

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

TASTE OF THE U TO DRAW HUNDREDS OF REVELERS, DOZENS OF COMPETITORS AND ONE, 7-FOOT CELEBRITY CHEF

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JACKSON, Miss. – Food, drinks and costumes from far-flung volcanic islands to nearby Louisiana swamps will transform the Jackson Medical Mall into a massive multi-theme party and fundraiser on Saturday, Feb. 23 during the University of Mississippi Medical Center's annual Taste of the U.

At Taste of the U, now in its 23rd year, departments and divisions from across the Medical Center form chef teams and choose a theme – Star Trek, juke joint, Mardi Gras and alien landing among others. Each team then creates costumes, decorates a booth and cooks a menu based on that theme.

Partygoers go booth-to-booth, sampling taste-size portions. Revelers can dance to Hunter Gibson and the Gators, vote for their favorite booths, and bid on locally donated items in a silent auction, including paintings, pottery, photography, crafts, gift certificates and gift baskets.

A panel of six celebrity judges will make awards to chef teams in several categories: Best Presentation, People's Choice, Children's Choice, Best Taste, Heart Healthy and the coveted Best Overall, which comes with the Dr. Fine Swine trophy and bragging rights for the next year. First- and second-runner-up winners also will be announced in the Best Overall category.

This year's judges are:

- **Chef Josh Marks**, "The 7-foot Chef" and runner up on Season 3 of *MasterChef*
- **Wanda Collier-Wilson**, president and CEO of the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau
- **Patty Roper**, editorial director for *Mississippi Magazine* and the author of five entertaining and recipe books
- **Rebecca Turner**, registered Dietitian with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Nutrition Affairs Program Manager for the Southeast Dairy Association, and Founder of Runner's FUEL
- **Chef Zack Athearn**, owner and chef of City Grille in Madison
- **Byron Brown**, journalist and evening anchor for News Channel 12

Taste of the U benefits the [UMMC Alliance](#), a non-profit that supports the needs of Medical Center patients and families, students and facilities. Last year's Taste of the U entertained about 1,000 people and raised the Alliance nearly \$60,000.

This year's Taste of the U honors Drs. Richard and Suzanne Miller, UMMC's first couple of pediatric medicine and surgery.

The Millers arrived in Mississippi in 1969, a time when a relative handful of Medical Center faculty covered all the various specialties in the adult and pediatric areas. The Department of Pediatrics consisted of five physicians and, before Richard Miller, the state had no pediatric surgeon.

"When you're starting a new specialty in the hospital and in the state, referring physicians aren't aware of you," Richard Miller said. "Pediatric surgery gradually got going and more patients came in."

At the same time, he increasingly took on administrative duties.

"It got so that nearly half my time was spent in administration, the other half in pediatric surgery," he said. "The seven-day workweek got longer."

Among other positions, he served as associate dean for clinical affairs in the School of Medicine, medical director of the University Hospital and as a member or chair of numerous committees.

Suzanne Miller, in all likelihood Mississippi's first pediatric pulmonologist, specialized in treating patients with cystic fibrosis.

In the 1970s, CF was a fatal disease of childhood. On her arrival, the average lifespan of a Mississippi cystic fibrosis patient was eight years, about half the national average. Now most CF patients now survive well into adulthood.

"About 30 patients originally came to the CF clinic," she said. "The Medical Center now cares for about 200 adult and pediatric patients."

BancorpSouth is the Taste of the U 2013 presenting sponsor. Additional sponsors include Hollis Cobb Associates, BankPlus, Brown Bottling Group, Business Interiors and Sodexo.

Taste runs from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. with dancing until 10 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 for students and \$5 for children and can be purchased at the Jackson Medical Mall main entrance during the event or online at umc.edu/alliance.

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Please forward this message to colleagues who might be interested. If you wish to be removed from this list or know of a colleague to add, send an e-mail message to: LAGriffin@umc.edu.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's health-care enterprise includes five hospitals in the University Hospitals and Health System, and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's population. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at umc.edu/publicaffairs.