

# RETIRED PROFESSOR CONTINUES FAMILY LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

The James and Christopher Gholson Scholarship Fund



The Gholson family has a tradition of supporting education and music.

Recognized as the namesake of a middle school in Maryland for his commitment to education as a high school principal charged to desegregate schools, General James Gholson Sr. also instilled the love for learning in his family.

"I'm so proud of him," notes Dr. G. James Gholson Jr., recently retired music professor at the University of Memphis. "He committed his life to education and democracy and his comprehensive desegregation plan became a national model."

Dr. G. James Gholson Jr. was the first African-American professor in the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music in 1972, first chair clarinetist in the Memphis Symphony Orchestra in 1979, and the first African-American First Chair at the University. Retired in 2012, he holds an undergraduate degree from Michigan State University and a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts from The Catholic University, and he is an emeritus member of the Memphis Woodwind Quintet. A frequent soloist with the United States Navy Band in Washington, D.C., during the Vietnam War, Gholson received the University's 2007 FLAME Award and has received acclaim as author of *The Seasoned Clarinetist*, the Unitus.org website and *Windscares* (a videotaped series of clarinet primers). He is currently working on a

book about the Civil War. Gholson's wife, Billie Baker Gholson, was the first African-American graduate from the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music. Christopher Gholson, also known by the stage name "Drumma Boy," attended the University of Memphis as a Music Business major before earning recognition from the *New York Times*, Southern Entertainment Awards, the Ozone Awards and the BET Hip Hop Awards.

undergraduate and graduate students majoring in Commercial Music or Woodwinds at the University of Memphis. One award per year will be made, based on financial need, musical talent, demonstration of understanding the importance of reading speed and comprehension for under-represented communities, and tutoring to document reading improvement while in the program. The scholarship will celebrate both the enterprise and

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Dr. Gholson's father and mother, a music teacher, began the family tradition of sharing education. They would likely be proud to know that their son continues to impact students' lives, even after retiring from decades in the classroom, through the establishment of a scholarship fund with his son. The award will support the family's commitment to reading as an avenue toward cultural literacy, engaged scholarship and musical endeavor for students of under-represented communities.

The James and Christopher Gholson Scholarship is available for

the study of music, while encouraging greater literacy in the Mid-South.

"We wanted to support the music school and impact literacy levels for the local community," explains Dr. Gholson. "As committed champions of the arts who always magnify Memphis music on and off campus, we recognize that music students are usually strong readers as they develop their sight-reading skills. In strengthening this basic skill [of reading], we hope to support higher levels of retention."