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**Dr. Hunter A. Taylor is the founding director of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship, also known as Tomorrow's 25. This innovative initiative, which partners the University of Mississippi (UM) with the Mississippi Association of Coaches (MAC) and the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA), is a year-long fellowship for a select group of 25 coaches from across the state who have demonstrated a positive, long-term commitment to the student-athletes in their communities. In the director's role, Taylor provides executive-level leadership by driving communication, collaboration, and coordination of the fellowship.**

**In 2017, Taylor joined the faculty at UM as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the School of Education (SOE). He is also now an Affiliated Faculty Member in the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at UM, the Scholar-in-Residence for the Oxford School District, and an advisor to Smallwoods – a national retail brand based out of Texas. In these roles, he teaches and advises leaders from a variety of contexts.**

**During his first six years at UM, Taylor designed and taught education courses, led recruiting efforts to bring teachers to critical needs public schools, produced research focusing on best practices in the field of education, and secured funding for state-wide outreach. Highlights of his time include:**

- **Record highs for teacher retention and cohort diversity in UM's Mississippi Teacher Corps;**
- **A renewed partnership between Jackson Public Schools (JPS) and the SOE;**
- **Headlining the University's 2021 TEDx conference on Resilience;**
- **Raising capital to launch Tomorrow's 25;**
- **Producing a University podcast that interviewed a diverse and accomplished guest list about how music inspired their lives;**
- **And authoring two leadership books - including his latest, *Draw the Line*, which examines the impact a high school football staff made over the course of 30 years in three rural East Texas communities.**

**Taylor also has 15 years of experience in athletics having either coached or consulted eight different programs in a variety of contexts. He's served as a men's basketball coach for 10 years (2007-2017) and just finished his fifth year as a leadership consultant for the Oxford School District's Athletic Department (2017-present).**

**In 2016-17, Taylor's final year of coaching basketball, he was a member of the Arkansas State men's basketball staff that orchestrated the biggest single-season turnaround in all of Division I college basketball and had the season's biggest upset (at Georgetown 11/17/16). Taylor got his start in athletics in 2006 at JPS serving the district as a math teacher at Powell Middle School while earning his masters from UM. During his**

second year at the school, he took on the additional role of head boy's basketball coach and led his team to its first City Championship in 10 years.

Once his commitment in Jackson was completed, he moved to Washington, D.C., and served for two years on the legislative staff of Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. While in D.C., Taylor also participated in a one-year fellowship with Reformed Theological Seminary. He then served consecutive seasons as an assistant basketball coach – first at Bishop O'Connell High School (Arlington, VA) where they won the 2010 Virginia Independent State Championship, and then at Trinity University (San Antonio, TX), where they were named the 2011 Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference's Western Division champions.

In 2011, Taylor was hired by Spring Hill High School (Longview, TX) to be its head boy's basketball coach and geometry teacher. In his first season at the helm, the team won the most games in school history on its way to winning District and Area Championships, and Taylor captured the district's Coach of the Year honor.

In 2013, Taylor left Spring Hill to join Baylor University's men's basketball staff and begin his doctorate. During his time with the team, Baylor went to three straight NCAA tournaments (2014-2016) for the first time in school history - including the 2014 Sweet 16, and Taylor was also selected to serve as an assistant coach for two of Athletes in Action's NCAA summer foreign tours (Mexico 2014 & Puerto Rico 2015). In the spring of 2017, he successfully defended his dissertation examining the teaching and leadership strategies of six legendary Texas high school football coaches to earn his doctorate.

In the fall of 2017, while serving as a professor at UM, Taylor began consulting Oxford High School's football program. Using improvement science methods, he and head coach Chris Cutcliffe developed plans that sought to better foster a family culture, develop future leaders, and maximize the program's on-field potential. After two years of working together, the program captured its first 6A football state championship in school history and Max Preps named it the No. 1 overall football team in Mississippi. Soon after, Taylor and Cutcliffe launched a web-based leadership platform titled Coach & Doc, which produces content for leaders and teams through their podcast, clinic, videos, and workshops. They also authored the leadership book, *How to Build a Thick Institution*, which is a reflection on their work of redesigning the Oxford football program.

A highly sought-after leader, Taylor has served on several advisory boards, including the Mississippi School for Mathematics & Science, the Chancellor's University Lecture Series at UM, and the Oxford Lodge. In 2018, he was one of 59 leaders from across the U.S. to be named a Presidential Leadership Scholar by the George W. Bush Institute and the William J. Clinton Foundation. In 2022, nominated by his students at UM, Taylor was one of three finalists for Professor of the Year. And in 2023, Taylor was named one of the state's Top 40 Leaders Under the Age of 40 by the *Mississippi Business Journal*.

A native of East Texas, Taylor graduated from White Oak High School where he was an All-East Texas basketball player and the region's Scholar-Athlete of the Year. He received his B.B.A. from the McCombs School of Business at UT-Austin where he was also a member of the Texas Cowboys. Taylor then earned his M.A.T. from the University of Mississippi and his Ed.D. from Baylor University. He and his wife, Brittany (Texas A&M B.B.A. '07, University of Mississippi M.B.A. '23), and their three sons, Yates, Simms, & Knox, now call Oxford home.