

DECEMBER 1, 2023

DEPARTMENT NEWS

STUDENT NEWS

Paul Gebeline: First Generation Alumni Success Panelist

Paul was one of 4 panelists on the First Generation Alumni Success panel held on November 7. Panelists shared their experiences as first-generation college students and their post-collegiate journeys. The panel was one of the many events held during First-Generation Student Celebration Week.

Sumeet Kulkarni: Excellence in Science Communications Award

Sumeet was awarded the 2023 Eric & Wendy Schmidt Award for Excellence in Science Communications by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

These prestigious awards recognize excellent science communicators and in order to build a diverse community of science communicators, science journalists, and research scientists.

Joe Rivest & Xinyue Gong: Graduate School Dissertation Fellowships

Joe and Xinyue were awarded Spring 2024 Graduate School Dissertation Fellowships. The fellowships allow students to spend all their time focused on their research. Congratulations to both Joe and Xinyue!

Luiz Ricardo Prais : Presentation at the 2023 BSM Conference

Luiz gave a presentation on neutrino physics at the 2023 Beyond the Standard Model (BSM) conference in Hurghada, Egypt. The conference highlighted the latest developments in physics beyond the standard models of particle physics, cosmology and gravitation.

Prospectus Defenses Completed: 08/22 - 11/30 2023

Subhayu Bagchi, Noah Knutson, Guoqin Liu and Purnima Narayan. Congratulations to all!



General Department News

Remembrance: Dr. Richard Raspet, Emeritus Professor of Physics in the UM Department of Physics and Astronomy, passed away on Thursday, November 2 2023, in Oxford, Mississippi at the age of 76. Rich was widely known, loved, and respected for his professional accomplishments, focus and commitment and unfailing kindness. Born in upstate New York, Rich moved with his family the following year to Starkville when his father accepted a position at Mississippi State University. Rich earned a Bachelor of Science degree at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and then went on to earn his Doctorate in Physics from the University of Mississippi in 1976. In 1987 Rich joined the faculty of the UM Department of Physics and Astronomy. In recognition of his excellence in research, teaching, and service, Rich was awarded the honor of Distinguished Faculty Fellow in the College of Liberal Arts in 2007. After twenty-five years of service, Rich retired and became an Emeritus Professor. His academic home on campus was the National Center for Physical Acoustics (NCPA). At NCPA he was a Principal Scientist and served as Associate Director. Rich was also a fellow of the Acoustical Society of America. He supervised 13 PhDs and mentored numerous other graduate and undergraduate students. His scientific contributions in acoustics were vast, with publications on topics including atomic nuclei, sonic booms, thermoacoustic engines and atmospheric turbulence. He was one of the preeminent experts in wind induced noise which is of critical importance in infrasound research. Rich also co-authored a paper on ballistic seed projection in the American Journal of Botany with his wife Wendy Garrison, who has a PhD in Biology and taught at UM for many years. He was extraordinarily passionate about physics and during his time on the faculty, he taught many undergraduate and graduate courses and was an insightful and rigorous instructor. He was a consummate experimenter; if you walked through the doors at NCPA this summer, you were likely to have seen him working to perfect the flight of balsa wood gliders. He continued to conduct research and mentor students as an Emeritus Professor until his passing.

Rich had a passion for cycling and had over 100 competitive career victories to his name at the state, regional and national level. At the peak of his competitive cycling career, he rode more than 10,000 miles a year. He was a beloved member of the cycling and running communities in Oxford. One of the local cycling routes is known as Raspet's Delight, a 39-mile circuit with an elevation change of over 1,600 feet and a quote related to this route goes – "Everybody talks big, but Raspet rides big." Rich was committed to service, animal rights, the environment, and athletic and academic excellence. He served as a volunteer with a network of local animal rescue groups. Rich and Wendy turned their 100 acres of land in Oxford into a private nature preserve through a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy of Mississippi. Rich had a wide friendship circle throughout the community and world at large. His passing was far too soon for the many who loved, admired and respected him.