



## **Media Release Public Relations**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **JSU social work students revitalizing Mt. Olive Cemetery**

(JACKSON, Miss.) – Some social work students at Jackson State University are doing more than learning how to improve the lives of individuals and families – they also are preserving the memories of the dead.

Students in Julie Schroeder's Introduction to Social Work class are researching and revitalizing the Mt. Olive Cemetery near the main campus. The cemetery is on John R. Lynch Street across the street from the College of Business building.

"The way in which we care for our dead is reflective of how we care for our living," said Schroeder, a visiting associate professor in her first year at Jackson State.

As part of their class service learning project, Schroeder's students are cleaning up the cemetery, conducting historical research, taking photographs and developing a Web site. The students also are recording oral histories with nearby retirement home residents to find out what they know about the cemetery and surrounding area.

Once the Web site is developed, users will be able to click on names and pull up biographical information and pictures of headstones. The long-term goal of the project is to seek funding for restoration, Schroeder said.

Student Toni R. Lewis, who is chairing the historical research committee, said she hopes the class project will motivate the community to clean up their neighborhoods.

"If we give them the history behind the cemetery, it might encourage others to take more pride in where they live and their surroundings," said the 27-year-old junior from Jackson.

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Sophomore Katrina Bumphis, who is chairing the photo documentation committee, said she wanted to get more involved in preserving the cemetery after learning that “people tried to cover it up and build over it.”

“We found out that everyone buried over there were Masons or Eastern Stars,” said the 20-year-old social work major from Jackson.

Among those buried at Mt. Olive is James Hill, the namesake of Jim Hill High School near Jackson State. Hill, who died in 1901, was one of the first three blacks elected to state office in Mississippi. A statue of him is in the cemetery.

Jammie Adams, a freshman chairing the media/public awareness committee, said students will be posting fliers and distributing information to newspapers and television stations to let the public know about the cemetery.

“If we are making things beautiful on our campus, we should do the same thing around our campus,” said Adams, 18, a social work and marketing major from Jackson.

For more information, contact Julie Schroeder at 601-432-6833 or [julie.a.schroeder@jsums.edu](mailto:julie.a.schroeder@jsums.edu).

–JSU–

#### **About Jackson State University**

Jackson State University, founded in 1877, is a historically black, high research activity university located in Jackson, the capital city of the state of Mississippi. Jackson State's nurturing academic environment challenges individuals to change lives through teaching, research and service. Officially designated as Mississippi's Urban University, Jackson State continues to enhance the state, nation and world through comprehensive economic development, health-care, technological and educational initiatives. The only university in the Jackson metropolitan area, Jackson State is located near downtown, with three satellite campuses throughout the city. For more information, visit [www.jsums.edu](http://www.jsums.edu).