

A LETTER FOR PROFESSOR DEBORAH H. BELL

*Morris H. Stocks, Ph.D., CPA**

It is with great pleasure that I offer my sincere congratulations to you, Professor Bell, upon your induction into the University of Mississippi School of Law Hall of Fame. This tremendous honor is well deserved. Your service to the School of Law, your profession, and to our university is remarkable.

I remember our first professional encounter early in my tenure in the Office of the Provost. I was asked to join a meeting with you, Tucker Carrington, and John Grisham. Our goal was to make progress toward more permanent funding, and in permanent employment opportunities, for faculty in the Innocence Project and within Clinical Programs at the Law School. Mr. Grisham explained that he was committed to continue funding, but felt that the university should also pledge resources and to create tenure track positions. After you directed us through a careful discussion, and an explanation of the benefits accruing to the School of Law and its students, I agreed with him. We were able to make progress toward those initiatives thanks to your invaluable leadership in that process.

Our second interaction centered around my efforts to appoint an Interim Dean for the School of Law. As Provost, I felt that stability was needed in the Office of the Dean. I wanted to appoint an Interim Dean who would be primarily, if not solely, interested in the welfare of the Law School, its faculty, staff and students. You reluctantly accepted that role, and I am thankful that you did. Your approach to leadership was perfect for your new responsibilities. You provided needed stability, strengthened relationships with alumni and other supporters, and, most importantly, began the process of carefully understanding the financial issues that were

* Professor and Don Jones Chair of Accountancy, The University of Mississippi Patterson School of Accounting; Former Interim Chancellor, Former Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for The University of Mississippi.

being faced by the Law School. I appreciated that you quickly understood the need to move the Law School toward a business model that solidified its future. I was disappointed that you were not interested in a permanent appointment as Dean after I asked you on multiple occasions, but you were steadfast in your resistance. Nevertheless, your leadership was critically important during challenging times for law schools across the country.

You are the type of faculty member and servant leader our university depends upon and so desperately needs. My personal goal has always been to leave The University of Mississippi better than when I arrived. You have, without question, accomplished this. Congratulations once again for your induction into the Hall of Fame and best wishes to you as you continue in your life journey.