

Rebel Run

Rebel Run is the latest of many game day traditions at Ole Miss where fans welcome freshmen to the campus by inviting them to a free game and the opportunity to run across the football field before kickoff. Each year hundreds of students participate in this exciting event.

Red, Blue and Green

Chancellor Khayat signed the University and College Presidents' Climate Commitment in 2008. The University of Mississippi also has become a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) campus and vigorously promotes sustainability efforts through programs of energy conservation and recycling, as well as sponsoring Earth Week each Spring.



Our new on-field mascot — Rebel Black Bear

In the fall of 2009, students approached newly appointed Chancellor Dan Jones with the idea of selecting a new mascot for Ole Miss athletic teams. Ole Miss had been without an official on-field mascot since 2003, when University officials decided to remove Colonel Rebel from the sidelines at athletic events; Ole Miss was the only school in the SEC without an identifiable mascot to represent its athletic teams. ASB President Artair Rogers and Cardinal Club President Peyton Beard, with the assistance of the student group One Mississippi, conducted a survey to see if students were interested in voting on whether or not they wanted to consider a new on-field mascot. In the ensuing referendum, more than 3000 students voted and an overwhelming 74 percent voted a resounding YES in support of a student-led effort to develop and propose a new on-field mascot that represented the spirit and energy of today's Ole Miss Rebels.

After an extensive application process, a diverse and representative committee of 17 Ole Miss students was chosen as the Mascot Selection Committee, and this group met regularly over



Former Rebel All-American Michael Oher's early life was the subject of the book and blockbuster film, *The Blind Side*. But Oher still had more to tell. In 2011, his own memoir, *I Beat the Odds*, hit bookstores.

the ensuing eight months. The Mascot Selection Committee was led by two co-chairs, Ty New, a junior business administration major from Olive Branch, and Margaret Ann Morgan, a freshman journalism major from McComb. The committee included three freshmen, three sophomores, six juniors, one senior, and three graduate or professional school students. Twelve of the student committee members were from Mississippi, and five were from other states. The Ramey Agency, a full-service marketing, advertising, branding and public relations firm based in Missis-



issippi, carefully guided the student committee through an inclusive, transparent and creative process following a proven “best-practices” model.

After receiving more than 1,000 mascot idea submissions and holding 33 Rebel Rallies or focus group meetings with students, faculty, staff, and alumni from throughout the state, a series of comprehensive polls was conducted. These inclusive polls allowed Ole Miss

students on all campuses, all registered alumni of the University, all season-ticket holders, and all faculty and staff at Ole Miss to participate in expressing their mascot preferences. More than 13,000 of these participants responded to the first poll that was conducted, and in the final poll 62 percent of those participating chose the Rebel Black Bear as their first choice for a new on-field mascot. Among students, support was even stronger for the Rebel Black Bear, with 74 percent of students indicating a preference for Rebel Black Bear.

Rebel Black Bear has strong Mississippi roots. The black bear is an indigenous and protected species in the state of Mississippi and has experienced quite a comeback in recent years due to renewed interest. Many stories have been shared for generations centered around our native black bear. In William Faulkner’s “The Bear,” Old Ben, a formidable black bear, is a symbol of pride, strength, and toughness. Additionally, the legend of the “teddy bear” originated in Missis-

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David Sheffield studied theater at Ole Miss. He is the favored screenwriter for Eddie Murphy (the two met while working on *Saturday Night Live*). Sheffield’s films — including *Coming to America* and *The Nutty Professor* have grossed more than a billion dollars.



sippi when President Teddy Roosevelt refused to shoot a defenseless black bear on a hunt in the Mississippi Delta in 1902.

The Rebel Black Bear made his debut at the Blair Batson Children’s Hospital at the University Medical Center in Jackson on April 5, 2011, and appeared on campus for the first time at the Ole Miss/Kentucky baseball game on April 16, 2011. Look for the Rebel Black Bear to be in the Grove and roaming the sidelines at Vaught-Hemingway Stadium as the Ole Miss family welcomes a new on-field mascot to lead us forward in a united effort to support our athletic teams.

About the Author

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Dean of Students



Dr. Reardon has worked in higher education for the last twenty-nine years. Known to everyone at Ole Miss as ‘Sparky’, Dr. Reardon is a popular speaker on the college circuit. He has spoken at over one-hundred colleges on issues ranging from leadership to hazing prevention to crisis management. In 2003, Reardon appeared on the History Channel’s documentary on the history of fraternities.



Alumnus and long-time Ole Miss public relations director Ed Meek founded the Tupelo Furniture Market (now the largest in the U.S.). He also built a Las Vegas hospitality event — known simply as “the Show” — that is the largest of its kind in the western hemisphere.