundation for Mississippi | \$40,000

on behalf of Barksdale Reading Institute

To examine and share insights of the extent to which insufficient reading skill impedes academic achievement during and after high school, and the impact it has upon college acceptance, performance, and completion among Mississippi students

Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi | \$50,000

on behalf of eligible organizations in the 18 identified Mississippi Delta counties

To support placed-based partnerships and scale college access opportunities for underserved high school students in the Delta

Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi | \$40,000

on behalf of MS Delta After-School Collaborative (MiDAC)

To improve educational and economic opportunities for youth and young adults through member organizations in under-resourced communities, particularly the Mississippi Delta

Get2College Corps | \$379,500

To promote strong, early FAFSA completion rates in Mississippi by scaling professional development and training opportunities to community college partners

IMPACT (Improving Mississippi's Persistence and Completion Together) | \$3,075,000

To implement or scale innovative, proven student success practices within public baccalaureate institutions, to reduce achievement gaps, improve persistence and completion among underserved populations, and create a learning community for campus practitioners

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning | \$50,000

To develop the P-20 collaborative website for the purpose of providing guidance and knowledge to personnel enabling them to successfully navigate preschool-to-postsecondary pipeline resources in preparation for workforce opportunities

Millsaps College - Woodward Hines Education Foundation Endowed Scholarship | \$100,000

In honor of the Foundation's co-founders Jack Woodward and Herman Hines, to establish an endowed scholarship fund to provide financial aid to Mississippi community college students transferring to Millsaps to complete baccalaureate degrees

Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy | \$50,000

To support the general operations of the newly-formed organization as it develops strategy and programming to address the philanthropic needs in the state of Mississippi

Mississippi Community College Foundation | \$9,818

To support the short-term financial stabilization of community colleges, which, due to extreme hardships experienced as a result of COVID-19, were threatened in their ability to continue service as the most accessible, affordable source of higher education for underserved Mississippi students

Mississippi Community College Foundation | \$310,000

To establish a Student Relief Fund at all 15 Mississippi community colleges for direct financial support to students experiencing hardships as a result of COVID-19, to promote academic persistence and completion

Team 36 | \$13,300

To support the development of online ACT test prep resources and instruction tools for teachers of Mississippi students

FINANCIALS

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION *(unaudited)*

As of December 31, 2020 and 2019

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 5,427,313	\$ 3,002,488
Investments	172,930,285	167,934,697
Investment interest receivable	2,222	25,430
Other assets	338,224	202,961
Total assets	<u>\$ 178,698,044</u>	<u>\$ 171,165,576</u>

LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 357,903	\$ 396,191
Grants payable	1,936,091	737,080
Total liabilities	<u>2,293,994</u>	<u>1,133,271</u>
Unrestricted net assets	<u>176,404,050</u>	<u>170,032,305</u>
Total liabilities and unrestricted net assets	<u>\$ 178,698,044</u>	<u>\$ 171,165,576</u>

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS *(unaudited)*

For the Years Ended December 31, 2020 and 2019

	2020	2019
REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
Program services revenue	\$ 1,114,394	\$ 851,936
Total revenue and support	<u>1,114,394</u>	<u>851,936</u>
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE		
Program services expense	6,460,609	3,679,605
Support services expense	1,041,755	928,224
Total functional expense	<u>7,502,364</u>	<u>4,607,829</u>
Net operating expense	<u>(6,387,970)</u>	<u>(3,755,893)</u>
OTHER REVENUE		
Investment income	12,325,715	18,288,727
Contribution from MS Higher Education Assistance Corp	434,000	475,000
Total other revenue	<u>12,759,715</u>	<u>18,763,727</u>
Change in unrestricted net assets	6,371,745	15,007,834
Unrestricted net assets, beginning of period	170,032,305	155,024,471
Unrestricted net assets, end of period	<u>\$ 176,404,050</u>	<u>\$ 170,032,305</u>



“Education is a tool. It is a tool that allows people—people like me—to get where they want to go in life. Education is a chance. It is an opportunity that everyone deserves, regardless of race or income.

The Woodward Hines Education Foundation is working to open the doors of opportunity to all Mississippi students, but especially to those who would not otherwise get that chance. I am proud of their work and am glad to know that they are continuing the fight.”

- **JAMES MEREDITH**, Civil Rights Activist

In 1962, James Meredith became the first African American student to attend the University of Mississippi after state officials refused an order by the U.S. Supreme Court to integrate the school. After campus protests, he was escorted onto campus by federal marshals. He eventually graduated from the university and has continued to advocate for all students, regardless of income or color, to have equal access to educational opportunities.



WOODWARD
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