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Belhaven's arts dean taking on new role

By Sherry Lucas

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Belhaven College arts dean Colin Harbinson will resign that position at the end of August to assume a new role as international director of StoneWorks.

StoneWorks is a global, trans-organizational movement Harbinson designed that will focus on the next generation of Christians in the arts.

Harbinson will continue to reside in Brandon; StoneWorks will be an entity of the college's School of the Arts.

"This will certainly be a global focus, so people will be coming here for all sorts of seminars and performances," he said. "There will be a mixture of people from all over the world on a regular basis. They'll be available to speak on campus and perform on campus and in the community as well." The move will free him from day-to-day academic duties, allowing him to concentrate on the creative side.

"No one in the world has a better grasp on the issues and a vision for how the arts and the church need to again be strengthened together," college president Roger Parrott said in a release. "The church needs to reclaim the worship of God through the arts."

StoneWorks will build on the college's leadership role in the arts community around the world.

"What he's taking on can only bring credit to Jackson and enhance the cultural scene in Jackson," said Jackson mezzo soprano Lester Senter Wilson. "He is the best of the best and we are blessed to have him."

Harbinson has been dean of the arts at Belhaven for seven years. When he arrived, the college had all the arts disciplines, but some were only in the embryonic stage.

"They've all flourished," he said of music, theater, dance and visual arts. "It was a huge time for growth — faculty, students, buildings, everything."

That growth included the conversion of a church into the Belhaven College Center for the Arts concert hall and the Bitsy Irby Visual Arts and Dance Center.

Belhaven College recently achieved national accreditation for all its departments in the School of the Arts, putting it among only 24 colleges and universities in the country with that status. The University of Southern Mississippi also has comprehensive national arts accreditation.