

## ***The Education of a Lifetime*** **Readers' Guide**

1. What did you think of the author's reaction to the death threats he received in the wake of the symbols discussion? Why do you think he chose to begin the book with this scene?
2. The author came into his chancellorship with ambitious dreams for Ole Miss that were completely separate from his campaign against the university's symbols. Do you believe that the symbols discussion derailed some of Khayat's initial goals for the university, or did it allow him to make an even greater impact on Ole Miss than he ever imagined?
3. Discuss the ban on sticks as a strategy to keep Confederate flags out of Ole Miss sporting events. Do you believe the ban was constitutional? Do you believe that it was worth it to change the nation's perception of Ole Miss?
4. Khayat wrote about having cereal with John Hope Franklin. Did you recognize, at the time you read the scene, the foreshadowing of future events?
5. Discuss the irony of John Hope Franklin, a black man, coming to Ole Miss's aid during the Phi Beta Kappa vote. Why do you think Franklin felt compelled to do this? In your opinion, how much of his motivation came from his personal connection to Robert?
6. After setting out goals in his investiture speech, Gloria Kellum whispered in Robert Khayat's ear, "Are you out of your *damn* mind?" Discuss his determination to have nothing but the best for Ole Miss.
7. Discuss the author's period of reflection before deciding to put his name up for the chancellorship. What do you think inspired him to ultimately overcome his reluctance and take such the risk? Discuss the role that Khayat's family and friends, particularly Jack Dunbar, played in shaping his decision, as well as possible deeper motivations.
8. Discuss Khayat decision to not adopt the original design for the Civil Rights monument on campus? Did he have the right to overturn an 8-year process?
9. Discuss how Robert's trip to Memphis to see the opera *La Boheme* affected him?
10. Khayat wrote, "Everyone wants progress, but very few embrace change." Discuss.
11. While chancellor, Robert walked the campus every day, picking up trash and looking for ways to improve campus beauty. He admitted his obsession with appearance in the book. Discuss the pros and cons of this obsession.
12. Talk about the impact of Larry Martindale's mother asking him if he had repaid his scholarship to Ole Miss.

13. What was the impact of Rex Deloach bringing a business sensibility to university finances?
14. Was the University of Mississippi's decision to forego hosting the 2004 Presidential Debate the right choice? Why or why not?
15. If you were Stanley Hill and you had experienced the 1956 Ole Miss basketball team walking off the court when you appeared, would you have accepted Robert Khayat's invitation 35 years later?
16. What one personality trait do you think best embodies Robert Khayat? Discuss.