



## MCM-Meridian Announces Site to be 403 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

### MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM- MERIDIAN

*A Signature Project of  
The Phil Hardin Foundation*

#### MEDIA CONTACT

Mary Alex Thigpen  
Director of Marketing  
maryalex@mcm.ms  
P: 601.709.8354

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**Meridian, Miss.-** The Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) is pleased to announce the site of the planned Mississippi Children's Museum- Meridian (MCM-M) **will be located at 403 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue**, the current location of an old Sears department store. Also announced in October, **the Riley Foundation has joined the Phil Hardin Foundation as a major supporter of the project with a grant for \$4 million.** Both announcements were made November 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM at the MSU Riley Center during a public press conference. In order to safely serve the children of East Mississippi, MCM-M will be constructing a new state-of-the-art facility on the property.

**With a grant for \$3 million in May of 2016, MCM-M became a signature project of the Phil Hardin Foundation.** Executive Director, Lloyd Gray, reflected on their early commitment saying, "The Phil Hardin Foundation recognized early-on that this project will have a tremendously positive impact for children across the socioeconomic spectrum in our community and region. We need to do all we can to stimulate and enhance learning for all children, but especially for those who otherwise wouldn't have access to the type of enrichment experiences the Children's Museum will provide. This investment is at the heart of the Hardin Foundation's educational mission and purpose."

The Riley Foundation President and Treasurer, Marty Davidson, also spoke to their recent grant, "The mission of the Riley Foundation is to improve the quality of life in Lauderdale County. Today, the Riley Foundation is making a four-million-dollar grant, to the Mississippi Children's Museum, that will improve the quality of life for our children, and grandchildren, for many generations to come."

**MCM-M has contracted with Weir Boerner Allin, a Mississippi architectural firm, to design the new museum.** Design renderings for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue facility were unveiled at the press conference. Meridian Mayor Percy Bland commented on the project, stating "The City of Meridian is thrilled to work with the Mississippi Children's Museum on a project that will not only expand opportunities for Meridian's youth, but also provide an opportunity for cultural and economic growth in our city." **More information regarding the MCM-M project can be found at [mschildrensmuseum.org/meridian](http://mschildrensmuseum.org/meridian)**

### **About the Mississippi Children’s Museum**

The Mississippi Children’s Museum (MCM) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides unparalleled experiences that ignite a thirst for discovery, knowledge, and learning in all children. MCM is dedicated to inspiring Mississippi’s children from all backgrounds to discover and achieve their potential. The museum features 40,000 square feet of exhibit space designed around five primary initiatives: Literacy, STEM, Health and Nutrition, Cultural Arts, and Mississippi History. The museum’s exhibits, programs, and outreach opportunities provide engaging, explorative, hands-on educational activities for children of all ages. To learn more about MCM visit [www.mschildrensmuseum.org](http://www.mschildrensmuseum.org).

### **About The Riley Foundation**

Chartered in January 1998 with \$60 million, the mission of The Riley Foundation is to improve the quality of life for the people of Meridian and Lauderdale County, Mississippi. With current assets over \$70 million, the Foundation has awarded more than \$67 million over the past 20 years, with the majority of funding for education. The Foundations \$4 million commitment to the Mississippi Children’s Museum in Meridian will continue to provide educational opportunities for the community.

### **About The Phil Hardin Foundation**

The Phil Hardin Foundation is a statewide education philanthropy based in Meridian. Since 1964, it has followed its founder’s vision to “improve the education of Mississippians” through support of innovative educational initiatives that enhance opportunities for Mississippi children and communities. Phil Hardin was a successful businessman who owned bakeries in Meridian, Jackson, Columbus and Tupelo, and the foundation he started with his personal wealth now has nearly \$58 million in assets. Its current grant-making strategy focuses on enhancing all levels of education in Meridian and Lauderdale County and on statewide efforts to improve student achievement in pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

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