

# ADVANCEMENTS

SPRING 2025



## Building a better **LAND OF THE BEARS**

The community came together for a groundbreaking for the Clifton M. Smart III University Advancement Center and a demolition ceremony for the Judith Enyeart Reynolds Performing Arts Complex. These improvements and more are made possible by your support!

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## BRENT'S CORNER

### *The groundbreaking of the Clifton M. Smart III University Advancement Center:*

# A NEW ERA FOR MISSOURI STATE



**It's no fooling: April 1 was "Day One" for University Advancement.**

The groundbreaking for the Clifton M. Smart III University Advancement Center signified the first day of construction on our future home. The first day we can see progress on our new campus "front door." The first day of a new era.

At the site, there were giant yellow excavators and bulldozers.

A line of shovels and maroon hard hats waited for the first ceremonial turn of earth (a trough of white sand created by our own construction, design and project management students).

Boomer, the spirit squad and Bearmania band members provided energy and excitement.

For me, it was the culmination of a decades-long dream. I can't wait to be housed and work on campus with the entire University Advancement team.

It's even more exciting because this dream is only coming true because generous supporters like you chose to invest in the future of Missouri State.

#### **What will be in the center; how you can use it**

The University Advancement Center will be directly across the street from the Davis-Harrington Welcome Center, at the corner of Bear Boulevard and National Avenue.

A student's journey starts at the Welcome Center when they first visit or tour campus.

After they graduate, they have a home forever at the University Advancement Center.

Students and supporters will have a full-circle experience in these buildings, where they can truly learn what it means to be a Bear for life.

When the center is finished in fall 2026, we will be waiting for your visit — right at MSU's front door.

You'll be able to explore indoor and outdoor features, including an event center, conference rooms, an executive boardroom, a living room, a traditions hall and an outdoor courtyard.

This will be a place where you can connect and collaborate, and celebrate all things Missouri State!

There will be no doubt this place is full of MSU pride, from the Bear head chandelier to the maroon Steinway piano.

#### **Thank you, thank you, thank you to all**

The crowd at the groundbreaking included alumni, students, friends and supporters.

We announced new naming gifts for the center, which you can read about later in this issue.

This center will play a major role in the university's future. It will be the heart of our efforts to engage alumni, strengthen partnerships and secure the university's future through philanthropy.

It is not just about building a new structure — it is about creating a lasting foundation for generations of Bears to come.

Your generosity turned this vision into a reality. We can't thank you enough.

GO BEARS!

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

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



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## THE STORY BEHIND A GIFT



# Self-made couple creates fund to help international students

WRITTEN BY TAYLOR LADD | PHOTOS BY KEVIN WHITE

**When Alfonso Corona '02 and Tom Choate decided to support students, they thought back to their own college days.**

Both of them are business leaders in Springfield now — Choate is a managing director for a banking technology organization, and Corona is an information technology professional in the insurance industry — but they faced obstacles.

“We are self-made. We’ve had a little bit of luck along the way, but we’ve worked our tails off,” Choate said. Now, the couple who has been together 19 years wants “to give back where and while we can.”

## **CORONA, AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT, EARNED MSU AID**

Corona grew up in Mexico, where he received a bachelor's degree. When he was ready to continue his education, he came to Springfield to earn an MBA at Missouri State.

But as an international student, Corona did not have access to federal financial aid. That didn't stop him.

“I have great gratitude for Missouri State because they accepted me and gave me the opportunity to come here,” Corona said. “I had a graduate assistantship that helped me achieve the dream I had to go to another country and get my degree.”

## **“WE BOTH PAID FOR COLLEGE” AND SEE VALUE IN HELP**

Choate grew up in the Springfield area and started his college education at Missouri State.

However, it just wasn't the right time for him to pursue higher education. After his freshman year, he left. He would later finish his degree at another university. He next earned a master's degree in Kansas.

“We both paid for college ourselves. Neither of our families were in a situation where they could help us financially,” Choate said. “It would've been nice back when we were in college to have that little extra push.”

The pair have an abiding love for Missouri State and have stayed connected over the years. Choate volunteered as an assistant softball coach from 2000-04. They are both avid Bears athletics fans and have been Lady Bears season ticket holders for more than 20 years.

Outside of work and MSU, they have adopted dogs. They support pet-rescue groups like Rescue One as well as low-cost spay-neuter clinic Springfield Animal Advocacy Foundation.

## **ESTATE GIFT WILL EVENTUALLY ASSIST GLOBAL BEARS**

Because Corona couldn't access federal aid, he and Choate were inspired to create a scholarship to support international students in similar situations. They set up an estate gift for an endowed fund.



**Tom Choate (left) and Alfonso Corona '02** in MSU's Morris Center, the home of some international programs.

Choate points out some of the conflicts students may face: What if they have a test to study for, but also worry about paying their rent?

“You cannot concentrate. You can't put all your energy into school if you're worried about the primal needs you have — shelter and food,” Corona said.

Choate and Corona wanted to leave a legacy.

“We typically help a lot of dog rescues, so we thought, ‘We probably need to help people at some point,’” Choate said. “This was a good opportunity to do that.”

## **THEY ALSO BUILD COMMUNITY FOR CURRENT STUDENTS**

Their scholarship is not their only involvement.

They joined MSU's International Friends Program, which pairs students from around the globe with local hosts. They meet with their student every few weeks to get dinner, talk about life and offer career support. It's a one-semester commitment, but often leads to lasting friendships.

“It's about helping somebody, just having a conversation,” Choate said.

They hope their efforts lead to a chain reaction.

“It's so important to help the people who have the desire to better themselves,” Corona said. “Somebody finishing their goal and following the steps we took would be a great legacy for me.” ▽

# Scholarship SIGNALS appreciation for MSU

**Richard “Hank” Scrivener ’71, the founder of Signal food stores and gas stations, established an endowed scholarship for business students.**

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JAMI JORDAN

**Jami Jordan, president of Scrivener Oil Company, remembers the day her dad started brainstorming ideas for his first gas station.**

It was 1984, and Richard “Hank” Scrivener ’71 decided it should be at a stoplight so it would be easier for customers to stop or turn in. He started sketching stoplights and created the company’s logo: a ball that is half red and half yellow.

That was more than 40 years ago. Today, the locally owned company has 12 Signal stations around the Ozarks. Scrivener Oil Company is the stores’ parent company.

## **GIVING BACK TO STUDENTS FROM THE TOWNS WHERE THEY BUILT THEIR BUSINESSES**

Scrivener and his daughter recently established the Richard H. Scrivener Endowed Scholarship in the College of Business, from which Hank graduated.

It’s for students who graduated from Missouri school districts in Mansfield, Ava, Mountain View, Buffalo, Camdenton, Seymour, Ozark or Nixa. That’s because these communities have a Signal store, said Jordan. She spoke on her father’s behalf about the scholarship, as his health has been declining.

“We wanted to give back to those towns that have given us so much — with not only their customers, but also their

employees. We have the most amazing employees,” she said.

Missouri State played an important role in their lives. Jordan was raised going to Homecoming, football games and even fraternity events with her dad. She is also a Bear, earning her MBA in 2006.

For the past seven or eight years, they batted around the idea of starting a scholarship.

“It was, ‘Yeah, we’re going to do that some day.’ One day, I thought: You know what? My dad is still here. It’s a great time to do it. I don’t want it to be something in his legacy. I want him to be here to see it,” Jordan said. “He’s really excited about it.”

She describes her father as having grit, courage and an entrepreneurial spirit.

## **FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT FOUND HIS CAREER, WIFE, LIFELONG FRIENDS WHILE ON CAMPUS**

Scrivener grew up in Lebanon, Missouri, which was a small town in the 1960s.

He was the first in his immediate family to go to college, inspired by a cousin. Scrivener chose a marketing major due to its range of career opportunities. One of his favorite professors



**Jami Jordan and her dad Richard Scrivener** at a grand opening celebration for a new Springfield store in 1984.



**Jami Jordan and her dad Richard Scrivener** at the Scrivener Oil Company’s holiday party in 2023.

was John Ashcroft, who eventually became the U.S. Attorney General.

On campus, Scrivener joined Sigma Phi Epsilon. He said his fraternity helped him get through MSU because his family couldn't give him advice about college, but his fraternity brothers could. To this day, they stay in touch.

He also met his future wife Barbara on campus. She was an education major and went on to earn her master's degree from Missouri State.

After graduation, they moved to Chicago. She taught school and he worked for Standard Oil.

### **PITCHING HIS BRIEFCASE IN A RIVER: "I'M GOING BACK TO SPRINGFIELD" — FOR HARD WORK FOLLOWED BY SUCCESS**

Scrivener worked at Standard Oil for a few years, learning all he could absorb.

But not long after Jami was born in 1976, he decided the Windy City was not where he wanted to raise a family. Scrivener threw his briefcase in the Chicago River and declared: "I am going back to Springfield."

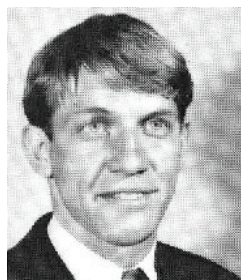
In the Ozarks, he first worked with Madden Oil company. Next, he decided to start his own company.

The first Signal opened in Ava. Scrivener stocked the shelves. Mowed the lawn. Shoveled the snow. And did it all while commuting to Springfield.

It was tedious work, but he was committed.

Then, he opened a Signal in Mansfield. Another followed in Nixa. Locations were carefully selected. It was about quality over quantity for the company.

"We add them because they fit our business scope and



**Richard Scrivener** in the 1968 Ozarko.

model, and we feel we can make that location successful," Jordan said.

Scrivener then decided he wanted to bring in his own fuel, so he bought a transport oil truck.

"He got it because someone told him he could never do it. He said, 'I'll show you,'" Jordan said. "Now we operate three transport trucks, 24 hours a day with five drivers."

### **DAUGHTER, ALSO AN ALUM, SAYS COMPANY ISN'T DONE EXPANDING ACROSS THE OZARKS**

In 2005, Scrivener convinced his daughter to move from Dallas to Springfield so she could learn the basics of Scrivener Oil.

Jordan assumed a variety of roles, from working the stores to hiring and establishing their first website. Part of their deal was she'd pursue her MBA at Missouri State if she moved back. After graduating, Jordan got married and moved to South Carolina. Then in 2008, her dad called and asked her to come back and take over the company's burgeoning food service.

"I told him, 'No, I don't know anything about food service.' But long story short, I came back and got the food service started, and now we have three Subways, two Hank's Chicken and one Papa John's Pizza," she said.

The company started building travel centers, which were significantly larger than a traditional gas station. Those include diesel fueling stations, a restaurant, groceries and more.

They are opening another Signal in Ozark this year.

From a little operation in Ava, they have grown significantly. Today, they have 170 employees across their locations.

This scholarship is a way to give back to the university and communities he loves, Jordan said.

"He gives so much credit to Missouri State. He thinks so much of the college and what it has done for him, in the contacts and friends that he's made." ▼



**Richard Scrivener** drove in the 1988 Sucker Days parade to promote the Signal location in Nixa.

# Building a better LAND OF THE BEARS

There have been so many recent announcements for campus improvements, it can be hard to keep track of them all. Thanks to your generous donations, nearly every corner of campus is seeing improvements — from minor facelifts to major upgrades.



**Heavy equipment and light-hearted Bears** are both ready for construction to begin. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

# Springfield campus



**Many supporters and friends** were invited to the Advancement Center groundbreaking. Among them were donors who have provided naming gifts for areas of the center. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

## CLIFTON M. SMART III UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT CENTER

The April 1 groundbreaking for the university's new advancement center brought together alumni, friends and faculty and staff members.

It was also former Missouri State President Clif Smart's first official visit to campus since his retirement nine months prior. A seven-figure gift from an anonymous donor named the building in Smart's honor in spring 2024.

"This truly is the greatest thing anyone has ever done for me in my life," Smart said. "I'm amazed that many friends have made other major gifts to this project since we made the announcement of the advancement center about a year ago. Thank you all for your generosity."

The center is expected to open in fall 2026. So far, naming gifts announced for the facility include:

- **Kenneth E. and Jane A. Meyer Foundation**, for the Kenneth E. Meyer Event Center
- **Mary and Jeff Schrag**, for the Mary and Jeff Schrag Courtyard
- **Matthew and Patricia Harthcock**, for the Dr. Matthew '77 and Patricia Harthcock Reception Hall and the Dr. Matthew '77 and Patricia Harthcock BearMobile
- **Beverly Miller Keltner**, for the Jack Miller and Beverly Miller Keltner Family Conference Room
- **Mike and Judy Breeding**, for the Mike and Judy Breeding Conference Room
- **John Foster**, for the John Foster Patio and Courtyard
- **Carol, Andy and Dana Kuntz**, for the Kuntz Family Foyer
- **Mike and Judy Breeding**, for the Mike and Judy Breeding Conference Room
- **Billy and Carolin Hixon**
- **Rich and Cindy Miller**, for the Rich and Cindy Miller Guest Information Suite
- **Dan Cobb**, for the Dan Cobb North Welcome Entrance

- **Bradley Thomas**, for the Bradley Thomas South Welcome Entrance
- **Richard and Teresa Ollis**, for the Richard and Teresa Ollis Executive Patio
- **Greg and Cheryl Beck**, for the Gregory A. and Cheryl J. Beck Catering and Staging Area
- **Karen Horny**, for the Teri Trickey Catering Kitchen
- **Greg and Jennifer Spears**, for the Spears Family Sitting Area
- **Scott Carter in memory of his parents**, for the Carol R. and A. Bruce Carter Reception Area
- **Anthony and Danielle Biggers**, for the Anthony and Danielle Biggers Sitting Area
- **Mark and Tina Stillwell**, for the Mark and Tina Stillwell Assistant Vice President for Development and Strategy Office
- **Earnest and Aaren Muex**, for the Earnest and Aaren '02 Muex Executive Director of Engagement and Alumni Relations Office
- **Jeffrey and Amelia Counts**, for an Advancement office
- **Jim Wilson**, for the Jim Wilson Break Room
- **Anonymous**, for an Advancement office



**University leaders and representatives** from the Foundation Board of Trustees and Alumni Association join Clif Smart for a ceremonial turning of the earth. PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

## JUDITH ENYEART REYNOLDS PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX

The plans for Missouri State's new "front porch" were announced in fall 2023. The project has since been officially named the Judith Enyeart Reynolds Performing Arts Complex.

It includes a new facility replacing the old Art Annex on Grand Street, renovations to Craig Hall and improvements to the surrounding outdoor areas

At a celebratory event Dec. 16, 2024, members of the university community were welcomed to the Art Annex to kick off the renovations with the swing of a sledgehammer. Attendees fondly exchanged memories made in the building and shared excitement over the new potential for the space.

The complex is expected to be complete by fall 2026.

Don't worry, Tent Theatre fans — the show will go on throughout the renovations!



**President Dr. Richard B. Williams** speaks to the crowd at the demolition kick-off ceremony.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE



**Adonis Negron**, a student who is a singer and performer, smashes a hole into the annex wall. Bears in the arts will benefit from the new spaces. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

## ROY BLUNT HALL

The two-phase project to update facilities for the College of Natural and Applied Sciences is on track.

Upgrades include a 66,500-square-foot addition and updates to the existing building, previously known as Temple Hall. The building's original namesake, Allen Temple, will be honored in the new space's atrium.

Some safety fencing around the building has come down and new windows have already made a difference to the building's appearance

The project is expected to be complete before the fall 2026 semester.



**Bears studying in the sciences** will have state-of-the-art facilities when Blunt Hall additions and upgrades are done.

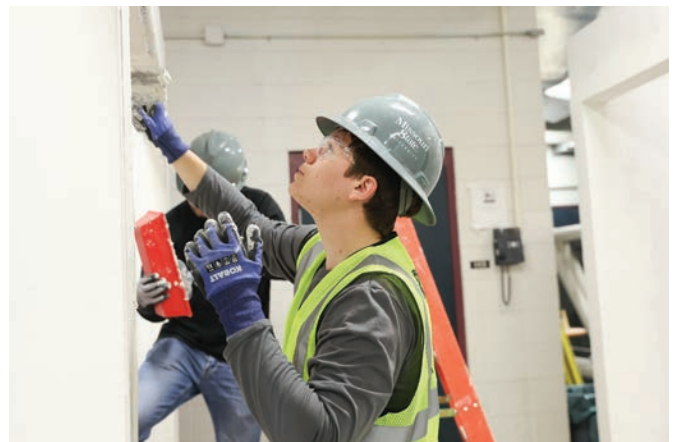
PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

## KEMPER HALL

A renovation to Kemper Hall focused on the needs of the School of Construction, Design and Project Management.

Upgrades included a 10,000-square-foot addition and renovations to the northwest corner of Kemper Hall. New customizable colored lighting illuminates the exterior of the building.

This project was completed in December 2024.



**Students in the** School of Construction, Design and Project Management get hands-on experience in Kemper Hall.

PHOTO BY RYLEE WILLIAMS

## SMALL UPDATES MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Even projects with a smaller footprint play an important part on our campuses. Recent examples include:

- A modified data center in Cheek Hall
- A new Agriculture Innovation Hub at Darr Agriculture Center
- Classroom upgrades to Greenwood Laboratory School
- Renovations to King Street Annex
- Sidewalk improvements across the Springfield campus



## West Plains campus

### WULFF-RISNER AGRICULTURE SCIENCE CENTER

In 2024, Dr. Linda Wulff-Risner, professor of agriculture at Missouri State University-West Plains, donated her 40-acre farm to the university. It will now serve as a location for all applied learning classes in the field of agriculture.

The property is located just south of West Plains and includes two stables, a tack room, hay barn, storage, pond, offices, kennel areas and a 7,200-square-foot riding arena.

The space will support, enhance and grow West Plains' plant and animal science programs. Currently, the university offers two associate degrees and seven certificate programs in agriculture-related fields. Other programs are in the planning stages.

It is also opening the doors for a new opportunity — a rodeo team. The co-ed team competes in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association.



**Grizzlies and their horses** have a new space at the Wulff-Risner Agriculture Science Center. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

### AUTISM SUPPORT CENTER

For two years, West Plains' T.J. Swift House ASCEND program (Autism Support Can Empower New Directions) has been housed on campus. Now, it has a new building: The Neurodiversity and Autism Center.

Everything has been tailored to the needs of autistic individuals, including paint, flooring, soundproofing and lighting. The materials used dampen noise. Instead of overhead fluorescent lighting, the building uses natural light, LED, adjustable and indirect lighting. People on the spectrum often don't like wide open spaces, so there are smaller breakout rooms with lower ceilings.

There is flexible seating in the classroom and many adaptable features. Instead of a typical desk, there are tables with dry erasers on the top.

The facility also provides classroom space for students in degree programs with an emphasis on neurodiversity support.

The project was finished in January. ▼



**The Neurodiversity and Autism Center** was dedicated on April 17, 2025. PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

# Galas held in two cities in 2024

## An uptown hoedown

Alumni and friends in Springfield saddled up Oct. 4 for the Maroon Saloon. Guests donned hats and boots for poker, dinner, drinks and a barn dance with the band Luce Cannons.



# MaroonNation Ball CASINO NIGHT

## A glittering get-together



Alumni and friends placed their bets Nov. 2 at a vintage Las Vegas casino night in St. Louis. Attendees tried their luck at games and continued the party with dinner, dancing and entertainment straight from the Vegas strip.



PHOTOS BY  
KEVIN WHITE



## A great time for a great cause:

Student scholarship recipients are the reason for the revelry

“My favorite part about Missouri State is the close relationships I have. It has blown my mind how close and supportive the students and staff are. I’ve just been amazed and found a lot of comfort in that. It has been an astronomical blessing.”

— **Riley Laub**, physician assistant studies



“I would not be where I am today if it were not for the support of my family, friends, coaches and teammates. Thank you for the constant love and lessons that have molded me and brought me into wonderful opportunities such as this.”

— **Olivia Malinee**, biology, minor in chemistry



“It can be a thankless job to donate to students you may never get to meet. But behind the scenes, it helps a lot. A lot of students who come to Missouri State pay for it themselves; they work and go to school full time like I do. It takes a lot of stress off to not have the financial burden, so I want to say thank you.”

— **Carlos Abrams**, psychology, minor in human resources



“I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who made this opportunity possible; I truly cannot thank you enough. This scholarship is extremely helpful and has given me the ability to focus more on my studies and the large-scale events I plan for fellow students on the Missouri State campus!”

— **Chase Cappello**, communication and event planning



# Thank you for supporting these events!

## SPRINGFIELD

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### Saloon sponsor



### University sponsors



### Maroon and White sponsors



## ST. LOUIS

### Presenting sponsor



### Casino floor sponsor



### Cocktail reception sponsor



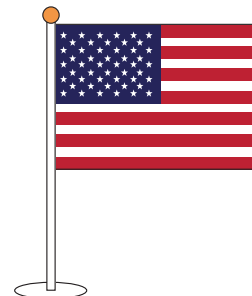
### Maroon and White sponsors



### University sponsors



# Scholarships that salute veterans



**These Bears served their country. Now, they benefit from foundation scholarships established by generous donors.**

WRITTEN BY JULIANA GOODWIN | MOST PHOTOS SUBMITTED

**When Chase Boggs graduates, he will do so debt-free.**

Although the former Marine was eligible for the G.I. Bill, he's saving that aid for law school.

His education was instead funded by savings, his job on his family farm — and a generous donor.

Boggs received the Dr. John S. Bowdidge Scholarship from the Missouri State University Foundation.

Bowdidge was a veteran who also taught in the College of Business from 1975-2009.

"Being able to move to the next chapter in life and pursue a law degree and career without the hovering stress of student loans is a tremendous blessing," Boggs said.

Missouri State University has long been recognized as a veteran-friendly institution.

Private gifts from donors just for veterans are an important part of how we support and encourage further education.

Here are two stories of veterans who have received assistance made possible by donors who established gifts with the Missouri State University Foundation.



**Dr. John S. Bowdidge**  
in the 1989 Ozarko.



**A panel of veteran students** shared their experiences with MSU trustees and alumni on Oct. 17, 2024.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

# Chase Boggs:

## From Bear to Marine, and back to Bear

Chase Boggs now works as a farmhand in Walnut Grove and commutes to Springfield for classes. He is a college senior and a finance major — a choice inspired by his time in the military.

### FINANCE MAJOR ONCE ADVISED YOUNG SERVICE MEMBERS

Boggs saw many members of his platoon and team make poor financial decisions.

“I also saw people actively seeking financial guidance, as most of these young men were 18- and 19-year-old kids with little to no independent experience in life,” Boggs said.

He became the go-to Marine for financial assistance. He advised them on smart investments, savings, creating retirement accounts or deciding what their retirement contribution should be.

His own financial planner eventually encouraged him to pursue the field.

Boggs had originally enrolled in Missouri State in 2017-18, then enlisted in the military. He was an infantry rifleman stationed in Washington, D.C.

During his service, he conducted 222 funerals at Arlington National Cemetery as a member of the Firing Party, conducting what most people know as a 21-gun salute.

He also participated in ceremonies at the White House and the Pentagon.

As a corporal, he led a squad of 12 Marines while conducting infantry operations.



**Chase Boggs and his great-uncle Billy Hayter** at his graduation from boot camp. Boggs lives on his family farm.

He was a ceremonial drill instructor and eventually the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Ceremonial Drill School. There, he led a team of three instructors whose mission was to train upwards of 40 Marines at a time.

After his enlistment ended, Boggs worked in Congress as a staffer for four months before he returned to Missouri.

*Chase Boggs, continued on page 20*



**Chase Boggs served as a rifleman** at the Marine Corps War Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.



**Chase Boggs** on his land with his great-uncle Billy Hayter. The sign proclaims it a Missouri Century Farm, which means it has been in the same family for 100 years or more. Boggs plans to use his MSU education to become an agricultural estate planning attorney.

*Chase Boggs, continued from page 19*

### **BOGGS PLANS TO USE HIS EDUCATION TO HELP FAMILIES LIKE HIS KEEP THEIR FARMS**

Boggs lives in a house hand-built by his great-grandfather during the Great Depression. This land has been in his family since 1924.

On campus, Boggs is also vice president of the Missouri State University Cattlemen's Association.

Boggs plans to become an agricultural estate planning attorney. His goal is to help keep family farms in the family "and operating as food-producing assets on which families will make generational memories instead of being sold off to corporations or subdivided for development like so many of them are."

When he graduates from Missouri State, he plans to go to law school and use his G.I. Bill to pay for it.

He was humbled and struck by the fact that someone would establish a scholarship to assist a stranger: "Their generosity will not be forgotten."



**Chase Boggs** on top of a mountain range in Camp Pendleton, California. He earned the Dr. John S. Bowdidge Scholarship at Missouri State.

# Ian Campbell:

## Combat medic now in doctoral program

Ian Campbell is a critical-care registered nurse who served as a combat medic in the U.S. Army.

### MSU SCHOLARSHIP SHOWS “PEOPLE TRULY CARE”

Campbell was raised on a small farm in Aurora, Missouri, and his family has deep roots in the military.

“I knew coming out of high school that I wanted to serve like those before me,” he said.

Campbell was stationed in Afghanistan, Africa and Central America. Seeing wounded soldiers led him to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist, or CRNA.

When he enrolled in the Doctorate of Nurse Anesthesia Practice program at Missouri State, Campbell received the John and Fredna Mahaffey Operation Promise scholarship.

It was established for veterans. John Mahaffey served in the U.S. Army from 1944-46 and spent his life as a champion for soldiers. He was appointed as Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army in 1974 and served under five presidents.

Mahaffey established the Fort Leonard Wood chapter of the Wounded Warrior Fund and received two lifetime achievement awards from the Association of the U.S. Army and Fort Leonard Wood.

“Obtaining the John and Fredna Mahaffey scholarship reaffirms that people truly care about the sacrifices me and my family have made during 14 years in service,” Campbell said.



**John and Fredna Mahaffey** in an MSU newsletter from 2008.

### HE MET MSU ALUMNI IN THE FIELD BEFORE COMING HERE

Campbell has performed combat operations, humanitarian operations and host-nation training.

During his time in Afghanistan with a surgical team, he worked closely with certified registered nurse anesthetists. They inspired him as they provided life-saving care to traumatically injured soldiers in an austere environment.

“It was my time with them that highlighted the capabilities, professionalism and expertise that CRNA providers bring to medicine,” Campbell said.

“I was motivated by their ability to practice anesthesia in such high stakes, high stress and hostile environments.”

Several CRNAs and trauma surgeons with whom he served wrote him letters of recommendation and encouraged him to apply.

Campbell chose Missouri State because he was aware of its excellent reputation: Some of the CRNAs with whom he served were alumni who spoke highly of the program.

The program is demanding, and there is no time to work outside of school, so the scholarship helps him fill in financial holes.

“This will help in numerous ways to offset the cost of education and relieve strain from a tight budget,” Campbell said. “Ultimately, the scholarship will help me reach my educational goal of becoming a nurse anesthetist — a career that will allow me the ability to care for my community and my loved ones. I am truly honored to receive this scholarship.”



**Ian Campbell** received the John and Fredna Mahaffey Operation Promise scholarship.

GIVING DAY 2025

# We're celebrating our **BEAR ERA!**



**In just 36 hours, your generosity helped strengthen Missouri State University for years to come.**

Your donations go on to fuel dreams. You have created a better future for fellow Bears and Grizzlies in so many ways.

Thank you to all of our alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents and friends around the globe for coming together to shape Missouri State!

**\$674,873** raised from **2,252** donors

**“We did it! Your support means the world to us! We appreciate each of you. Thank you for sharing our message, contributing your hard-earned dollars, and following us on this Giving Day journey!”**

*Pride Band social media post*

**“Final thermometer check: \$900 raised! We are SO grateful for the generosity and support shown during Giving Day! Thanks to YOU, we raised \$900 to support our pro bono clinic — fueling patient care, student learning and real-world impact.”**

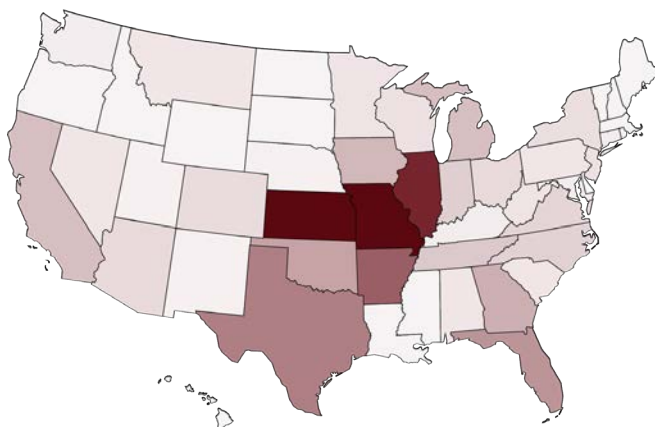
*Physical therapy department social media post*

**“Thanks to those who made sure my challenge was accepted. #PayUpMichelle Working in the international business programs office was never a job, but a blessing. I hope you’ll consider a gift so other students can have those valuable experiences, too.”**

*Michelle Hulett, staff emeritus, social media post*

## TOP STATES WITH GIVING DAY SUPPORTERS

1. **Missouri**
2. **Kansas**
3. **Illinois**
4. **Arkansas**
5. **Texas**
6. **Florida**
7. **Oklahoma**
8. **Georgia/Tennessee**
9. **Iowa/California**
10. **Michigan**



We received gifts from  
**48** states and **17** countries



There were **909**  
first-time donors to Missouri State

### YOU INVESTED IN ACADEMICS

Your support is already changing lives and setting the next generation on the path to success. Your gifts went to:

- The College of Business
- The College of Education
- The College of Natural and Applied Sciences
- The Darr College of Agriculture
- The Graduate College
- The McQueary College of Health and Human Services
- The Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities
- Libraries
- Missouri State-West Plains campus
- Greenwood Laboratory School



### YOU BACKED THE BEARS

You're helping provide our student-athletes with top-tier resources. Athletics gifts went to:

- Nutrition and wellness
- Travel
- Equipment and gear
- Facilities enhancements

### YOU ENHANCED THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Your support improves student life and connects Bears to the world through research, economic development and international programs. Gifts went to:

- Community and global partnerships/International Studies General Fund
- Student affairs (Bear Breaks trips, Bear Pantry, campus recreation, emergency funds for students in crisis, esports, residence life, veterans' services and much more)

### YOU HELPED THE COMMUNITY THRIVE

MSU educates, inspires and entertains our region. Your gifts went to:

- Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts
- Ozarks Public Television and KSMU radio

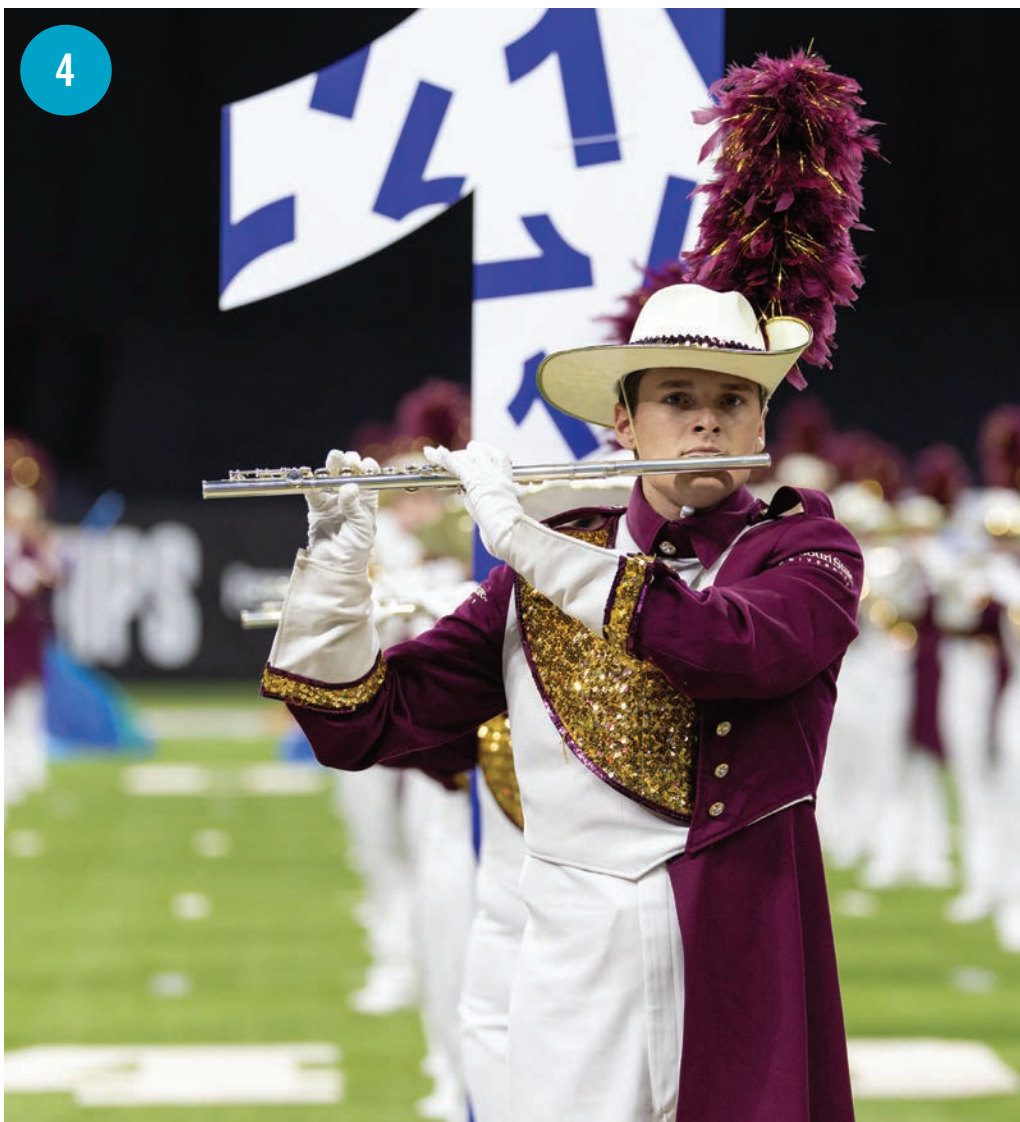
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You can learn more about 2025 results, make a gift and start your plans to be a Giving Day Ambassador and/or create a match or challenge gift for 2026.

 [GivingDay.MissouriState.edu](https://GivingDay.MissouriState.edu)



## SIGHTS AND SCENES: FALL AND WINTER 2024-25





**1. Bears got into the MSU spirit**

during the New Student Convocation, held Aug. 18.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

**2. Brooke Shields**, actress, model, author and entrepreneur, was the keynote speaker Sept. 24 at the 2024 Public Affairs Conference. The event was made possible by the Missouri State Foundation with support from KY3.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

**3. The Bears rolled** to a 46-21 win over the Indiana State Sycamores at the Oct. 19 Homecoming football game.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

**4. The Pride Marching Band** was one of just a few college bands invited to exhibit in November at the Bands of America Grand Nationals event in Indianapolis.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

**5. Missouri State is among just 216 institutions** nationwide that will join a new Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education category: "Research Colleges and Universities." Last year, MSU topped its research record for the second straight year, receiving \$63.2 million in external funding.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

**6. The 2024 Fall Dance Concert** was held in early November.

PHOTO BY ARDEN DICKSON

**7. The women's soccer team** were the Missouri Valley Conference champs. Here, they celebrated Nov. 7 after their win in the first round.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

**8. Many students became alumni** Dec. 17 at the fall commencement.

PHOTO BY JESSE SCHEVE

**9. Students enjoyed a snow day** during a Jan. 10 blizzard.

PHOTO BY KEVIN WHITE

## LIGHTNING ROUND

# Tamia Schiele

## President of Student Government Association (student body president)

**Grew up in:** Raymore, Missouri

**Education:** Senior majoring in political science with a minor in English

**Plans for post-grad life:** “I’m hoping to get my master’s here. I’ll be going into the Master of International Affairs program.”

**Family:** One sister, who lives in Texas, and a brother who also attends Missouri State. “I live with my mom when I go back home. I really love my family.”



### What do you do for Missouri State?

Student body president is really being the face of what students want at the university and the representative of what they are thinking. I sit on a lot of different committees and councils. Being Student Government Association president also means overseeing budgets. It's looking through proposals for student initiative funds and making sure they feel guided in that process.

### Favorite aspect of your job?

Getting to sit down with students and hearing their perspectives. Even if it takes the whole semester to get an issue resolved for them, seeing how happy they are when it is resolved makes me happy.

### Favorite way to relax outside of class?

I love to watch movies. I have a season pass at the Alamo theatre in town. My mom and I are going to see the new “Wicked” movie this weekend, so I’m really excited for that.

### Your favorite place to hang out on or around campus?

On campus, Glass Hall. Off campus, I really like Kingdom Coffee.

### Go-to coffee shop order?

An iced latte of some sort with oat milk.

### Favorite place to eat in Springfield?

Kai After Dark.

### When you're in an intense study session, are you team music or no music?

I have to listen to music if I’m doing work. I really like Coin; it’s one of my favorite bands.

### Fun fact about yourself:

I have a few: I’m vegetarian. I was born a month and a half early. My cheerleading team in high school won our state championship — I got a ring from it. I danced competitively for 13 years.

### Describe your time at Missouri State in three words.

Humility, challenge, growth.

### Has there been a class that you have especially loved?

American foreign policy. It has made me think of the behaviors of world leaders.

### Favorite Missouri State event?

Bear Bash. This year I was able to go on the roof of the PSU to see all the people at the event. It’s really cool to have all your friends in one place.

### What would you tell your freshman self?

When I was a freshman, I had a bad tendency to avoid things or point the finger at other people. In my leadership, I’ve grown to take accountability. Mistakes happen, but the way you approach things after making a mistake is what matters more. You must be honest and clear about the mistake that you made. Take it head-on.

### What is your goal after MSU?

Potentially going to law school after getting my master’s here, or working in the government in some capacity.

**Fill in the blank. Missouri State is:** An opportunity for learning and growth. ▼

— Interview by Taylor Ladd

# Meet a Trustee: Marla Elliott

Though Marla Elliott '89 has called Dallas home for nearly three decades, a piece of her heart remains on the Missouri State campus.

Since joining the Board of Trustees in 2017, she has served as a co-chair for BearsWIN (Women's Impact Network) and established three scholarships.

Elliott grew up in Neosho, Missouri. In college, she earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and now has a Certified Public Accountant license. At MSU, she also met her husband Kevin '88, who is a partner at a Dallas private-equity firm.

## What made you want to join the Board of Trustees?

It is an opportunity to shape the future of a university that played a pivotal role in my life. The board has been supportive of BearsWIN, which is dear to my heart. It is rewarding to visit campus and have everyone cheering BearsWIN on to success.

## Why did you establish three scholarships?

As a scholarship recipient myself, I know first-hand the value of this assistance. It often can be the difference in completing a degree. My parents were self-employed, small business owners with limited financial resources. This was further complicated by the fact that I'm a twin, which meant double the tuition costs. Thanks to the scholarships, my parent's encouragement and a part-time job, I graduated without any debt.

About 10 years ago, Kevin and I had a desire to give back in a way that had a direct impact on students. We felt there was no tribute more fitting than establishing scholarships in our parents' names to honor the value they placed on education. We established the Dave and Arlette Elliott/Dave and Rose Heaser scholarships in the College of Business. More recently, we established the Elliott Family Scholarship at West Plains.

## What is new with BearsWIN?

BearsWIN (Women's Impact Network) is a network of advocates who address pressing needs of students. We recently established a membership component. It will provide opportunities for both men and women to be involved, and build infrastructure for the program to be self-sustaining. I'm excited to see the support for our three initiatives:



- **Mental wellness** (Springfield, West Plains campuses) — With 71% of students citing struggles with stress, anxiety and depression, this provides crucial financial assistance for those seeking counseling or psychiatric services.
- **Degree completion** — Assists students with financial support needed to finish their degree. The average grant is \$2,232.
- **Neurodiversity and mental wellness on the MSU-West Plains campus** — This includes support for students on the autism disorders spectrum.

As a student, my older sister struggled and found herself unable to register for her final semester because of a past-due balance. She withdrew from classes and never finished her degree. Had this program been in place, she would've been able to request the modest funds needed to register and finish. Her story is one of many where a small boost can make a big change in trajectory, which is why BearsWIN is so important.

## What are some of your favorite memories from MSU?

They revolve around friends who have stood the test of time, distance and life's many changes. No matter where we go, we have a common bond. Missouri State wasn't just where we earned our degrees — it's where we found our people, and that's something that stays with you forever. ▼

— Interview by Juliana Goodwin

**BEARSWIN** WOMEN'S  
IMPACT  
NETWORK  
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

Goal for BearsWIN:

**\$500,000**

by August 2026

Funds have assisted

**212 STUDENTS**

since June 2024

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**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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## FACES OF THE FOUNDATION

# Kerry Dickerson

**Senior director of athletics development**

**Hometown:** Blue Springs, Missouri

**Career:** Came to Missouri State in 2016. Previously worked as the assistant athletic director at the University of Northern Iowa for five years.



### What is your role with the Missouri State University Foundation?

I oversee athletic development, so that's The Bears Fund. Donations to The Bears Fund support our student-athletes through tuition, books, fees, housing and more. That's a big part of what we do. The other part of my role is anything that pertains to athletic fundraising.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

Meetings with donors, advancement staff or athletics staff throughout the day. During the year, there are campus or athletic events going on at night. It's nonstop, it's seven days a week, but we enjoy it. That's the beauty of it — you get to be a part of sporting events, and there's never a dull moment.

### What is your favorite part about working on the advancement team?

I love being a part of Missouri State and being a Bear. I feel lucky to tell our story to our donors and build relationships that help them feel good about what they're doing to directly support student-athletes. Engaging with our fans, our donors, our alums and friends and seeing how making an impact makes them feel makes me feel good. I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, and that's helping move Missouri State forward.

### How do you spend your time when you're not at work?

I enjoy being active, exercising, playing golf, visiting friends and family, or an occasional good book when time permits.

### Tell us about your family.

I have two sons — Mark, 14, and Luke, 10. I have family in the Kansas City area, so coming to work at Missouri State was a good opportunity. It felt a little bit like coming home.

### Any favorite sports to watch? Favorite teams?

That's hard. Obviously, the Kansas City Chiefs. It's hard not to love them after back-to-back Super Bowls and being from the area.

I played college basketball, so I enjoy watching that on TV and going to basketball events. But I enjoy all sporting events.

### Tell us why we should be so excited about the Bears moving to Conference USA.

The transition to Conference USA — it's bigger than the athletic department. We can be a national brand that people will recognize.

The first football game next year is in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, which is a venue that has hosted multiple Olympics.

I tell parents of prospective students: when your son or daughter graduates in four years, we hope this transition to Conference USA expands their footprint in the major cities we will be competing in athletically.

They will now recognize the name Missouri State. Their student's employment opportunities are going to expand.

This is huge for the institution moving forward, and it shows vision for the future.

*Kerry Dickerson, continued on page 31*

**Help create today's  
champions and  
tomorrow's leaders:**

**SUPPORT THE  
BEARS FUND!**



The Bears Fund is the fundraising program for all men's and women's athletics teams at Missouri State. Your contributions support student-athletes as they pursue excellence, both on the playing field and in the classroom.



**MissouriStateFoundation.org/BearsFund**

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*Kerry Dickerson, continued from page 30*

## How can people get involved with The Bears Fund?

You can donate directly. There are different giving levels, so any dollar amount helps. You become a Bears Fund member at \$50. You'll receive emails to stay aware of what's happening within athletics on campus.

## What do you want Missouri State supporters to know?

I'm thankful for their support, no matter the dollar amount. Buying tickets, supporting our student-athletes, making a donation — all of it has a great impact on Missouri State. ▼

— Interview by Taylor Ladd



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All the traditions, with new excitement:

Join us for our first  
**HOMECOMING**

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