Brekenridge joins Supreme Court
Judge’s appointment sets record for number of women on court

Missourians can celebrate a new record on the Missouri Supreme Court with the September appointment of Judge Patricia Breckenridge, which raises the number of women on the court to three.

Gov. Matt Blunt appointed Breckenridge to replace Judge Ronnie White – the first and only African-American to serve on the state Supreme Court - who resigned in July. Breckenridge is just the fourth woman to serve on the court.

All the women who have served on the Supreme Court are products of the nationally renowned Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan and served as appeals court judges before their elevation. The first was Judge Ann Covington, now retired, who spoke at Breckenridge’s investiture ceremony.

Covington applauded the appointment of the newest female member of the court, while Breckenridge recognized Covington as (Continued on page 3)

Walkers celebrate women’s leadership

More than 100 people took advantage of the opportunity to meet, mingle and celebrate women elected officials at the Sue Shear Institute’s first Women Walk Before they Run event on Sept. 29.

“It was a great celebration of women’s involvement in public policy and we are already planning next year’s walk in Clayton,” said Jane Klieve, Walk Committee co-chair and member of the Institute Advisory Board.

Webster Groves Mayor Gerry Welch also served as co-chair and hosted the event in Blackburn Park on a warm, sunny fall day.

Participants walked along the park’s pathways which were lined with dozens of colorful campaign signs.

“The idea was for participants to have an opportunity to meet and talk to women in public life in an informal setting,” said Institute Director Vivian Eveloff. “It was a very successful event.”

Plans are to hold the event annually in a municipality governed by a woman.

Serendipity Ice Cream of Webster Groves helped celebrate the occasion with “Women’s Leader-Chip Ice Cream.” Other event sponsors in-

(Continued on page 5)
NAMES IN THE NEWS

Dodwell joins Wildwood City Council
Katie Dodwell has been named to the Wildwood, Mo., City Council, replacing Jim Jennings who resigned. Dodwell will serve out the remainder of the term, which ends in April.

Simmons Appointed St. Louis Fire Department’s First Female Battalion Chief
Gail Simmons has been promoted to Battalion Chief for the St. Louis Fire Department, the first woman to hold the post. Simmons joined the department in 1987 and was the first female captain.

India, Argentina, elect Women Presidents
Following a global trend of increased women's leadership, India and Argentina have elected women presidents, firsts for both countries. Pratibha Patil won 65.82 percent of the votes cast by national lawmakers and state legislators in July, to become India’s first female president. More recently, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was elected President of Argentina in October. Patil began her political career in 1962 as a member of the state legislature. She served in the Indian Parliament and her most recent post was Governor of the northern state of Rajasthan. Fernandez de Kirchner was a prominent senator in the national legislature before succeeding her husband, Nester Kirchner, who resigned this year.

Watson-Wesley Coleman Named Clerk and Legal Counsel by St. Louis Board
The St. Louis Board of Aldermen has hired Denise Watson-Wesley Coleman to serve as clerk and legal counsel to the Board. Coleman was general counsel to a former comptroller and served as an aide to the late Senator J.B. “Jet” Banks.

Vincent Named Chief of Staff
Patricia E. Vincent has been named Chief of Staff by Governor Matt Blunt, making her the most senior member on his staff. Vincent has served as the Director of the Missouri Department of Revenue since 2005. Julie A. Allen, Director of the department’s customer services division has been named acting director.

Are you a woman in public life with news to share? Please e-mail dstock@umsl.edu or fax 314.516.6621.

Women leaders talk about what it takes

The Institute co-sponsored a “Women and Leadership Forum” with Park University on Friday, Nov. 9. Former Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes and Park University President Beverley Byers-Pevitts talked with moderator Linda Doolin Ward about preparation and challenges of leadership. Over 100 students, faculty and community members attended the session, which was full of interesting stories and excellent advice, including:

Ŷ # Make sure you have a great staff and volunteers, and empower them to do their jobs. Finally, make sure you hire people who have different talents from your own.

Park University president Beverley Byers-Pevitts (right) talks to audience members about how to be a strong leader while Kay Barnes, the former Mayor of Kansas City, looks on. Both women were panelists at the “Women and Leadership Forum” presented by the Sue Shear Institute and the Park University International Center for Civic Engagement on Nov. 9.
Pipeline participants gear up for 2008

Almost two dozen aspiring candidates and campaign workers are ready to hit the campaign trail after participating in the Institute’s most recent “Pipeline to Public Office” program at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

In a new program format, Pipeline participants met on Friday, Nov. 2, at the home of former Clayton Alderwoman Beverly Wagner for a reception and informal conversation with women office holders. State Sen. Rita Days and St. Louis Alderwoman Kacie Starr Triplett joined Wagner in sharing the highs and lows of campaigning, including things to consider before deciding to run, and tips for staying sane on the campaign trail.

The program continued on Saturday, Nov. 3, at UMSL where participants got a crash course in campaign skills, learning how to target voters, raise money, and develop a plan and budget. The “final exam” of the day was a campaign simulation, facilitated by State Rep. Vicki Schneider and St. Louis County Councilwoman Barbara Fraser.

In addition to several candidates for local and state legislative races, the participants included alums of the Teach for America program, and several Washington University students sponsored by the Gephardt Institute for Public Service. The Institute’s next campaign workshop, “Pipeline to Local Office” will be held Jan. 29 & 31, 2008, at UMSL.

(Breckenridge, continued from page 1)
a pioneer and role model.

Breckenridge was born in Nevada in southwestern Missouri and earned both an undergraduate degree in agricultural economics and a law degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She started her judicial career at age 25 when she was appointed to the bench in Vernon County by Gov. Kit Bond. In 1990 she was appointed to the Missouri Court of Appeals by Gov. John Ashcroft. That same year she was elected as President of the Association of Probate and Associate Circuit Judges.

In addition to her career in the courts, Breckenridge is involved in many community and statewide organizations. She is a member of a number of bar associations, including the Missouri, American, and the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Associations.

Breckenridge was a member of the Missouri Task Force of Gender and Justice and was Co-chair of the Missouri Gender Fairness Implementation Committee. She is also a Council of State Governments’ Toll Fellow.

A ninth-grade civics class and a focus on different careers first interested Breckenridge in law. She later worked for her father’s law firm over summer breaks in college, and then attended law school. When Breckenridge was first appointed, Vernon County Circuit Clerk, Bernice Dobson, took her under her wing. Dobson had “high standards and was conscious of civic duty,” Breckenridge remembers and thus became Breckenridge’s role model. The judge encourages aspiring attorneys or judges to find their own female role models. She says that there are a lot more women in the legal profession now, and they are more than willing to help.

If there is any free time in her schedule, Breckenridge enjoys spending time with her husband and traveling. Her favorite trip was to China, to celebrate her 30th wedding anniversary.

As for being one of three women on the court, Breckenridge believes that “diversity in every respect is important.” The court should reflect the people it represents, she said. Race and gender are not the only aspects to think about; judicial experience and whether someone is from a rural or an urban background, a big or a small firm, are important also. Diverse perspectives lead to more carefully considered judicial decisions, Breckenridge said.

“The Sue Shear Institute is dedicated to promoting women, particularly in government. I applaud that. It’s how all of us are able to have new career opportunities,” Breckenridge said. “I feel blessed to have so many supportive women friends and mentors.”
In each newsletter, we will list women who have been recently appointed to public policy positions. Please let us know of other women who have joined the public policy process since July 2007.

Serving on a public board or commission is an excellent way to put your talents to use in public service without running for office.

If you are interested in serving on a board or commission, contact the Institute at (314) 516-4727 in St. Louis or (816) 235-1409 in Kansas City and visit our website at www.umsl.edu/~iwpl/ to complete a “Public Service Personal Profile” on-line.

For a list of boards and commissions in Missouri, visit the Governor’s website at www.gov.mo.gov/boards/boards.htm.

Appointment information for Kansas City and Jackson County was unavailable at press time.

Kansas City Office Receives Grant for Talent Bank Efforts

The Greater Kansas City Women’s Foundation has awarded almost $7,000 to the Kansas City office of the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life to expand and increase the capacity of the Talent Bank.

Funds from the grant will be used to enhance appointments to boards and commissions in the Kansas City region.

“We are excited that Women’s Foundation has invested its trust and resources in the Sue Shear Institute,” said Advisory Board member Jean Peters-Baker, “and look forward to rewarding their trust with an effective program.”

The grant will be awarded at the Greater Kansas City Women’s Foundation Awards luncheon in Kansas City on Dec. 7, 2007. To join the Institute’s Talent Bank, visit www.umsl.edu/~iwpl/talentbank.html. For more information about the Women’s Foundation, visit www.wfgkc.org.
Spotlight on Theresa Garza: Jackson Co. Legislator

By Cynthia Beckmann

By 2006, Theresa Garza of Blue Springs, Mo., had served five years in the Navy, received a B.A. in Criminal Justice from UMKC and was working as legislative liaison for the Jackson County Legislature. She had also attending the Sue Shear Institute's two-day workshop on campaigns for local office where she had announced her plan to run for the Jackson County legislature. The 1st District At-Large seat was open and Garza stepped up to compete against two male opponents in the Primary election. Capturing 43 percent of the vote, this first-time candidate triumphed and faced no general election opposition.

Clearly, Garza is comfortable in her new role as Jackson County Legislator. She entered the restaurant where we were to meet having an animated discussion with a constituent, after which she ran into a colleague, continuing the discussion about life in Kansas City.

Garza could inspire anyone thinking about running for office. She successfully ran for Jackson County Legislature with very little money and against the odds. Holding true to her own advice, she did what she knew she could, and won as a relative newcomer to the process.

When asked how she got interested in running, Garza talked about her position as a Legislative Liaison working for all county legislators. This role put her in touch with the community, talking to residents and listening to their complaints. Doing this, she realized that solving their problems was her passion.

“The community wants its leaders out in the community” she said. “People want to feel like they’re more involved and they want to know their leaders. They want to know what you stand for and what you’re like as a person.”

Her advice on running for office could read as advice for life: Surround yourself with supportive people and always be confident. “When I win, I will...” is how she thought and talked throughout the campaign. “You can’t just think positively – you need to verbalize it at every opportunity – whatever the situation,” she said.

“Never listen to those who will tell you that you can’t do something – and don’t take anything personally. Don’t let people tell you that your age or lack of experience will hinder you. Everyone has life experience that they bring to a position. Also, let people know that after the election, you can set your differences aside and work for the good of the community -- more life lessons.”

Garza is an alumna of the Institute’s Pipeline to Politics class, which she said she found to be especially effective because it was taught by people who had either run for office or had run a campaign and were able to offer down-to-earth advice. The faculty also stressed having a positive attitude – not to let other people tell you that you can’t do it. The advice proved especially important, as during the campaign Garza’s opposition often cited her age and newness to the process.

When asked if it is really different for a woman to be a legislator, Garza replied with an emphatic “YES!” She continues...

“While women are succeeding in all areas of life and business, success in public life is slower in coming. The reality is that the political arena is still mostly a man’s arena – we haven’t quite caught up in politics.”

Garza took office on January 1, 2007 and, while still new to the position, has a clear sense of her mission. Trying to break in is a slow process... but Garza is determined to let everyone know that she’s serious and has the personal conviction to stay true to her message and her constituents.

When asked about shortcomings in the system that the Institute might be able to address, Garza immediately encouraged more women to mentor other women and help bring younger women into the political process.

Garza serves as an excellent example of a woman making a difference and succeeding against the odds. Hopefully her efforts will motivate other women who might be contemplating a run for office. The Institute will continue to encourage women like Theresa Garza to make a difference.

(Walk, continued from page 1)

The Institute sponsored its biennial program, “The Inside Scoop on Appointments to Boards and Commissions” on Oct. 23 in Kansas City and Oct. 24 in St. Louis. The Kansas City panelists were Alexa Barton, Clay County Administrator, former UM Curator Mary James, Ruth Bates representing the Kansas City Mayor’s office, and Angel McCormick Franks, State Director of Supplier and Work Force Diversity. Franks also participated in the St. Louis program where she was joined by Charles Bryson, Public Safety Director and Special Assistant to the St. Louis Mayor; Darin Cline (above), St. Louis County Intergovernmental Relations Director; and Susan Stepleton, a member of the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood Development.
It is always exciting to receive “progress reports” from Leadership Academy alums, and we are proud to share their accomplishments with you! (Note: The number in parenthesis represents year of participation in the Leadership Academy.)

Tammy Baldwin, Ph.D.
Southeast Missouri State University
Campus Advisor, 2005
Dr. Baldwin was recently recognized as a Faculty Merit Award winner for excellence in teaching by the Southeast Missouri State University Alumni Association. She is a full professor in the Dept. of Communication, and is co-founder and co-advisor of the Association for Women in Communication student chapter at Southeast.

Liana Boone
Truman State University ('02)
Lianna returned from Long Island this summer to become Finance Director for State Rep. Margaret Donnelly’s campaign for Missouri Attorney General.

Rebecca Clifton
Missouri State University ('06)
Becky just started a new job as a client service supervisor in the Springfield, Mo. office of Spherion, a nationwide human resources consulting & staffing/recruiting company.

Caroline Coulter
Southeast Missouri State University ('02)
Caroline passed the Missouri Bar exam in August after graduating from the Southern Illinois University School of Law. She is currently living in St. Louis and seeking employment in the legal field.

Vanessa Crawford
Truman State University ('04)
Vanessa recently left her position as legislative assistant to Rep. Rebecca McClanahan to become the new political & field director at Missouri NARAL.

Traci Daffer
Truman State University ('01)
Traci graduated second in her class at UMKC School of Law and passed the Missouri Bar exam this fall. She spent three weeks in August backpacking around Australia solo before starting her new job as an associate attorney in the Labor and Employment department at Blackwell Sanders LLP in Kansas City. She recently got married and bought a house too.

Jennifer Davis
University of Missouri-St. Louis ('07)
Jenni is preparing for her last semester in the master’s program at the UM-St. Louis School of Social Work, and is in the process of applying to law school. She is an intern at Legal Advocates for Abused Women and a victim advocate for the Bridgeway Sexual Assault Response Team. She is also working with the St. Charles Crisis Nursery, Epworth Youth Emergency Services teen shelter.

Shante Davis
University of Missouri-St. Louis ('05)
Shante graduated from UMSL in May and just started a new job as the development coordinator for the St. Louis Area Foodbank. In her spare time, she is working on an agriculture program for children in the inner city and a scholarship program for students in Mozambique. She also stays busy caring for her 5-month-old daughter.

Antionette Dickens
University of Missouri-St. Louis ('07)
Antionette has been nominated to represent UMSL at the International Scholar Laureate Program delegation on Communications and Journalism in Australia next summer.

Jennifer Drake
Truman State University ('05)
Jennifer moved to Washington, D.C. in late October to start a new job as the outreach associate for The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Caroline Erickson
University of Missouri-St. Louis ('07)
In addition to serving as the program intern for the Sue Shear Institute, Caroline is the event coordinator for the UMSL Residence Hall Association. She is currently working on plans to study abroad next fall.

Heather Ingrum Gipson
University of Missouri-Kansas City ('00)
Heather just started a new job as an assistant public defender with the Public Defender’s office in Sedalia. She is excited to be living under the same roof as her husband who recently returned from Iraq.

Jessica Gunder (Shaw)
University of Missouri-Columbia ('03)
Jessica graduated from law school in May and passed the Missouri Bar exam in Sep-
The Institute would like to welcome Caroline Erickson as a new program intern this semester. She first became affiliated with the Institute this summer when she was a fellow at the 21st Century Leadership Academy. Caroline is a sophomore at the University of Missouri-St. Louis majoring in Public Administration and hopes to pursue a career in Public Health and other types of nonprofit management. Along with working at the Institute, Caroline is the Event Coordinator for the Residence Halls Association at the St. Louis campus, as well as a student at the Pierre Laclede Honors College. She is currently exploring her options for studying abroad in the coming academic year.

At the Institute, Caroline helps prepare for events and provides other office support. She is working with the Institute’s ongoing project of analyzing gubernatorial appointments in Missouri. Caroline is familiarizing herself with the information systems at the Institute that connect women around the country and is learning about all of the different types of work that the Institute is involved in.
Yes, I want to support the Institute’s mission in helping women participate fully in public policy decision making arenas. Please place me on your mail list for notice of upcoming events and to receive the Woman Watch newsletter.

Name: _______________________________

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