

## Office of Geology Outreach at the Gem, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show

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The Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society held its 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show at the Trademart Building in Jackson on February 23 to 24. MDEQ's Office of Geology staff worked a booth at the event as did geologists and paleontologists with the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, the University of Southern Mississippi, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, and other institutions and organizations. The main draw of the show was more than 25 dealers from across the country selling mineral and fossil specimens, beads, lapidary tools and cutting material, gems, jewelry, and more. The show drew a large crowd, and many people stopped by the Office of Geology booth to purchase our publications and to have their finds identified.

In recent years, the Office of Geology and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science (MMNS) occupied neighboring booths. This association has worked well for those coming to bring their rocks and fossils—fossil bones are directed to the MMNS booth and invertebrate fossils are directed to the Office of Geology booth. MMNS has a new research associate, Jerry Case, who is at the far left in Figure 1. Case published the shark and fish tooth fauna of the Bashi Formation from the famous Red Hot Truck Stop in Meridian and also a popular book entitled *A Pictorial Guide to Fossils*.



Figure 1. Mississippi Museum of Natural Science booth at left and Mississippi Office of Geology booth on the right, with Dan Morse, Brenda Cook, and Michael Bograd.

We had an opportunity to interact with our fellow geologists from the geology departments of the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi (Figure 2).

The show is also a learning experience as several MDEQ staff brought their children to check out the show—Lyndsey Henley and her children and James Starnes' daughters (rock show regulars) in Figure 3 (next page). In addition, each year my Physical Geology class from the Hinds Community College Rankin Campus get extra credit for attending the rock show when they sign in at the Office of Geology booth. Pictured in Figure 4 (next page) is Hinds student Tafara McKinney (right) and her cousin at our booth. Finally, the left side of Figure 4 shows some incredible fossils for sale including the slab with the fossil palm fronds and fish that is now on display in my office.

If any of these items spark an interest, then I encourage you to attend the show next year. Information is available from the Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society's [website](#).



Figure 2. Top, University of Mississippi booth; middle, Mississippi State booth, and bottom, University of Southern Mississippi booth.



Figure 3. MDEQ families: Left, Lyndsey Henley with children Ross and Lynnlee; Right, Abby and Gracie Starnes.



Figure 4. Left, Hinds CC student Tafara McKinney (in pink) with her cousin at the Office of Geology booth. Right, dealer with rare fossils for sale.