

Students from Pelahatchie among 959 UMMC graduates

Special to Pelahatchie News

The University of Mississippi Medical Center recently conferred degrees to hundreds of students who are beginning their careers in the health sciences or entering into a new chapter of an existing one in this state and beyond.

The following graduates are from the Town of Pelahatchie:

- Benjamin Mack Willoughby, BS
- Kristi Nicole Cofer, MHSA
- Joseph D Easterling, BSN
- Cameron Lee Padgett, BSN
- Lauren Elizabeth Shoemaker, MSN

The graduates of the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences, Population Health, and Health Related Professions are leaving campus with the aim of improving health and quality of life. Of this year’s graduating class of 959 students, more than 700 walked across the stage in cap and gown to receive their diplomas in person.

“There are just four things I want you to take with you,” Dr. LouAnn Woodward, vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine, told graduates.

“Today is a milestone. It is not the end. In fact, this is only the beginning of your learning process,” Woodward said. “As you go forward, you will learn from one another, and you will learn from the greatest teachers of all: the patients.

“You will make choices every day that will impact others in a significant way. Deal with others and those you serve with a deep respect for our differences,” she said. “Choose respect. Choose kindness. Choose courage.

“Our nation will continue to struggle with ways to care for the sick. I challenge every one of you to be part of the solution to this struggle. In all things, leave it better than you found it.

“You will never practice any health profession well if you don’t have a good time doing it,” Woodward said. “The work before you is hard. It is important. It is heavy. And, it is rewarding and it is worth doing. Remember the excitement, the spirit, the passion you have today. Look for the joy. Have a good time.”

Dr. Glenn Boyce, chancellor of the University of Mississippi, told graduates that he’s confident they are well prepared for their next steps of training or for launching their careers as a health care provider or researcher.



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Wearing the colors of their fields of study, UMMC graduates await the start of ceremonies Friday.

“We’re especially grateful for this class of graduates who demonstrated perseverance and resilience during one of the most challenging periods in our nation’s history,” Boyce said. “You’ve reached this pinnacle and your educational goals through hard work, grit, and determination.

“And, I know you’ve done so with the steadfast support, and many times sacrifice, of your loved ones,” he said.

“It is my honor to join you here today as we mark the culmination of years of study, sacrifice and diligent preparation, and the fulfillment of many lifelong dreams.”



Griffin Family Medical Clinic

Mary Ann Griffin, CFNP • Tracie Bass, LPN
Kim Risher • Keli Robertson



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