What is your UMSL story?
I came here in August 1983 as an admissions counselor, not knowing a lot about UMSL or its mission and values. But over the years, as I moved from that first position to assistant director, then to associate director, I fell in love with the university. Everybody – from the faculty and staff to administration and students – cared about providing a quality education. They wanted to be here, and they were so welcoming. There is a real sense of family at UMSL.

Another university offered me the position of director of admissions, and I knew that if I wanted to advance in my career, I had to take it, even if it meant leaving UMSL. But even so, I knew I would find my way back - UMSL was in my heart and soul. I did eventually return as director of admissions and then later was asked to be interim vice provost for student affairs. I always wanted to be a dean of students, and while the permanent position became available sooner than I’d thought, it was an easy choice to throw my hat in the ring. After a national search, Chancellor Blanche Touhill offered me the job. I was in that position for almost 20 years, and in my opinion, it’s one of the best jobs on campus. It was a joy getting up every day and going into the office. You get to know students beyond the classroom. You get to know their stories.

What are you most excited about in this new position?
I’ve stayed in contact with a lot of my former students throughout the years, and I’m looking forward to reconnecting with more. I’ve witnessed countless happy-ending stories from alumni, which really reinforces my decision to pivot to this role. I believe that everyone at UMSL wants to help students find their places, find their “why.” So many of my former students have gone on to do great things. I’ve seen their names in the alumni newsletter, and I feel so proud of them. I love UMSL.

When you’re not working, what do you like to do?
My wife, Diane, and I spend a lot of time with our two Shih Tzus, reading and working in our garden – she’s the green thumb. I haul dirt and rock. I like to play golf, but somehow, my game has not gotten better with time. But I’m always carrying the UMSL banner: I’ve got UMSL gear for every occasion, including polos and a necktie!
For over 50 years, the UMSL Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award has recognized alumni whose work in their fields and roles in their communities goes above and beyond typical levels of excellence. Every year, a call for nominations is announced, and without fail, the committee receives an abundance of first-rate candidates. The honorees for 2020 are (from left) James Brennan, BSBA 1974; Terry Freerks, BA 1977, MEd 1979; Stanley Freerks, MBA 1992; Stephen Kolodziej, BA 1987, PhD 1992; and Elizabeth Petersen, BA 1980, elected vice chairman of the board of directors of Court Appointed Special Advocates of St. Louis.

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Welcomeing messy lil' future Tritons!

Did you recently welcome a new addition to your family? Let us congratulate you and introduce yourselves to your future Triton with an UMSL branded gift! Drop us a note at alumni@umsl.edu or connect with us on social media @UMSLAlumni.

The African American Alumni Chapter of the UMSL Alumni Association consistently demonstrates creativity in engaging alumni and students and commitment to its members. This year, two awards highlight its achievements in these areas.

In recognition of its efforts creating a myriad of engagement opportunities for alumni and current students, the university honored the beacon affinity group with the Chapter of the Year Award. Then, fundraising efforts for a memorial bench dedicated to the late Hubert H. Hoorman Jr.—Chancellor’s Council member, alumni and community leader—landed the group the Project of the Year Award. Chapter members (standing, from left) Doris Coleman, BSBA 1988; Debra Tollever-Nash, BS 2006; Mildred Simmons, BSBA 1978; Sharon R. Holbrooks, BSF 1996; Patricia Bäker, ME 2003; EDSP 2008; Lynnette Veal, BA 1974; (seated, from left) Linda Brown Reed, BA 1976; and Edward Scrupka, ME 2009, gathered by the bench, which was dedicated in Aug. 2019.

2010s

Candice Hall, BA 2010, joined Southern Illinois University Edwardsville as graduate program director and instructor for the college student personnel administration program.

Haley Kell, BFA 2010, joined FGM Architects as a senior interior designer focusing on pre-K-12 school and municipal design projects.

Carly Maddock Hussey, BA 2010, was promoted to digital marketing manager for Darden Restaurants.

Kendra Williams, BS 2010, was appointed director of admissions for St. Louis’ National Student Nurses’ Association.

Tamar Hodges, BSN 2011, was named membership chair of the Young Lawyers Division of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis. Tamar is an associate at Husch Blackwell’s health care practice.

Daniel Rosner, BSBA 2011, BSACC 2011, joined Amazon Web Services as an enterprise account executive.

Tasha Stevens, PhD 2012, was named vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Matthew Wood, BSN 2012, was named digital marketing manager at Measuress for Justice.

Jennifer Chinn, OD 2014, was named one of the 2020 Most Influential Women in Optical by Vision Monday.

Shawntelle Fisher, BS 2015, was named to the St. Louis Business Journal’s 2020 Most Influential Business Women. Shawntelle is the founder and chief executive officer of The Soulfish Ministries.

Matthew Freeman, MFA 2015, wrote “Ideas of Reference at Jesuit Hall,” published by Coffeetown Press.

1990s

Jane O’Shaughnessy, MEd 1977, on March 27, 2020

James Hager, MBA 1976, on May 29, 2020

Robert G. Taylor, BSBA 1973, on March 31, 2020

Larry M. Dwyer, BSBA 1972, on Dec. 22, 2019

John S. Pearman, BSBA 1971, on June 14, 2020

Robert W. Schmitt, BA 1969, on Feb. 10, 2020

Donna L. Gnagi, BSEd 1968, MEd 1981, on March 1, 2020

1980s

Charles Drain, BA 1982, on Jan. 5, 2020

Danny Stephens, MEd 1983, on April 21, 2020

Robert Dubuque, BSBA 1981, on Apr. 1, 2020

Larry M. Dwyer, BSBA 1972, on Dec. 22, 2019

James Hager, MBA 1976, on May 29, 2020

Fred Maclching, BSBE 1976, on July 7, 2020

Jane O’Shaughnessy, BSBE 1977, on March 27, 2020

John Meyers, BSBE 1978, on Aug. 25, 2019

Charles Drain, BA 1982, on Jan. 5, 2020

Denny Stephens, MEd 1983, on Apr. 21, 2020

Elaine Litwak, MBE 1984, on Jan. 15, 2020

Martha Panetti, BSEd 1984, on March 31, 2020

Charles Dieckhaus, BSBE 1974, on Aug. 6, 2020

James Hager, MBA 1976, on May 29, 2020

Fred Maclching, BSBE 1976, on July 7, 2020

Jane O’Shaughnessy, BSBE 1977, on March 27, 2020

John Meyers, BSBE 1978, on Aug. 25, 2019

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John Meyers, BSBE 1978, on Aug. 25, 2019
The 1963-1964 University of Missouri–St. Louis Cheerleaders were the first, even though there were Normandy Residence Cheerleaders the year before. We cheered for the Tiger Cubs basketball team. Here I am with the other members of the squad (from left): Linda, Vicki (me) and Judy, all in the back row. Then: Judy and Sandy in the front row. Sandy and I were from Riverview Gardens High School. Linda and the two Judys were from Normandy High School. We couldn’t choose a captain because there were more girls from Normandy than Riverview. I was the tallest, so I stood in the middle.

— Vicki Anagnos Diech, BSED 1968, EDI 1973, MED 1973

I wore UMSL tees and jeans/pajama pants almost every day, similar to my life now. This is me with my roommate Ya Xiao visiting the Arch.

— Laura Kessler, BA 2012

This summer, alumni and friends celebrated the Dog Days of Summer with a special giveaway designed to celebrate our furry companions, who are always with us offering their comfort and support when it’s needed most.

Photos of UMSL Pets at their goofiest, chilliest and most mischievous — lounging on inner tubes in pools, playing with their families and sleeping with their tongues out — peppered our social media. Every dog or cat was given its very own UMSL branded bandana and now wears it proudly. Want a bandana for your #UMSLPet? Shoot us an email, and we’ll make it happen: alumni@umsl.edu