The newsletter of Pierre Laclede Honors College at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
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Are you a student interested in contributing on a volunteer basis or for independent study credit in Fall 16? Are you an alum interested in being profiled in a future issue? Contact Dan Gerth (gerthd@umsl.edu) for more information.

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Honors College: PLHCSA:
Dear alumni and friends,

Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of Provenance, the Honors College newsletter. It has been much too long since we have communicated with you in this way, and rest assured that regular communications are on the horizon. Our new team of student writers is already hard at work on the Fall 2016 edition, which hopefully will arrive this September.

Given the length of time since we might have talked last, some updates on the state of the Honors College are in order. Possibly the two biggest changes are the retirement of longtime administrators Nancy Gleason and Bob Bliss. Nancy retired at the end of 2014 but thankfully is still working in a part-time capacity. Bob stepped down as dean of the college at the end of 2015 but also thankfully remains at UMSL in the History Department and also as an instructor of an occasional Honors College class. More details can be found in a profile article inside the newsletter.

While changes like those can be sad, there are many wonderful constants in Honors, as well as changes that are completely terrific. We are going strong in what is now our 26th year as a college at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and we continue to grow. We now enroll 600 students per year, up from about 450 a decade ago. And our students are better than ever. Our fall applicant class, for example, has an average ACT composite of 28 right now, along with an average class rank of 86% and an average high school GPA of 3.7. We are about to graduate one of our most accomplished groups, including a record number of students accepted into law and medical schools. Last year’s PLHCSA president, Marlee Thomas, was Student Life’s Student Leader of the Year, and senior Cameron Roark, who will be attending UMKC’s law school in the fall, is about to finish his second term as Student Government Association president. Honors students were crowned, for the second year in a row, as Homecoming Court King and Queen, and our alumni trivia night continues to be wildly successful. It has allowed for a six-fold increase, for example, in the amount of Bohnenkamp Scholarship funding we offer our students.

How are you? We hope that you are as happy and successful as the two alumni who we profile in this issue (Charlie Bright and Audrey Jeanis). We apologize for not staying in better contact and sincerely hope that you will consider contacting us to let us know how you are. There are a lot of opportunities that we hope to create for alumni to interact with our current students, and we would love for you to be a part of them.

Sincerely,

Dan Gerth
Interim Dean
Pierre Laclede Honors College
Welcoming Two New Members: Mandy Bibe and Kate Votaw
By Samantha Kolar

Mandy Bibe was hired on at the Honors College as a full-time advisor in August 2015. Following her bachelor’s degree in communication, she received her master’s degree in higher education administration from University of Louisville in 2004. Mandy enrolled in honors courses throughout college, notably a course called Philosophies of Peace and the Enterprise of Death and Dying. She also took courses in Russian for her foreign language requirement. Mandy worked at a local advertising agency in Louisville between undergraduate and graduate school, and she worked as a residence hall director of a three-building complex while she was working toward her master’s degree.

After graduation, Mandy worked in various positions for different universities. First she worked in the Residence Life and Student Housing Department at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Then she became an academic advisor and coordinator of probationary programs at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, which enabled her to move back to Kentucky. After relocating for her husband’s job to Paris, France, in 2012, Mandy and her family—her husband and her now two-year-old daughter—resettled in St. Louis in 2014.

Along with academic advising, Mandy also serves on several departmental committees and assists with student retention programs in Honors. She helps students in a variety of ways, including selecting and scheduling classes, planning their degrees, and making plans for after graduation. Mandy works individually with students with academic difficulty and primarily with all students majoring in business administration, communications, media studies, political science, history, public policy administration, pre-law, criminology, sociology, and social work. Her favorite aspect of advising is being able to work closely with students: “The students are what make it fun. I like getting to know people, hearing about the different things in their lives, and helping them to become successful in school and in life.”

Kate Votaw was hired as an assistant teaching professor in the 2016 spring semester, following a two-year adjunct teaching position at the Honors College. She is a PLHC alumna; she graduated from UMSL with a bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2009. As a student, Kate was involved on campus, living in and working as a residential advisor in Seton, where she also met her future husband. She was also president of the Residence Hall Association. Her favorite Honors classes were Speculative Fiction with Ken Wolfe and Existential Psychotherapy with Dr. Brian Vandenbarg.

Kate has been interested in psychology since high school, though she changed her focus area several times throughout college. She decided to focus on attraction and romantic relationships; she received her masters of science in research from St. Louis University in 2011, after completing her thesis on the effects of makeup and clothing on attraction using an evolutionary psychology framework. She taught various psychology courses at St. Louis University before she was hired on at the Honors College.

This semester, Kate is teaching Honors Social Psychology and The Science of Psychology as well as advising psychology, music, and anthropology majors. She expects to be awarded her doctorate degree in August 2016 for her dissertation on the effect of perceived number of choices and maximizing strategy on romantic relationship satisfaction. “What I like best about teaching at the Honors College is the enthusiasm, motivation, and capabilities of the students,” Kate says. “It’s so refreshing to teach courses with students who come to your class actually excited for discussion.”
Kim Baldus was awarded the 2015 Chancellor's Award for Excellence for a Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member for her tremendous dedication and commitment to student success in the Honors College. She received the award on September 16, 2015, during the State of the University address.

Ann Torrusio, Geri Friedline and Dan Gerth attended the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conference in Las Vegas in October 2015. They presented on the trials and rewards of academic advising in their collaborative panel “Notes from the Advising Trenches: Strategies to Combat Compassion Fatigue.” Colleagues from Columbia College were also part of the panel.

Ann Torrusio and Geri Friedline just returned from the College English Association’s 2016 conference: “Creation.” Geri presented on her Personal Narrative course—“Finding a Voice: The Creative and Recreational Power of First Person Narrative”—at one of the creative writing sessions, and Ann presented on her original and innovative film class: “Through a Female Lens: Ida Lupino’s The Hitch-Hiker and the Creation of a New Noir.”

Geri Friedline won an Excellence in Teaching Award from the National Society of Leadership and Success. She was nominated by her student, Michelle Merli, and was recognized at a ceremony in the Millennium Student Center on December 2, 2015.

Dan Gerth won an Outstanding Advising Award in the faculty advisor category at the NACADA conference in Las Vegas in October 2015.

Christoph Schiessl’s first book, Alleged Nazi Collaborators in the United States after World War II, was released this March from Lexington Books. It is available via Amazon and will be in the UMSL library soon. A copy will also be available in the Honors College main office.

Alleged Nazi Collaborators in the United States after World War II

Christoph Schiessl

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Ann Torrusio, Geri Friedline, Dan Gerth, and Kim Baldus attended the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) 50th annual conference in November 2015. Ann and Dan presented on their innovative course design—“Alfred Hitchcock and Ida Lupino: Directing the Classic Suspense Film”—while Geri presented on the Bellerive seminar class in “The Power and Pleasure in Seminar Produced Literary Publications,” and Kim presented several times during the conference including “Supporting Student Publication in Undergraduate Journals: An Interdisciplinary Seminar on the Rhetoric of Academic Publishing” and “Graduate School Search Process.”

Christoph Schiessl
The Pierre Laclede Honors College Student Association has been busy at work this year planning events and strengthening the Honors community. PLHCSA, which has recently undergone leadership and advising changes, has aimed to develop a stronger influence among the Honors College community and throughout the UMSL campus as a whole. President Nick Domescik is excited to have the chance to grow PLHCSA as an organization and to have more students in the Honors College involved beyond the classroom: “I feel that PLHCSA has been reinvented this year. The executive board has worked diligently towards involving more Honors students in exciting events. Overall, we are completing our mission by getting students involved on campus in order to make UMSL an even better university.”

So far, PLHCSA’s efforts have been successful, with increased attendance at events and more student participation in the organization. Some of the PLHCSA events of the 2015-16 school year so far have included Paint-a-Palooza, Haunted Honors, Are You Smarter than the Professors? Trivia Night, finals week Candygrams, and the Get Felt pool tournament. Some of these events have won Student Life awards for innovation and outstanding achievement.

In addition to hosting events for students, PLHCSA has been focused on raising awareness for their adopted charity for the year, Stray Rescue of St. Louis. “We have focused in on our philanthropy by making it a priority to raise money at every event that we host,” Domescik said. In addition to raising money at each event, PLHCSA sponsored a donation drive for the month of November, where they collected a tremendous number of pet supply donations for Stray Rescue. PLHCSA faculty advisor Ann Torrusio believes the increased focus on philanthropy has been positive. “It’s clear that this year’s board is very enthusiastic and service-minded,” Torrusio said. PLHCSA plans to continue raising awareness for Stray Rescue during the events that are planned for the remainder of the spring semester.

To see more of what PLHCSA has been up to, as well as photos from recent events, visit their Facebook page.
Each spring semester, the Honors College celebrates the arrival of the newest issue of *Bellerive*, its annual literary publication. The 2016 issue, *Sonder*, made its debut on Friday, February 26th. The launch party featured special guest speaker Ken Wolfe (pictured below with instructor Geri Friedline), an award-winning storyteller, poet, and part-time adjunct instructor at the Honors College. He delivered a funny and motivating fable to an audience of over 50 people, including students, staff, and faculty from across the campus.

*Bellerive* was founded as an extracurricular activity in 1999, headed by teaching professor Nancy Gleason. Nancy established *Bellerive* as an Honors seminar in 2003, and it has been instructed by associate teaching professor Geri Friedline since 2007. This year, *Sonder* was produced by a staff of 17 students of diverse majors and areas of interest. These staff members selected submissions for publication and worked on editing, layout, art, and public relations committees, devoting much time and care to editing and proofreading, designing the layout, digitally formatting artwork, designing the cover, advertising, and planning the launch party.

The result is a diverse publication featuring quality works that the Honors College is proud to include in the *Bellerive* tradition. The title *Sonder* was chosen from *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, which defines the word as the realization that every person is living a life as vivid and complex as, and separate and unrelated to, one’s own. The contents of this year’s issue reflect this idea; Geri describes the pieces as “present[ing] human drama, vivid (sometimes dark) experience, and moments of epiphany and . . . provid[ing] interesting direction for readers to discover common human experience in distinct, sometimes divergent, individual experience.” The cover features artist Chiazom Okoye’s *Collage in Recent Findings,* which the staff feels illustrates the title and the collage-like nature of the anthology.

Geri believes that *Bellerive* is an important aspect of the Honors College because “[it] is part of an overall vision to support and cultivate the arts—and to extend participation and enjoyment to campus members who might not have other opportunities to do so.” For more information on the publication or to purchase copies of *Sonder* and previous issues, visit the *Bellerive website* or contact Geri at friedlineg@umsl.edu.
The Honors College announces the retirement of two distinguished faculty members: Dean Bob Bliss and Associate Dean Nancy Gleason. Bob has been teaching history since 1970. He received his doctorate degree from University of Wisconsin—Madison in American colonial history with a minor in American literature. Following a teaching career at Lancaster University in England, Bob was hired on as dean of the Honors College in the spring of 1997. In addition to his administrative duties as dean, he also taught Honors classes in history as often as possible.

Over the course of his 18-year career as dean, Bob made many significant contributions to the Honors College. Of these, Bob is most proud of integrating and reconstructing the first-year curriculum, the Western/American/Non-Western series and Cultural Traditions, so that students “quickly acquire the satisfaction of becoming educated persons.” During his time as dean, the number of students in the Honors College increased from 250 to nearly 600 without a decline in standard or quality, and the number of faculty members and seminars has increased significantly too. “I wanted to start my career by being pleasant,” Bob says, so since his first day on the job, he has made it a priority to foster an environment of friendliness and congeniality.

His decision to retire was based in his love for teaching; though he did have opportunities to teach when he was dean, it was not as often as he would have liked, and after working in administration for 35 years, he decided that he was ready to focus on teaching. Bob says that what he will miss most about the Honors College is being able to interact with a large number of students on a regular basis. He says that he has enjoyed working at the Honors College because “it might be the only time in students’ lives that they are asked to find out the truth. And it’s fun.”

Bob is currently working as an associate professor in the History Department on UMSL’s north campus, teaching American history and American studies courses. He has been succeeded by Dan Gerth as the interim dean of the Honors College.
Nancy’s academic career with UMSL began with her undergraduate degree; she received her bachelor of arts in English and a certificate in secondary education in 1972. Following a career teaching high school English for seven years, during which time she also started a family, she returned to UMSL for her master’s degree in English, accompanied by a teaching assistantship, which she completed in 1987. Upon graduation, Nancy was invited to apply for a position in the English Department. She worked in the English Department as an instructor, advisor, and student-teacher supervisor for 11 years, primarily teaching composition and American literature courses.

In 1999, Nancy was hired at the Honors College to design a writing program. She became the writing director and created the portfolio program and capstone, the freshman composition class, Writing the City (junior composition), and numerous Honors creative writing courses. “Curriculum development has been a big deal for me,” Nancy says. She is also responsible for helping design the general education program for the university and creating the Bellerive publication and seminar. After becoming an instructor at the Honors College, she was eventually promoted to teaching professor, and she was named associate dean in 2005.

When asked what her favorite aspect of working at the Honors College was, Nancy replied, “Just about everything.” She added that “it is so much fun to watch and be part of where students are headed and where they want to go, and I just enjoy very much being part of a bridge to where they’ll go next.” She enjoys coaching students through times of academic success and hardship, and she likes to help faculty members incorporate writing into their classrooms.

Nancy made the decision to retire in 2014 when a health issue surfaced and a doctor recommended that she lighten her workload. She decided that the healthiest option was to work part-time instead of retiring completely so that she “could gradually wean [her]self away from teaching,” which is proving to be a slower process than she originally thought. She currently works in the Honors College as an administrator and an independent study and writing portfolio instructor. Nancy would like to add that she loved teaching in the English Department and Honors College as well as working on campus initiatives and committees, and that she has always felt at home on the campus of UMSL.
Audrey Jeanis, a December 2013 graduate, has managed to stay busy since her time at UMSL. Audrey was a double major in Communications and French and earned certificates in Public Relations as well as Honors. Transferring one year after starting her college career at the University of Missouri, Audrey found herself involved on campus in Greek life through her sorority, Delta Zeta, and as a student in the Honors College tight-knit community.

After hearing about a friend who worked with Panera Bread Company as an intern, Audrey applied for a similar position while still in college. In 2012, she began working with Panera as a Human Resources intern. Shortly thereafter, she began working as a Social Media intern where she helped support national marketing campaigns through social media content creation. After graduating, Panera brought Audrey on as a full-time employee in an entry level position as a Social Media Coordinator. In this position, she was responsible for managing interns while continuing to work with social media campaigns. After a year as a Social Media Coordinator, Audrey again switched positions at Panera. In 2014, she began working as a Brand Marketing Coordinator, the position that she currently holds.

As a Brand Marketing Coordinator, Audrey is responsible for working on advertising campaigns based in Canada. While this is a smaller market than the U.S. Panera market, the national advertising campaigns are similar. Audrey’s division works in tangent with the New York division to develop commercials and other advertisements. Their newest campaign, “Food As It Should Be,” was Audrey’s first involvement with a television shoot, and she really values the experience: “It was rewarding to see on TV something that I had worked on, especially a national campaign.”

On any given day, Audrey stays busy with the demands of her job. Often she finds herself sourcing and ordering food for shoots or reviewing casting. After a review process, she signs off on print or billboard ads developed for national campaigns. She strives to one day move up in the company and work on larger scale projects that are based in the United States.

Reflecting on her time at UMSL, Audrey advises other students to pursue internships while they can. She believes that a great deal of her current success came from who she knew and was able to network with. While at the Honors College, Audrey felt she learned accountability and self-motivation. She says, “Strive for success for yourself and no one else.” Her current success is the result of her own tenacity and perseverance. While Audrey’s work with Panera has international reach, she remains connected to the UMSL community as a recruitment advisor for Delta Zeta.
Charlie Bright

Charlie Bright, a 2003 graduate of UMSL and the Honors College, took a unique path to his current position as a Partner at the St. Louis branch of New York Life Insurance Company. A native of Washington, Missouri, Charlie was intrigued by the Pierre Laclede Honors College because of the “tightknit subculture of intelligent people who were like a family.” While pursuing his degree in English, Charlie became enthralled with the liberal arts style education that the Honors College provided. It was there that he believes he found his place, and also where he met his wife, Jill. In a summer class, he recounts, students were assigned to interview one classmate, and Charlie chose to interview Jill. Years later, he credits his Honors College professor for introducing him to his wife.

After graduating with a degree in English with writing and Honors College certificates, Charlie began his Masters in Fine Arts at UMSL. After a brief stint of teaching on the main campus, Charlie began teaching Freshman Composition at the Honors College in 2005. While teaching classes like Fantasy Fiction Writing and Comic Book Writing, he also worked at the Thomas Jefferson Library on campus. However, that all changed in 2008 when he received a postcard from New York Life Insurance Company that would later change the course of his life.

With much reluctance, Charlie responded to the postcard and eventually went in to interview for a position at New York Life. Though he believes the interview went terribly, Charlie got the job and began selling life insurance. After a few short years as a Financial Services Professional, Charlie garnered multiple awards, which he displays proudly in his office. In 2012, he was promoted to Partner, the position he currently holds. Charlie attributes much of his success to a distinctive style of selling life insurance. After many years as a teacher, he uses his skills to educate potential clients like students. He firmly believes that teachers make the best life insurance salesmen and saleswomen because they have a unique skillset that allows them to not only be very personable but also to make clients feel like they aren’t listening to a sales pitch.

Personal success, however, is not completely reserved to the workplace. Charlie and his wife frequently travel, visiting places like Disney World a few times a year. He believes that if you are not traveling while you can, you are missing out. “Everyone tells you to pursue your passion,” he says, “but you will become passionate about the things you do often”.

While Charlie remains very busy with work, interviewing up to 250 people per year and holding 10+ meetings a day, he credits some of his success to things he learned while at the Honors College. He says, “Don’t be afraid to ask for more; the worst response you can get is ‘no.’” He remarked that his time at the Honors College taught him empathy and gave him a sense of family. When asked about advice he would give to current Honors students, Charlie says, “The most expensive thing you can own is a closed mind.” When looking at his journey from the Honors College until now, that idea cannot be truer. While Charlie Bright’s pathway to success was unique, an open mind allowed him to find his passion.
HONORS AND THE CURRENT

Honors College Provides Inspiration for Aspiring Journalists

By Kat Riddler

UMSL’s student newspaper, The Current, is turning 50 on November 18, 2016. 50 years is a long time when you think of all of the hours put in by so many people from all disciplines and backgrounds working together to keep the University of Missouri—St. Louis students informed about what goes on or effects the campus.

Just three years ago, the university celebrated its jubilee event. The Current has been here since nearly the beginning. It’s hard not to be sentimental when looking back over all that was accomplished. One thing that sticks out, at least looking at a condensed roster for the past ten years, is that the Editors-in-Chief seem to have at least one thing in common: they were also Pierre Laclede Honors College students, including myself.

The UM System has monopolies on certain campuses. One of those monopolies is the School of Journalism. You can only find that on the Columbia campus. So maybe there is something that the Honors College offers students that pushes them to excel in the journalism realm?

My own experience with the Honors College was constantly pushing me to ask questions inside and outside of the classroom. I didn’t take one person’s answer as absolute truth. There were always more sides to a story. This also led me to become more aware of issues in my community and to connect readings for a class with current events from the local to international level.

If that wasn’t enough to drive me to journalism, then it probably was the teachers who pushed me to write papers on subjects I found interesting. The Honors College environment let me research topics that were a main subject to the course or that were an off branch side to the lesson plan. Teachers at the Honors College directed me to readings and other research material that could aid in what I was wanting to know. They were not just supportive with material; they helped me to connect research to my main idea and helped me formulate the argument to its fullest potential.

Then you can’t forget about the student seminars. The Honors College set up small seminars that can focus on critical reading. Class discussions connected current events, personal events, and context to the reading, furthering students’ understanding of the material. This also helped in seeing more than one point of view to a story or an event as I heard from a variety of students and teachers bringing a unique perspective to the discussion.

In speaking with another former Editor-in-Chief who also graduated from Honors, Sharon Pruitt, I gained some different insight into how the Honors College had helped her. She told me, “The Honors College curriculum is more challenging, and the classes are smaller. Being a naturally reserved person, the smaller classes were a little more comfortable for me, and I felt a little more comfortable opening up and sharing my opinions in them. I think that, in that way, the Honors College really contributed to the growth of my confidence, which in turn led me to feel more comfortable in the various leadership positions I filled at the paper.”

From every single one of my classes at the Honors College, I can tell you a story. I think that’s what each Editor-in-Chief from the Honors College did at The Current.

Recent Editors-in-Chief who were also Honors College students:

Kat Riddler, 2015-present
Anna Glushko, 2014-2015
Sharon Pruitt, 2013-2014
Matt Poposky, 2011-2012
Jessica Keil, 2009-2010
Sarah O’Brien, 2008-2009
Like many of her fellow student-athletes, Chandler Duchaine has managed to not only be successful in her sport, but she has also managed to balance the rigorous course load required at UMSL. Over 50% of current student-athletes at UMSL have maintained a 3.20 GPA for the Fall 2015 semester; and Chandler is no exception. She, however, has managed to accomplish many athletic and academic feats, while also being a four year member of the Honors College.

Chandler, who will be graduating in May 2016 with a degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing, has been a member of the Women’s Tennis program at UMSL since 2012. A native of Washington, Illinois, Chandler was drawn to UMSL and the Honors College because she saw an opportunity to “improve her writing skills in a more personal setting.” While she further advances her skills on the tennis court, Chandler is also able to work individually with professors who are more attuned to her personal academic needs. These professors, she says, have made a tremendous difference on her college experience. Because she is so busy with matches and tournaments during tennis season, Chandler has to maintain a good relationship with her professors. At the beginning of each semester, it is recommended by athletic staff that student-athletes provide their professors with their travel schedules to address any conflicts with their classes. Chandler says that this not only has been helpful for working with her busy schedule, but has also allowed her to develop greater relationships with her professors. Honors College professors, she says, understand that their students have busy lives and are willing to be more flexible with due dates. While this is not true for every situation, Chandler believes that just knowing her professors are approachable and willing to work with her has reduced a lot stress throughout the years.

Athletics and the Honors College both require time consuming work and finding a balance to both is key. So, how is it possible to do both? Chandler says that her biggest challenge as an athlete and Honors College student has been finding time to complete her work. Often times it can be difficult to find the motivation and energy to write a paper or complete assigned reading after a long day of classes and hours of practice or matches. However, planning ahead and making sure you have given yourself ample amount of time to finish all of your tasks is important, she says.

As a Great Lakes Valley Conference Academic All-Conference Team selection (GPA of 3.30 or above for both fall and spring semesters) and a member of the Athletic Director’s Honors Roll (GPA of 3.50 or above for one semester) on multiple occasions, Chandler proves that it is possible to have a successful academic career while participating in Division II athletics. As a senior focusing on her final tennis season, Chandler hopes to return to the NCAA National Tournament with her team. When asked about what she would use in her future from her experiences as a student at the Honors College, Chandler said that she would “use the confidence I gained from being an athlete and a student to know I will be able to finish and accomplish any task because I have done it many times before.”
Your gift helps us offer an outstanding educational experience to students—an experience characterized by small seminar classes that tremendously develop their communication and critical thinking skills. Educating high-achieving students in small, discussion-based, writing intensive classes is important for the future of the St. Louis workforce and economy, but it is not easy to do in an era of budget constraints at every level of higher education. Your gift cheers the whole collegiate community, empowers it, and encourages its students to gain maximum benefit from their honors education.

What are some of the things that gifts help fund? The list is too long for an article like this, but some of this year's highlights include student research, including a presentation on health care ethics at November's National College Honors Council Conference; study abroad opportunities for students, including a winter intersession trip to Spain and Portugal this January; and the funding of our writing program, including our capstone course in which students get to work one on one with a faculty mentor who helps them with resumes and curriculum vita, cover letters and personal statements, and whatever additional career documents they need for the next stage of their journey.

In over 25 years, PLHC has grown to 600 students who major in every UMSL program and enrich the campus with their diversity. Our most popular majors are currently biology, business, psychology, nursing, and English—this diversity is a testament to the attractiveness and relevance of our style of education to all student populations. And while they also end up in countless fields after graduation, from the board room to the classroom to the operating room and everywhere in between, like many UMSL students they tend to stay here after graduation, so your gift not only strengthens our students; it makes a difference to St. Louis, too.

To learn more about how to give to the Honors College, please click here.
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