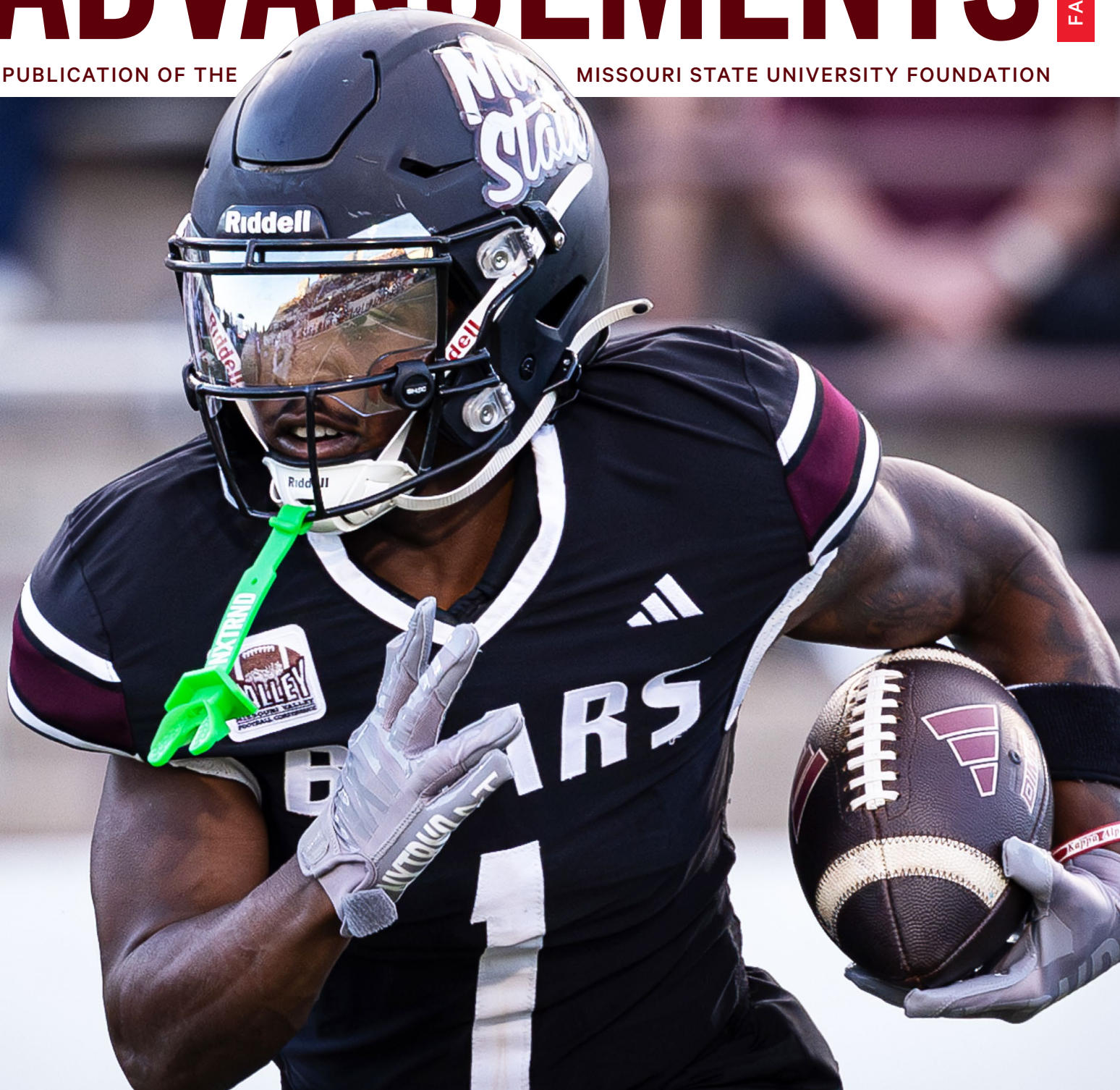


ADVANCEMENTS

FALL 2024

A PUBLICATION OF THE

MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION



The Missouri State Bears enter **A NEW ERA OF ATHLETICS**

We are racing into the future, with a new athletics director and a move to Conference USA.
Private support is crucial in helping MSU reach the end zone!

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**St. Louis,
Nov. 2, 2024**

Join us for an unforgettable night of games
straight from the Vegas strip!

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ADVANCEMENTS

FALL 2024

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PUBLICATION PRODUCED BY MSU DIVISION OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Publisher: Office of creative services
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Advancements is published by Missouri State
University. Postmaster: Send address changes to
Missouri State University Foundation, 901 S. National
Ave., Springfield, MO 65897

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Affirmative Action/Minority/Female/Veterans/
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Millions of reasons to say **THANK YOU**

Missouri State supporters like you continue to blow me away.

Alumni and friends donated almost \$36 million in fiscal year 2024, which ended June 30. It is the greatest fundraising total in the history of the Missouri State University Foundation. It is the impact these gifts have on our students, faculty, staff and campus that we acknowledge and honor. The gifts went toward:

- **Student scholarships.** These gifts transform lives. They help promising students pursue an MSU education and make the most of their university experience, regardless of their ability to pay. Scholarships are an investment in the next generation of Bears!
- **Programs.** These give Bears a rich college experience outside of the classroom. Missouri State's programs range from athletics to academic services, clubs to culture, fitness to

fun, student government to career advising — and beyond. You have helped us expand university programs in important, student-centered ways.

- **Capital projects,** such as the Judith Enyeart Reynolds Complex (a space for the arts, social sciences and humanities), Roy Blunt Hall, Smart University Advancement Center and Wulff-Risner Agriculture Science Center on the West Plains campus. You have allowed Missouri State to plan for, acquire, renovate and build amazing structures — and, most importantly, make sure we meet the needs of our students and the community.
- **Faculty support.** Where does a great education begin? Many students and alumni would say it starts with excellent teachers who bring passion and dedication to the classroom. Quality faculty members inspire students and motivate their peers. They raise the

profile of their departments and the entire university. They make discoveries and create knowledge.

Through your generosity this year, you show us you value Missouri State University and the educational impact it provides. What a humbling privilege to see this level of trust and support.

As we start this semester with a new leader in President Richard “Biff” Williams, there’s so much pride and excitement. Thank you for helping us dream big and chart a course for the future.

Go Bears!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Brent Dunn".

W. Brent Dunn, executive director of the Missouri State University Foundation and vice president for university advancement





\$35,979,042

raised from
July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024



≈20,000

donors contributed in
fiscal year 2024



\$32 million

previous fundraising record,
set in fiscal year 2022



\$454 million+

raised for MSU since the
foundation began in 1981



\$20 million+

raised each year for the
past seven years

Have swagger

Advocate for Bear pride

Be aspirational

DREAM BIG

President Williams lays out his vision for private support.

INTERVIEW BY MICHELLE S. ROSE
PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

When Advancements magazine sat down with President Richard B. Williams, he had just gotten back from a meet and greet with donors — one of several on his calendar since this summer.

“When I talk to our donors, you can see their only desire is to help others. And it’s not quid pro quo or anything like that. It’s: ‘We were given a lot in our lives, so we want to give back.’ Their stories are profound and just heartwarming.”

He’s no stranger to the importance of private gifts for a public institution, having seen firsthand how strong support can raise an entire university.

When you led Utah Tech, scholarship funding grew by 90% and overall private giving grew as well. How did you help facilitate that growth?

First, we decided to invest in advancement and hired some very good people.

Next, we made it a strategy to increase our scholarship portfolio. Our enrollment increased more than 42%.

We also simultaneously created a strategic plan that outlined a vision for the university that got people excited.

We added more than 200 academic programs. We built or renovated more than 40 buildings. We went from NCAA Division II to Division I athletics.

We bought an old elementary school and turned it into an innovation center, which became known for creating patents and new businesses.

Donors resonated with the vision, and that’s why we saw such a dramatic increase in their support.

MSU supporters have broken records for giving in the past several years. What do you think are keys to sustained fundraising success — how will you keep this trend going?

It’s about the vision. This year, we’ll be embarking on the creation of a new long-range plan. That will be key to fundraising, advancing the university and recruiting students for the next five to seven years.

We’ll have a comprehensive plan so donors from all different walks of life will be able to see where they fit and how they can help.

As an institution, we should have a swagger here. People have heard me say I think we are “THE” Missouri State University. It’s an attitude.

We’re important. We offer a lot — not just to this area, but to the entire state. We’re the second-largest institution in the state. And do we know that? Do we act like that? Are we excited about that? I will advocate for Bear pride in everything we do.

When do you think donors could get a glimpse of the new long-range plan?

This is going to be OUR plan, not my plan. We will get as many people engaged with this as possible. We’ll have town hall meetings starting this fall with different stakeholders, from students to faculty and staff, to alumni, to local businesses, to donors, etc.

I expect it’ll be finalized and approved in May or June 2025.



You have said “let’s dream big.” What does that mean to you?

Be aspirational! My hope is we put aside any feelings of, “Well, that’s not a viable idea because we can’t afford it.” I say, “Let’s dream big and figure it out.” We will collectively identify the four or five goals we want to focus on as a university — and go for it.

What do you think are MSU’s most pressing funding needs right now?

I think every area could probably say they have needs — and they are likely right.

As we work on the strategic plan, we’ll see what’s most important to all of us. Then, we’ll prioritize that. The plan’s going to help us figure out where we’re going: What buildings do we renovate next? What student needs do we meet first? What’s second, third and fourth? Then, we find the sources to help us conquer the revenue needs.

What would you say to all MSU donors?

The only thing I would add is, and I haven’t emphasized it enough: Our donors give back to tomorrow.

Their dollars have such an impact on our students. There’s a lot of first-generation students. There are students who couldn’t otherwise come to Missouri State.

Our donors give their time, too. They mentor our students. They’re attending their performances, their research symposia and public affairs events. They’re getting involved at the athletic events. All that really matters.

I can’t emphasize enough the impact these wonderful people are having on our students. I love talking about the donors because they are great. ▀



The Missouri State Bears are entering

A NEW ERA OF ATHLETICS

We have a new athletics director as we begin making the pivotal move to Conference USA. Private support is helping make this transition possible.

Confetti was flying, Boomer Bear was dancing and Missouri State Spirit Squad members were hyping up a large crowd on Aug. 30 at the Plaster Student Union Theater.

Missouri State officially introduced Patrick Ransdell, our new director of intercollegiate athletics, to the campus community and beyond.

He takes the reins as the Bears move to Conference USA, or CUSA. This is a larger intercollegiate athletic conference whose member institutions are mostly in the

southern United States. The benefits of moving to this conference are many, and include:

- An anticipated increase in revenue from joining the Football Bowl Subdivision, or FBS, the highest level of college football in the United States.
- The potential for more financial resources for student-athletes.
- Travel upgrades — less bus travel and more flights for our student-athletes.
- Increased national visibility for the university, and not just in athletics. This

exposure will promote Missouri State in many ways.

- A platform that will raise the profile of the university and the city of Springfield.

Private support will be essential as we move to CUSA. MSU will need to update facilities like Plaster Stadium to get them up to conference standards.

Gifts could also support scholarships for student-athletes.

Some gifts have already started coming in, including a major donation from alumnus and longtime supporter Tom Strong.



**New Athletics Director Ransdell
“excited to join the Missouri State family”**

Ransdell is MSU’s 11th athletic director. He has served as deputy athletics director for external relations at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, since December 2021.

His initial agreement with Missouri State is a five-year deal.

Ransdell has 20 years of leadership experience at six different NCAA Division I universities. His history includes:

- Overseeing external operations and leading major fundraising initiatives at Appalachian State. While he was there, the Mountaineers football team experienced record-setting attendance

numbers, leading the nation in percentage of stadium capacity filled. They also set program records for total attendance. The school also experienced record numbers for donor participation, ticket revenue and annual fund growth.

- Five years at the University of Central Florida, ultimately serving as executive associate AD for the Orlando university. During his time at UCF, the Knights football team experienced record revenue in tickets and corporate sales, while enjoying national success on the field.
- From 2013-15, Ransdell was an assistant director of development at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, before being promoted to assistant AD there in February 2015.

- He has also held leadership positions at UNC-Wilmington and Coastal Carolina.
- He started his athletics administration career at the University of Mississippi.

In college, he was a four-year athlete on Western Kentucky’s baseball team. Ransdell earned his bachelor’s degree in mass communication from WKU in 2002 with a minor in psychology. He later completed two post-graduate degrees at Ohio University, including his MBA in 2004 and master’s in sports administration in 2005.

Ransdell and his wife Brooke have two children, Walker and Collins.

“My family and I couldn’t be more excited to join the Missouri State family and serve as your next director of athletics,” Ransdell said.



Tom Strong at an MSU women's basketball game. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

Alumnus continues to support his alma mater's "dreams and endeavors"

Tom Strong, a former Springfield attorney and longtime supporter of Missouri State, led the charge toward CUSA membership with a donation of \$5 million.

Strong's gift will support the conference move in multiple ways.

- Some of the funds will go towards the NCAA transition fee for changing from the

Football Championship Subdivision to the Football Bowl Subdivision.

- The rest will be used for upgrades to Plaster Stadium on campus, starting with renovations to the football locker rooms and indoor facilities.

Strong is one of the most successful trial lawyers in Missouri's history.

He grew up in a nonaffluent family in rural Missouri. He majored in speech at MSU and received his bachelor's degree in 1952.

"Had it not been for MSU, attending college would have been a huge challenge," he previously told Missouri State.

"I graduated in three years with an education that enabled me to excel in law school and beyond. My late wife Wilma and I had three children, all of whom graduated from Greenwood and went on to earn professional degrees. Three generations of my family have benefited from this university. In addition, it has honored me in many ways since my graduation by allowing me to be involved in its dreams and endeavors."

He went on to graduate from the University of Missouri School of Law and serve in the Army's Counter Intelligence

Corps. He rejected offers to practice law in New York and San Francisco to return to his hometown of Springfield.

In 1976, he founded Strong Law, P.C.

Strong remains involved in many capacities at Missouri State.

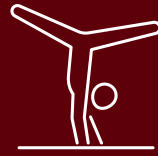
- He has served as a past president and past member of MSU's Board of Governors.
- He was the co-chair of Our Promise: The Campaign for Missouri State University, which raised more than \$150 million.
- In 2002, Strong Hall was named in honor of his family.
- He established several scholarships and endowed faculty positions.
- He received the Outstanding Alumni Award in 1987, the Bronze Bear Award in 2006 and an honorary doctorate in 2015.
- He is a member of The Founders Club and holds a Governors Medallion.

"I have been a firsthand witness to (MSU's) remarkable growth and contribution to society," Strong said. "So why do I want to give back to the university? How could I do less? What I will leave to it is just some possessions. What it has given to my family and me is priceless." ▴





Cheer for the Bears: ALL 19 OF OUR TEAMS



**Acrobatics
and tumbling**
(women's)



Baseball
(men's)



Basketball
(men's and women's)



Beach volleyball
(women's)



Cross country
(women's)



Football
(men's)



Golf
(men's and women's)



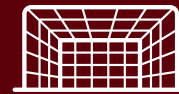
**Indoor track
and field**
(women's)



**Outdoor track
and field**
(women's)



Softball
(women's)



Soccer
(men's and women's)



Stunt
(women's)



**Swimming
and diving**
(men's and women's)



Tennis
(women's)



Volleyball
(women's)

Celebrating gratitude:

STUDENTS THANK THOSE WHO INVESTED IN THEIR FUTURES

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD

For nearly 20 years, Missouri State students have built meaningful connections with scholarship donors at annual Gratitude Gatherings in both Springfield and West Plains, Missouri.

These events, previously known as Endowed Scholarship Appreciation dinners and luncheons, have a new name to reflect that students can personally thank those who are supporting their dreams of higher education.

The most recent Gratitude Gatherings took place April 10 in West Plains and April 17 in Springfield.

Donors of endowed scholarships, and student recipients, are invited to the events. They share a meal, tell their stories and meet the faces behind the names they may only know from written thank-you notes or scholarship award letters.

“You can’t help but realize how important your gift is”

Carol Silvey, a donor to several scholarships, has attended Gratitude Gatherings in West Plains almost every year since they began.

“The events are fabulous because they are all about the students,” she said. “When you sit at lunch and talk to whomever is at your table, or you hear students who are speaking, you can’t help but realize how important your gift is. It truly does make a difference in the lives of students.”

Silvey added that Missouri State-West Plains Chancellor Dennis Lancaster asked students at the luncheon to look around at donors in attendance.

He then said: “These are people who have invested in your future.”

Donor: “Being able to meet the students enriches the experience”

At the most recent gathering in Springfield, Greg and Susan Hall caught up with a recipient of their scholarship, Jack Sullentrup.

The Halls first met Sullentrup, who is majoring in construction management, at a previous Gratitude Gathering. They immediately hit it off.

“As a donor, we are wanting to help students who are working to help themselves,” Greg Hall said. “We try to give them a little history of what the university was like when we attended. We like to hear more about their lives and what they’re accomplishing over the next year. The rewarding aspects of being able to meet the students enriches the experience of forming the scholarships.”

Sullentrup said spending time with the Halls has been special for him, too.

“It means my hard work doesn’t go unnoticed — someone is supporting me, even if they haven’t met me before. It’s nice to see them and be able to thank them for everything they’ve done. It was a fun experience to get to know them on a more personal level and hear about their careers.”

As attendees get to know each other, they can also celebrate the positive impact scholarship support has on students’ lives.

“That’s what this event does — it stirs the emotions of the donors who see these phenomenal young people, but it also brings out a different side of the students,” Silvey said. “I would encourage anyone who might not have attended or who missed this year to attend. It really reinforces how important those charitable contributions are to every single recipient.” ▼

Scholarship recipients Jake Sullentrup and Tegan Monnig met with donors Greg and Susan Hall (center) at the gathering in Springfield. PHOTO BY CYNTHIA HOWELL





MEET

Kevin White

**Missouri State University Creative Services
assistant director, photography**

Career: He has worked at MSU for more than 30 years, starting as a student photographer in 1989. He took a full-time position in 1994.

Family: White and his wife Kelly have a blended family with seven children, three Bernedoodle dogs and lots of fish.

After all these years at Missouri State, do you have a favorite work memory?

Covering a soccer game in a violent rainstorm. It was blowing wind and sleet.

We hunkered down and they played the game. We stood out there and photographed it in that inclement weather.

What is your favorite aspect of your job?

Not being tied to a desk. I get to go everywhere other people don't get to go: on top of buildings, down below, backstage, the front row.

I usually have the best view in the house — better than what the president has!

What is your ideal workday?

An assignment that involves doing research with a professor outdoors. Driving to a location and seeing what they do.

Are you counting down the days until your retirement or more likely to work 10 years past?

I am already past retirement. I'm still having fun, so don't have any plans immediately for retirement.

Your greatest accomplishment?

Having the family I have and the job I have. I don't feel like there's any job out there that suits me better.

Tell us a little-known fact about you.

I have a giant water garden in my backyard. I like rocks. Mowing is my therapy.

If you could go back in time for one hour, who would you spend it with and what would you do?

Besides spending it with the person who works the Powerball machine, I would like to visit my wife's mother. She died of cancer before I got together with Kelly. Kelly talks so highly of her. I know she's a big part of who Kelly is, so I'd like to meet her.

Do you prefer talking or texting?

Talking in person.

Your favorite food?

Pizza.

Your best vacation of all time and why?

I loaded up the kids and drove to Florida. We stayed in random old hotels, the "real" Florida, on a very limited budget.

Three activities for a perfect weekend?

Sitting by the fire, IPA beers and yard work.

Your favorite age so far?

This age. I'm happy right now.

Furthest you have been from Missouri?

I lived on the Big Island of Hawaii when I was 21 or 22. I was out there with a buddy of mine doing hotel photography for a few months. We had a little Toyota and we'd sleep in it. I also slept on the beach. We flew to Maui and drove up to lava flows. We got out — wearing flip-flops — and hiked to as close as we could get without burning off our faces and took photos of the lava flowing down from the open crater.

Coffee, tea or other?

Coffee. Mudhouse.

What place do you want to travel the most?

Alaska or Finland.

Pick only one entertainment: movies, TV, gaming or live music?

Movies. I can't sit still for a book.

What never fails to make you laugh?

I can't answer this because I'm immature. My wife and kids always make me laugh.

What would your spy code name be?

Reef Walker — that was my Hawaiian name. I walked out in the ocean and cut my feet open on the barnacles, so they called me Reef Walker.

What inspires you?

Wanting to explore and create.

Your favorite way to treat yourself?

A beer and a meal at a restaurant.

Could unlimited money buy you happiness?

I think so. I would be willing to give it a shot.

Bravest thing you've ever done?

Eat grubs.

Missouri State is...

My extended family. ▾

— Interview by Juliana Goodwin

BUILDING FUTURES FOR GRIZZLIES

Miriam Ward and her family set up scholarships for West Plains athletes in memory of her late husband Carr, an avid fan.

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD



Grizzly athlete Kendon Peebles (in jersey) wrote to Miriam Ward (center, in blue jacket) after he received the scholarship in her late husband's name. He was able to meet her and some members of her family before a game. PHOTO BY VICKIE DRISKELL

We know scholarships have a positive impact on students. These gifts also often lead to special outcomes for those who gave them.

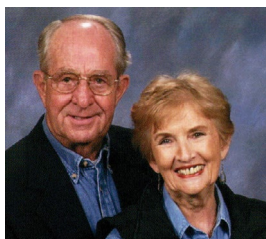
That was the case for Miriam Ward.

In June 2014, Ward and her family established The Carr Ward Family Grizzly Endowed Scholarship in memory of her late husband, Carr Ward. Carr had been a member of Grizzly Booster Club and the booster club executive board of directors.

"He always had a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye and a kind word for everyone," said Dr. Herb Lunday, former dean of student services at Missouri State University-West Plains.

Carr Ward left behind a legacy with those who knew him, and a scholarship would share that legacy with those he never met.

The Wards were avid supporters of athletics who could frequently be seen at Grizzlies games throughout the year. The scholarship was set up to support the athletic programs they enjoyed together. Each year, scholarship funds are divided equally between a recipient on the women's



Carr and Miriam Ward
in 2009. SUBMITTED PHOTO

volleyball team and a recipient on the men's basketball team.

"Scholarships are critical for Grizzly Athletics. They help us remain competitive in NJCAA Division 1 athletics, but also provide opportunities to make higher education available to students who may not have other means to attend college," Director of Grizzly Athletics Rachel Peterson said.

Students are nominated by others at the university based on personal character, potential to succeed academically and overall excellent representation of the university. The first awards were made during the 2020-21 academic year, and since then, eight students have received the scholarship.

Wiktorja Jakubik of the women's volleyball team and Kendon Peebles of the men's basketball team, the 2023 recipients, sent letters of gratitude to Miriam Ward after being awarded the scholarship last year.

Jakubik is originally from Grajewo, Poland, so the assistance of the scholarship was especially meaningful to her. She is adjusting not only to college life, but to life in the United States.

"I thought it was impossible to study and play volleyball in another country, on the

other side of the world," Jakubik said. "The scholarships and support from MSU-West Plains gave me everything. They are making dreams come true."

Peebles mentioned in his letter that he would love to meet Miriam and her family before a basketball game. She took him up on the offer.

"I was honored that Kendon wanted to meet me and my family," Ward said. "The team was great. I enjoyed meeting them all and seeing how well they interacted with

everyone, especially my great-grandchildren."

It seemed fitting that near the 10-year anniversary of the scholarship, Ward and her family were still cheering on the Grizzlies and connecting with students.

"Miriam Ward and her late husband, Carr, were instrumental for decades in Grizzly Athletics. Miriam has volunteered her time to raise funds for the Garnett Library and other on-campus initiatives," Peterson said.

"We are so thankful for donors and friends like Miriam!" ▼

Letters to Miriam: Recipients show their gratitude

I am a returning sophomore from Hampton,
Virginia. I am pursuing an associate degree in
general studies.
I appreciate all your efforts to support
student athletic scholarships. It means a lot to
me that you took a chance to help me with my
education, so thank you again. If you decide to
come to a game, I would love to get a picture
with you and your kids and family. God bless!

— Kendon Peebles, men's basketball

I came to West Plains from Poland. I am
studying general studies, but I will try to have
a psychology major. I am a freshman and I
plan to graduate in spring 2025. Thanks to
your generous scholarship, I am now one step
closer to achieving my goal.
By awarding the Carr Ward Family Grizzly
Endowed Scholarship, I have the opportunity
to develop myself and my dreams. I hope that
one day I will also be able to help someone like
you have helped me. Thank you.

— Wiktorja Jakubik, women's volleyball

WANT TO SUPPORT THE WEST PLAINS CAMPUS?

Contact the Missouri State Foundation or the Missouri State-West Plains university advancement office.

✉ WPAdvancement@MissouriState.edu

☎ 417-255-7240

🌐 WP.MissouriState.edu/UniversityAdvancement



BEARSWIN WOMEN'S IMPACT NETWORK | GRIZZLIESWIN WOMEN'S IMPACT NETWORK

THE POWER OF WOMEN

The recently established BearsWIN/GrizzliesWIN initiative is already benefiting Missouri State students in Springfield and West Plains.

Mental wellness



Degree completion



Neurodiversity



Funds raised by the BearsWIN and GrizzliesWIN (Women's Impact Network) are being put to good use.

BearsWIN and GrizzliesWIN is an initiative that brings awareness and funding to some of the most pressing needs of Missouri State students. It was established in 2023 with a public kickoff event in early 2024.

The network is focused on supporting three target areas:

- Mental wellness: Students seeking counseling and psychiatric services at Magers Health and Wellness Center.
- Degree completion: Students who have exhausted other types of financial assistance and still need support.

- Neurodiversity and mental wellness: Support of the TJ Swift House ASCEND program and more at MSU-West Plains.

The network's initial goal was to raise \$500,000 by 2026.

They just received their first six-figure gift and are at almost 60% of their overall fundraising goal. ▼

WANT TO BE A PART OF BEARSWIN/GRIZZLIESWIN?

Optimize your time, talent and resources to turn big ideas into measurable and meaningful change for Missouri State!

 MissouriStateFoundation.org/BearsWIN

**Missouri State University
Foundation**

Remembering an alumna who endeavored to create a “better Missouri State educational experience”



McQueary in the 1952 Ozarko

Longtime supporter Ramona McQueary, who helped shape the Missouri State University Foundation as one of its first directors, passed away June 29 at the age of 93.

McQueary was an alumna who graduated in May 1952.

In a release, the university said: “Ramona McQueary was a giant in our community and at Missouri State. She was our first female chair of the Board of Regents, has her family name on a college and led in fundraising work. She will be missed tremendously.”

McQueary family has had a long tradition of supporting the Bears

In the early 1900s, William M. McQueary opened a drugstore on the corner of Madison Street and John Q. Hammons Parkway.

His sons, William Les and Frederick Gordon McQueary, founded McQueary Brothers Drug Company in 1924.

The family’s legacy of giving was first

inspired by Les and Jennie McQueary, who enjoyed Missouri State athletics.

The couple’s children, Fred M. McQueary and the late William T. “Bill” McQueary, served as the first co-chairs of The Bears Fund in 1982.

The late Fred and Ramona McQueary and Bill and Shirley McQueary, and their families, continued the tradition of support.

The family is the namesake behind the McQueary College of Health and Human Services. They have also supported other areas, including arts, letters and business.

They have made multiple gifts to scholarships, athletics, Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts, Greenwood Laboratory School, the Child Development Center, Tent Theatre and the Pride Band.

Mark McQueary is the immediate past chair of the Missouri State University Foundation Board of Trustees.

In 2007, the McQuearys were honored with the Bronze Bear award for their multigenerational involvement.

Ramona McQueary helped sculpt the Missouri State landscape

Ramona McQueary gave her time and resources in many ways, including:

- She served on the SMSU Board of Regents (now the MSU Board of Governors) in the 1970s and was elected president in 1977. She was the second woman to ever be appointed to the board.
- In the 1980s, she served on the first SMSU Foundation Board of Directors.
- She and alumnus Tom Strong were the co-chairs of the Our Promise campaign, then the most ambitious fundraising campaign in university history. It was announced in 2009, and by the end of 2012 exceeded the goal of \$125 million.

In 2012, she explained why giving back mattered to her: “Those who invest in Missouri State are not just helping students of today thrive. They have laid the groundwork for a better Missouri State educational experience for generations to come.” ▽



Fred and Ramona McQueary at a then-SMSU fundraiser for scholarships. MSU ARCHIVE IMAGE



Ramona McQueary at a Board of Regents meeting, circa 1975. MSU ARCHIVE IMAGE



McQueary at the 2018 naming of the College of Health and Human Services. MSU ARCHIVE IMAGE

JOIN US FOR UPCOMING EVENTS!

Spend time with other Bears at Alumni Association and Missouri State University Foundation events in your local community. Make meaningful MSU connections at a gathering near you!

Check out all events:  MaroonNation.MissouriState.edu

SCAN TO REGISTER



Progress and planning continues for YOUR NEW CAMPUS HOME

The Clifton M. Smart III University Advancement Center will be a warm, welcoming spot for alumni, donors and friends.

RENDERINGS PROVIDED BY DAKE WELLS ARCHITECTURE

We can't tell you everything yet. But what we can tell you: The new University Advancement Center will be a game-changer when you want to gather on campus.

David Atkisson, a 1999 graduate with a bachelor's degree in construction management, is the Springfield office leader for JE Dunn.

"Our team has been working alongside Missouri State and Dake Wells Architecture throughout the design phase," he said.

Atkisson is proud to be working on the building that will be a new home for Bears of all life stages.

"It has been 30 years since my first campus visit to Missouri State as a high school senior in 1994. The oldest of our four children is currently a student at Missouri State, with three more future Bears on the horizon," he said.

"It is my honor to experience this full-circle moment by serving on the team for the Advancement Center project."

He's excited about features that are in the works.

"The facility will have great spaces for events, both indoor and outdoor, to bring future students, families, alumni, staff and friends together on campus for events that have historically had to be held off campus," Atkisson said.

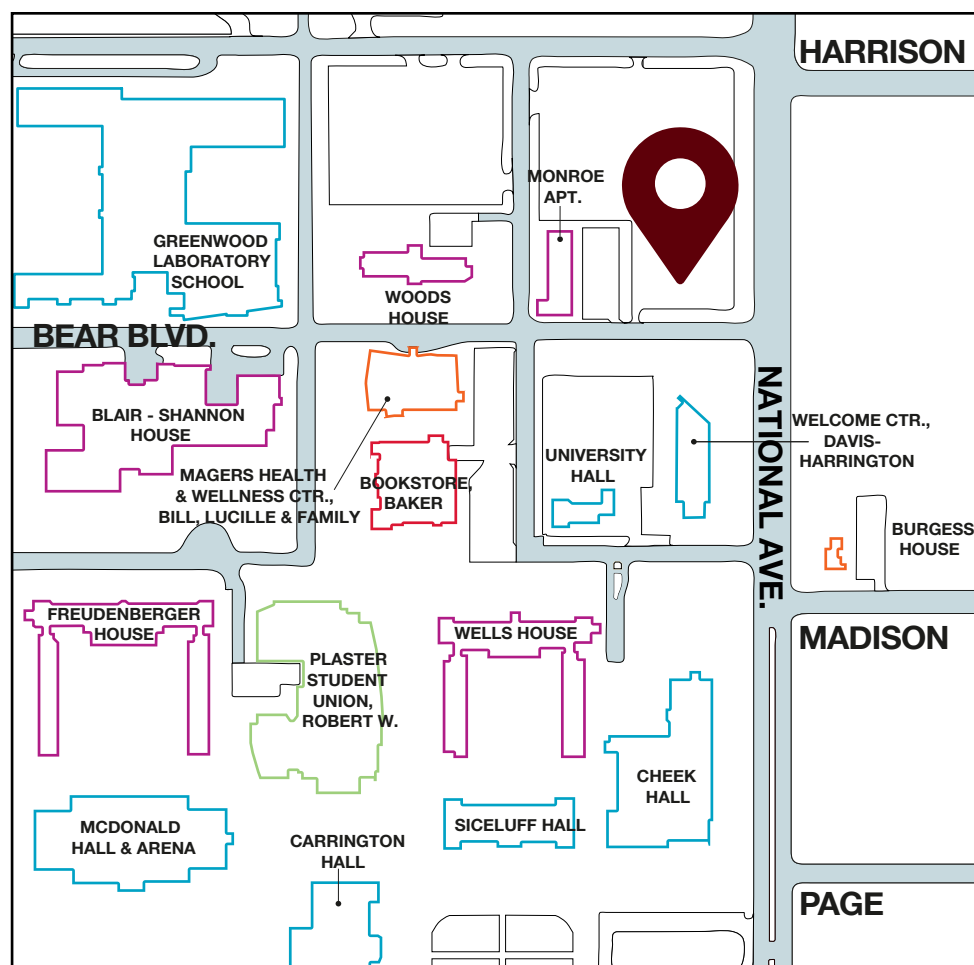
"The facility will have strong Missouri State branding and storytelling features."

It will include interactive elements, said Stephanie Smith, senior director of donor relations and special events.

"Our goal for our new home is to create a center for Bears of all ages," Smith said. "We want it to be a place that draws people in and a place you HAVE to see when you're on

campus. It will be a place that evokes Bear pride and makes our alumni and friends proud of Missouri State's legacy and excited about its future." ▼

FUTURE LOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT CENTER



A rendering of the outside of the center.



“This center will have an impact on the future of the university. One of the reasons I was attracted to working at MSU was that we have an alumni and community base that wants to be involved with students and the institution. When this facility is ready, Bears from all different walks of life will have a dedicated place where they will feel welcome and included, right at the front door of campus.”

Richard B. Williams, MSU president

What will be in the center?

The design process is under way, and the final design expected by the end of this year.

Some key features that will be included:

INDOOR EVENT SPACE HONORING KENNETH E. MEYER

This will be a place to gather for university and community events, and to stop by any time you are visiting campus. It will have seating for about 200. The space will be named for the late Kenneth E. Meyer, 1950 alumnus and former chairman of the Missouri State Foundation Board of Trustees. Meyer and his wife, Jane, were longtime supporters of Missouri State.

OUTDOOR SPACE

This area will be used for gatherings and serve as a hangout space with seating for students and visitors.

INSPIRATION HALL

This area will have displays that showcase the university's history and the impact philanthropic gifts have made through the years.

OFFICES

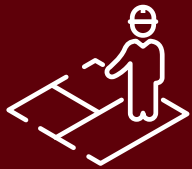
The Missouri State Foundation and university advancement team — including development, alumni engagement and relations, donor relations and special events, advancement services and athletics development — will all be housed in the center.



Groundbreaking is
expected in
spring 2025



Construction is expected
to wrap up in
summer 2026



The center
will be about
28,000 square feet



The indoor event space
will have seating
for about 200

“We can’t wait to unveil this building to all the alumni and friends who care about Missouri State. We want it to be the place they consider their home on campus. This center will allow us to change what we do and how we do it, better showcasing the incredible university we represent.”

W. Brent Dunn, executive director of the Missouri State University Foundation and vice president for university advancement



A rendering of a conference room.



A rendering of the main lobby/living room.

“Intentional efforts and significant investments over the past decade have greatly improved campus facilities and university pride already, and the new center will bring us to yet another level.”

David Atkisson '99, Springfield office leader for JE Dunn



“We’ve spent a lot of time on finishes, branding and the overall design to create a distinct experience. I’m excited to be part of creating a building that will make a significant impact on MSU and the community.”

Michael Mardis, MSU planning, design and construction manager/architect

What naming opportunities exist?

MAIN LOBBY/LIVING ROOM

A stunning space, this lobby and lounge area at the north entrance of the building will feature full-length windows with natural lighting and an inviting setting for alumni and friends.

OUTDOOR EVENT AREA

The courtyard will provide a protected exterior event space with a lovely lawn and terrace for hosting events while enjoying views of our beautiful campus.

EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM

This boardroom will offer state-of-the-art meeting space for the executive meetings of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees and the Alumni Association Board.

INSPIRATION HALL

This area will be located in the main corridor of the first floor. It will display alumni achievements as well as history related to the university and the MSU Foundation.

CONFERENCE ROOMS/COLLABORATION AREAS

These rooms on the first and second floors will offer collaboration and meeting spaces for staff, board members, alumni and friends.

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE SUITES

Professionals in advancement, development, athletics development, engagement and alumni relations, advancement relations and more will have spaces in the building.

STAFF OFFICES

Within each departmental office suite there will be multiple offices.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR GIFT

To discuss all possibilities for private support, contact the Missouri State University Foundation.

 Foundation@MissouriState.edu

 417-836-4143

**Missouri State University
Foundation**

SIGHTS AND SCENES: SPRING AND SUMMER 2024

- 1. New Missouri State President Richard B. Williams** took part in his first Welcome Weekend activities in August.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

- 2. Holi, a Hindu festival of colors, love and spring,** was celebrated in March.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

- 3. Tulips bloom outside Carrington Hall.**

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

- 4. Bears took in the sights of the April 8 solar eclipse.**

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

- 5. Cliff and Gail Smart** were on hand for the unveiling of Cliff's plaque on campus, part of the university's "goodbye" to the former president.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

- 6. Softball players reach out to Coach Holly Hesse** during her last game. She retired in 2024 after 36 seasons as head coach.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

- 7. Baseball Coach Keith Guttin** gets a hug from a player after his last game in May. Guttin retired in 2024 after 42 seasons at the helm of the program.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

- 8. MSU conferred 3,078 degrees** to students May 10 at spring 2024 commencement.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

- 9. Tent Theatre's 2024 season** included "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical."

PHOTO BY MINDY WELLAND

- 10. Comedian Nate Bargatze** brought The Be Funny Tour to Great Southern Bank Arena on June 28. He sported BearWear while performing for a large crowd.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE





FOUR INDUCTED INTO MISSOURI PUBLIC AFFAIRS HALL OF FAME

Roy Blunt, Dr. Norma Champion, Chris Chinn and Annie Malone were honored in fall 2024.



Inductees with President Richard Williams.
PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

The Missouri Public Affairs Hall of Fame 2024 inductees included a decades-long public servant, a former children's TV show host, an advocate for agriculture and an entrepreneur/community builder.

They were inducted Sept. 6 during a ceremony held at The Old Glass Place in Springfield.

The inductees were selected because they have a connection to the state of Missouri and serve as examples of global citizens by acting for the benefit of others.



Annie Malone



The Zimmers and Friends performed "Missouri Waltz."

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

MAKE YOUR NOMINATION FOR THE 2025 AWARDS

Do you know someone who exemplifies support of public affairs and engaged citizenship, and has a connection to the state of Missouri? Nominate them for this award!

 PublicAffairs.MissouriState.edu/HallOfFame



THE 2024 INDUCTEES



Roy Blunt

MSU alumnus, 1972

A former educator, university president and public servant, Blunt has a long and distinguished career. He taught high school history from 1970-72 and led Southwest Baptist University as president from 1993-96. He also served on Capitol Hill for more than four decades until his retirement from the U.S. Senate in 2023. Throughout his career, Blunt developed long-lasting, bipartisan partnerships that led to major legislative achievements in health care, infrastructure and national security. He is the current president of the State Historical Society of Missouri and chairman of Husch Blackwell Leadership Strategies Advisory Services.



Dr. Norma Champion

MSU alumna, 1978

Champion has lived many lives during her 91 years, from professor to senator. But she is perhaps most well-known to longtime Ozarks residents as Aunt Norma on "The Children's Hour," which aired on KY3 for nearly 30 years. Later in life, Champion began a career in politics as a Springfield city councilwoman. She ran for a Republican seat in the Missouri House, where she served for 10 years and finally served as a Missouri State senator from 2003-10. Champion is retired and resides in Springfield with her husband.



Chris Chinn

Chinn, a fifth-generation farmer from Clarence, Missouri, has been the state's Department of Agriculture director since 2017. A passionate advocate for agriculture, Chinn leverages social media and public speaking to bridge the gap between farmers and consumers. She created the MORE Strategic Initiative to advance the state's number-one industry. Her leadership roles include chairing and serving on the boards of national agriculture organizations. She also contributes time and expertise to community and state groups, as well as helping to manage her family's farming operations in Shelby County.



Dr. Chajuana Trawick accepted the legacy award on behalf of Annie Malone.

Legacy Award: Annie Malone

Malone, born Aug. 9, 1869, in Metropolis, Illinois, was an entrepreneur, community leader and philanthropist. She left high school to focus on hairdressing. At 20, she created a shampoo and scalp treatment. By 1902, she developed a nondamaging hair straightener for African American women. She moved her business to St. Louis, expanding her product line and company under the name Poro. Despite racial barriers, she succeeded — mentoring Madam C.J. Walker (an entrepreneur, philanthropist and activist) and supporting Black women's education. Relocating to Chicago in 1930, Malone left a legacy with Poro beauty colleges in 30 cities. She died on May 10, 1957.

Thank you to the sponsors of this event!

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS MEET IN SPRING, SUMMER TO CHART FUTURE



The Foundation Board of Trustees at their spring meeting. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

The Missouri State University Foundation Board of Trustees convened April 25 for its spring meeting for all members.

The volunteer-based board governs the foundation. Alumni and friends of Missouri State who have demonstrated dedication or contributed to the university's development are eligible to become trustees. They advise the foundation in gift planning, seeking private support and investing private funds for university projects and programs.

Board members were invited to join Gov. Mike Parson at the Davis-Harrington Welcome

Center on campus for an address by the governor followed by a book signing and social.

Next, they toured the McQueary College of Health and Human Services and heard updates on the Alliance for Healthcare Education, a community partnership. They ate lunch at the Blair-Shannon dining hall and were joined by scholarship recipients. That was followed by an afternoon meeting. That evening, the Board of Trustees attended a private dinner at Flame.

On July 18, members gathered again for discussions and updates in Meyer Alumni Center. The morning kicked off with meetings

of the Governance Committee, followed by the Stewardship/Development Committee.

President Richard B. Williams joined the group for lunch in the Turner Hospitality Room. During the meal, the Educational Advisory Board presented benchmarking data that will be used to help the foundation with future planning and peer discussions.

After lunch, the Executive Committee met. The day concluded with a Long-Range Planning Committee meeting held in person and via Zoom for members across the country. ▽

MEET A TRUSTEE: RUSS GANT

Russ Gant has been heavily involved in the West Plains campus and is a new member of the Foundation Board of Trustees. Gant met his wife Laura their freshman year at St. Louis College of Pharmacy. They married in 1987, shortly after graduation. Both pharmacists, they landed jobs at Walmart in West Plains, Missouri, where they've built their lives. They opened Burton Creek Pharmacy and operated it for 30 years before selling it to CVS Pharmacy. Now the couple are registered SimAngus seedstock producers. Russ also co-owns Mega Motorsports, a power sports dealership located in West Plains. They have three children and three grandchildren.

Which West Plains academic programs are you most excited about?

Respiratory therapy/nursing has been huge for us. Elementary education has been very good. We have turned out a lot of teachers.

What is your favorite way to be involved with MSU?

Athletics. Not even a question. I have a soft spot for MSU-West Plains' basketball program.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

We love pickleball and hiking. We are old, but we love mountain biking.



What do you see as your role on the Board of Trustees?

To cultivate friendships that can affect the whole system. The first few years, I'm going to learn. I toured the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist program. That program is so important. Seeing the equipment, that is something for me to hang my hat on in fundraising. You can't get gifts from people if you don't believe in it and don't understand it.

I've learned a lot of things and I will hopefully learn a lot more to help move the Missouri State University Foundation along in positive ways. ▼



Board of Trustees members toured MSU health-care facilities. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Members of the Board of Trustees are some of the most exceptional supporters of Missouri State University. Trustees advise us in gift-planning, seeking private gifts and investing private funds given for university projects and programs.



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Nita Jane Ayres	Paula Hartsfield	David W. Osborne
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MORE ABOUT THE TRUSTEES:
MissouriStateFoundation.org/Trustees

Executive committee



Judy A. Breeding



Bonnalie O. Campbell



W. Brent Dunn

Executive director of the
Missouri State University
Foundation, ex-officio



Dr. Anson Elliott

Board of Governors, Missouri
State University, ex-officio



John D. Foster



Matthew A.
Harthcock



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Beverly Keltner

Chair elect



Mark McQueary

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Aaren Muex

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State University, ex-officio



Cindy Schull

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Dr. Richard
B. Williams

President, Missouri State
University, ex-officio



Jennifer Weter

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Chair

Committee chairs



AUDIT COMMITTEE

Judy A. Breeding



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Dan D. Cobb



INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Diane L. Jenkins



DEVELOPMENT /
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Beverly Keltner



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

James H. Wilson

FACES OF THE FOUNDATION

JENNIFER WETER

**Executive assistant to the vice president;
building manager, Meyer Alumni Center;
secretary to the Foundation**

Hometown

Ozark, Missouri, but has lived in Springfield for almost 25 years

Career

Started working full time at Missouri State University in 2003 as pharmacy coordinator at Magers Health and Wellness (then named Taylor Health and Wellness). Started her new role in October 2023.



What does a typical day look like for you?

There really hasn't been a typical day, and that's what I like about this role — every day has a new challenge. I'm meeting new people all the time, learning new things. Before this role, I really didn't realize how much goes on in the Missouri State University Foundation. There's always something new happening, and so far I've loved every minute of it.

You have previous experience working on campus — tell us about that.

After 20 years in health care, I decided it was time for a change. I started my new position before Cindy Busby (former executive assistant to the vice president) retired in December so I could learn as much as I could from her in those three short months. I think everybody across campus knows Cindy. She has a wealth of knowledge about all parts of campus, but especially about advancement. I still ask her questions!

What is your favorite part about your career move and your new work space?

All the new people I've met. I have enjoyed getting to know our trustees — they're

fabulous people. The fact that they donate their time and really want to make an impact with students says a lot.

It's been interesting being downtown because it is a different energy down here, but it will be nice to be back in the commotion of campus (with the building of the new University Advancement Center). It's a great environment just to be able to walk out the door and see all the students, especially when they have concerts and things on the North Mall.

Tell us about your family — any fellow Bears?

My husband Jason and I just celebrated our 19th wedding anniversary. Our daughter, Reese, is a student at Greenwood Laboratory School on campus. She's been a student there since kindergarten. She'll be a sophomore in the fall, so we've been a part of the campus as a family for a long time, not only as Bears, but also Blue Jays.

We also have two boxer puppies, Hilo and Kona. They have the strongest personalities. They're like little humans.

My mom was a Bear in the early '70s.

I remember her telling me that former Missouri Gov. John Ashcroft was her favorite professor. My sister also got her bachelor's degree from the College of Business here.

How do you spend time away from work?

My daughter started playing soccer when she was 3, so we spend a lot of time watching her play and supporting her dream.

We love to travel. I prefer the beach over the mountains, but I'll go anywhere. We try to incorporate travel with soccer tournaments.

I also like sports photography. I spend a lot of time taking photos of soccer games and other sports like basketball.

What do you want Missouri State supporters to know?

There are an abundance of opportunities on campus to get involved and influence the lives of our students. Everybody can play a role.

I started my career helping students learn how to navigate health care, but now I'm enjoying helping our alumni and supporters stay connected and create a lasting impact for current and future students. ▾

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nation pulling together!



Mark your calendar now to participate or be an ambassador next year!

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