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Melanie A. Morgan



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## **Leadership Elected for Boards of M.B. Swayze Foundation, Public Education Forum and Leadership Mississippi**

JACKSON, Miss. –The Mississippi Economic Council has announced officers for the M.B. Swayze Foundation, the Public Education Forum of Mississippi and Leadership Mississippi for 2013-14.

- Rebecca Wiggs, a member at Watkins & Eager law firm, has been elected 2013-14 chair of the MEC's M.B. Swayze Foundation.
- William G. Yates, III, CEO & president of W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Company, has been elected to serve as vice chair of MEC's M.B. Swayze Foundation for 2013-14.
- Melanie A. Morgan, senior vice president and director of corporate communication and board relations for Trustmark National Bank, has been re-elected chair of the Public Education Forum of Mississippi for 2013-2014 year.
- Martha Cooke, vice president of special projects at School Book Supply Company, has been re-elected as vice chair of the Public Education Forum of Mississippi for 2013-2014 year.
- Gloria Johnson, director of customer service for Entergy Mississippi, Inc., will continue her role as chair of Leadership Mississippi for the 2013 program year.

Wiggs is admitted to the Mississippi Bar and the North Carolina Bar. Prior to joining Watkins & Eager, she was a law clerk to the Honorable Paul H. Roney, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Her experience spans from general product liability,

consumer finance, medical malpractice to labor and employment and appellate advocacy.

Wiggs earned a bachelor's in politics from Wake Forest University in 1979 and juris doctor from University of Virginia in 1985. She serves on the Mississippi State Bar Association Litigation Section Executive Committee and is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She also serves on the Mississippi Economic Council Board of Directors; Blueprint Mississippi Steering Committee; Vice President of the American Judicature Society and is a founding member of the Wake Forest University Divinity School Board of Visitors. She is a 1995 graduate of Leadership Mississippi.

Yates became president and CEO of Yates Construction in 2003. Prior to that, he was executive vice president of the Gulf Coast Division of Yates Construction. He received a bachelor's in business administration from the University of Mississippi and a master's in construction management from Arizona State University. He is also a Certified Public Accountant.

Yates serves on the Board of Directors for Trustmark National Bank and Trustmark Corporation. He is currently Chairman of the Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development and is also on the Board of Directors for the Gulf Coast Business Council. He is president of the board for the United Way of South Mississippi and serves on the board of the Mississippi Energy Institute. He is the 2013-14 Chairman of the Southeast U.S.-Japan Association Annual Meeting. Yates serves on the Millsaps College Board of Trustees, the Blueprint Mississippi Advisory Council and the Mississippi Economic Council Board of Directors.

Morgan's responsibilities at Trustmark include corporate governance, corporate communications, public relations, corporate contributions and sponsorships and corporate branding. She serves on the board of the Friends of Children's Hospital, is past president of the board of the Mustard Seed, Inc., and past president of the board of the Arthritis Foundation of Mississippi. Morgan has volunteered for nearly 16 years with Habitat for Humanity Metro Jackson, having served as chair of Habitat's Women Build in 2011.

Morgan is a 2005 graduate of the Leadership Development Program<sup>®</sup> at the Center for Creative Leadership. She is a 2003 graduate of Leadership Mississippi and a 2002 graduate of the Mississippi School of Banking. She was also named one of the "Top 50 Leading Business Women" of the year in 2008 by the *Mississippi Business Journal*. She earned a bachelor's of business administration from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master's of business administration degree from the University of South Alabama.

Cooke has many roles in her position at School Book Supply Company. She serves as the liaison to the Department of Education, Governor's Office and Mississippi Legislature. She works with 65 publishers, gathering information for them and coordinating their sample to school districts. She assists in the facilitation of the state-wide textbook caravan of the Department of Education. She also leads educational sessions for the members of the Mississippi Legislative education committees.

Cooke received her bachelor of business administration from Millsaps College. She currently serves as vice president on the Board of Directors for MISSCO Corporation and is a member of Alumni Council of Millsaps College. She has previously been a member of Junior League of Jackson, served on the Board of Directors for Junior Achievement, member of Stewpot Board of Directors, assisted with fundraising for the Mississippi Children's Home Society, grade coordinator for St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Steering Committee for Mississippi Children's Museum, co-chair of essay contest for Mississippi Children's Museum and a member of the Millsaps Else School of Management Advisory Board.

Johnson, an alumna of the Leadership Mississippi class of 1992, is responsible for directing community relations, customer satisfaction and customer programs at Entergy Mississippi. A native of Delta City, she received a bachelor's in business administration from Mississippi Valley State University and a master's of business administration from Delta State University. She is also a graduate of Leadership Jackson, Leadership Madison County, and was recognized in 2004 as one of the state's "50 Leading Business Women" by *Mississippi Business Journal*.

Johnson currently serves as chair of Keep MS Beautiful and has chaired the Madison County Chamber of Commerce, the Mississippi Housing Partnership, the Public Education Forum of Mississippi and the American Association of Blacks in Energy. Additional board service includes the Girl Scout Council of Greater Mississippi, the Metro Jackson Chamber of Commerce, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Willowood Developmental Center, Jobs for Mississippi Graduates, American Red Cross, Mississippi Council on Economic Education and Community Place. Johnson is a member of the Jackson Chapter of The Links, Inc., the Central Mississippi Chapter of 100 Black Women, Inc., and the Beta Delta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

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**About MEC:** The Mississippi Economic Council has been the voice of Mississippi business since 1949. MEC deals with broad issues that relate to businesses through advocacy, research, resources and leadership. MEC has more than 8,000 members from more than 1,100 member firms in 2,400 locations throughout Mississippi. For more information, go to [www.mec.ms](http://www.mec.ms).

**About M.B. Swayze Foundation:** The M.B. Swayze Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes leadership, educational achievement and economic competitiveness. Leadership Mississippi and the STAR Student-Teacher Awards Recognition program are annual programs of the Mississippi Economic Council and conducted by the M.B. Swayze Foundation.

**About Public Education Forum of Mississippi:** The Public Education Forum of Mississippi is a non-profit, non-partisan education policy research group created by a broad cross-section of business, education and political leaders in Mississippi. Founded in 1989, the Forum is committed to being the leading independent force for public education in the state.

**About Leadership Mississippi:** Leadership Mississippi is an annual program of the Mississippi Economic Council and conducted by the M.B. Swayze Foundation. Participants, selected by a committee of MEC members, work together in a training course which combines individual study, group sessions and project experience in using leadership skills.