

# UMSL

MAGAZINE

FALL 2019



Scholarships  
transform  
lives

North County students flourish  
thanks to the Emerson  
Community Scholarship



### Service winner

Head Coach Ryan Young oversees practice in his 10th season with the Tritons volleyball program. The team got off to its best start in program history, winning its first 12 matches and running its record to 23-3 by the beginning of November. See page 8 for more campus views and news.



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FALL 2019

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presiding judge

**Shannon Keys**, Team USA  
roller skater

**Nathan Roth**, NASA  
postdoctoral fellow

**Julia Sperry**, community  
development specialist

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## ON THE COVER

Alayna Epps, Christian Girma, Jorden Hendree, Awa Konte, Maleah Lucas, Fredrick Muikia, Donyell Nelson, Emma Norman and Davona Rankins make up about half of the current class of Emerson Community Scholarships. In 2014, Emerson helped transform their lives when it donated \$1.5 million in UMSL scholarships dedicated to North County students.

**Clarification:** The spring 2019 issue of UMSL Magazine featured two grants awarded to the Center for Character and Citizenship totaling \$5.4 million. CCC co-Director Melinda Bier was the principal investigator on both grants.

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Photo by Nancy Grant



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## Showcasing humanity

Alumnus Adrian O. Walker's photography  
explores beauty traditions  
among black men.

The University of Missouri–St. Louis publishes **UMSL MAGAZINE** for alumni and friends. The magazine highlights excellence at the university. Circulation is 106,000, and the magazine is released twice a year.

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**MS**  
cybersecurity

**BS**  
cybersecurity

**BSBA**  
entrepreneurship

# Degrees for the Future

**BS** actuarial  
science

**BS** computing  
technology

**BA** organizational  
leadership

**BS** sport  
management

**The University of Missouri–St. Louis continues to create innovative opportunities that will propel a new generation of students to success.**

Within the past year, the university has launched a series of in-demand degree programs that provide promising futures: a BS and MS in cybersecurity, a BSBA in entrepreneurship and BS degrees in actuarial science and computing technology.

The creation of these new programs reflects the university's dedication to provide students with the skills to help ensure career success.

"We are thrilled to launch these new degrees in St. Louis," Interim Chancellor and Provost Kristin Sobolik says. "UMSL remains on the vanguard of inventive educational offerings with degrees that look forward to current and future students' aspirations. Our graduates are uniquely prepared to be competitive in

the job market, and they help address the region's growing need for highly trained technology and actuarial professionals and entrepreneurs."

Each degree was developed to help fill talent gaps and workplace shortages in the St. Louis region and beyond. For example, the world cybersecurity talent shortage is nearing 3 million, according to (ISC)<sup>2</sup>, a prominent industry certification body, and UMSL is one of two local universities to offer actuarial sciences and the only public St. Louis institution to offer entrepreneurship.

The university will continue expanding offerings to fill students' needs: Two more degrees, a BS in sport management and a BA in organizational leadership, will start accepting students in the spring. ≡

# This is Rebecca Rogers

Curators Distinguished Professor College of Education

*“I think I’ve always been intrigued by the entanglement of language, literacy and power.”*

By David Morrison

Rebecca Rogers’ career in literacy education started well before she joined the University of Missouri–St. Louis College of Education faculty in 2006. It even predated her PhD in literacy in the Department of Reading at the University of Albany.

When she was in high school in upstate New York, she served as a literacy volunteer.

“I was 15, and I was tutoring adults who were much older than me in reading and seeing that power of language and literacy,” Rogers says. “I think I’ve always been intrigued by the entanglement of language, literacy and power.”

Now, Rogers is one of the leading experts in the field of critical discourse analysis and literacy studies. She has seven books and more than 75 articles and chapters in national and international journals to her name. You’ll find her latest article, a meta-ethnography of family literacy studies, authored with colleagues Catherine Compton-Lilly of the University of South Carolina and Tisha Lewis Ellison of the University of Georgia, in the latest issue of *Reading Research Quarterly*.

For her scholarly contributions, Rogers was named a Curators Distinguished Professor by the University of Missouri System, the highest honor bestowed on UM System faculty, in the spring.

“Critical discourse analysis is a set of theories and methodologies to help people unravel and understand what’s happening with language and power,” Rogers says. “I’ve been one of the people who contributed to the rise of CDA in literacy studies – because it was mainly in linguistics – and I’ve also made it more accessible for public intellectuals: educators, counselors, community workers.”

Locally, she has been a longtime leader in Educators for Social Justice – a grassroots organization of teachers who collaborate to integrate social justice practices into their classrooms. On campus, she has helped grow UMSL’s Literacy Clinic from primarily an on-campus, face-to-face lab for preservice and in-service teachers into a clinic that has branches in local schools, now led by colleagues Katherine O’Daniels and Martille Elias.

The new frontier, Rogers says, is moving UMSL’s top-notch literacy teacher preparation programs online.

“I think it puts UMSL on the map being a leader in the preparation of literacy specialists,” Rogers says. “I’m really excited about future research in this area and continuing to grow our program.” ≡



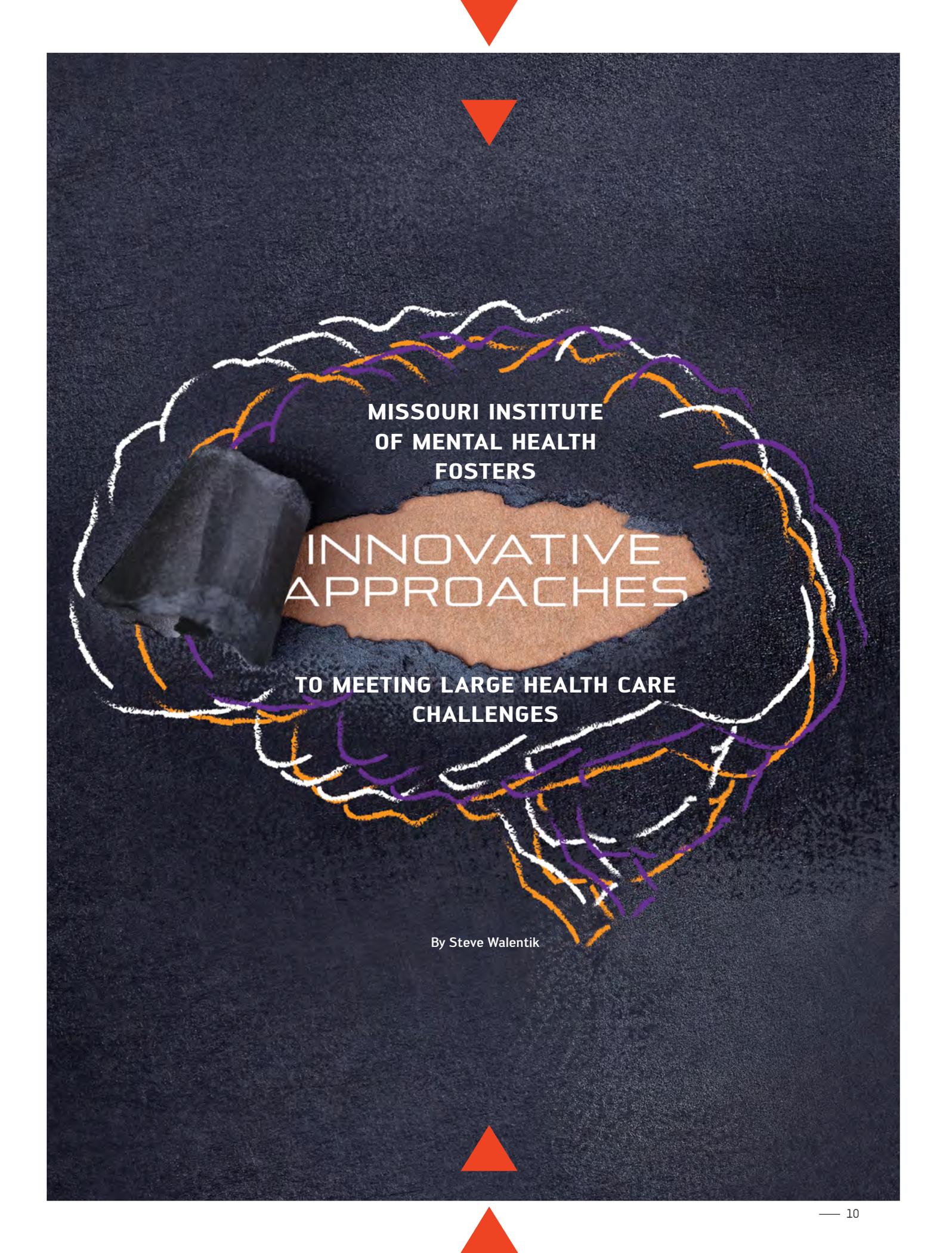
**1** Barb Shaffer shows off work celebrating the St. Louis Blues' 2019 Stanley Cup win done while auditing a biweekly printmaking course in the Department of Art and Design. **2** Legendary jazz composer Benny Golson visits campus in September to give the UMSL Jazz Combo a clinic that turns into an hour of advice and behind-the-scenes storytelling. **3** Line dancing livens up the grounds outside of the Thomas Jefferson Library during the annual **Fall Involvement Expo**. **4** From left, St. Louis Area Foodbank Vice President Lenora Gooden, Save A Lot Vice President Tony Botos, Interim Chancellor and Provost Kristin Sobolik, Chancellor Emeritus Tom George, Associate Vice Provost D'Andre Braddix and Director of Student Social Services Robin Kimberlin formally **dedicate the Triton Pantry** on May 23 on the first floor of the Millennium Student Center. Created to combat the problem of food insecurity on campus, the pantry serves 160-180 students and community members each month. **5** Students, faculty and staff win bragging rights during

# ACROSS THE QUAD



**D**uring Professor of English Frank Grady's "English Literature to 1790" course, students (from left) Meredith Alton, Sophie Kluba, Rachael Wood and Dani Brown-Schnurr perform a staged reading of the melodramatic final scene of Nahum Tate's 1681 revision of Shakespeare's "King Lear" – a happy-ending, Restoration version of the play.

the inaugural **College Transit Challenge** by logging the most social media check-ins as they make use of the Metro system. Citizens for Modern Transit staged the daylong challenge to highlight the impact and importance of transit in the St. Louis region. **6** **Brian Owens** (at right) and **Michael McDonald** take to the stage at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center in September for a unique community celebration and tribute concert to the original soul of Ferguson. **7** Two students greet the new semester – and campus photographer August Jennewein – during **Weeks of Welcome**, the trademark beginning-of-the-year program designed to build community at UMSL. **8** College of Nursing BSN students (from left) Madeline Klein, Jennifer Underwood and Justin Pursley get some hands-on experience in their "**Clinical Simulation**" class. **9** The **shuttles get a redesign** featuring the trident logo as UMSL Parking and Transportation extended its shuttle service contract.



**MISSOURI INSTITUTE  
OF MENTAL HEALTH  
FOSTERS**

**INNOVATIVE  
APPROACHES**

**TO MEETING LARGE HEALTH CARE  
CHALLENGES**

By Steve Walentik

From left:

**Andrew Belden**

**Lucette Cysique**

**Paola García-Egan**

**Rebecca Preston-Campbell**

**Christina N. White**

**Jacob Bolzenius**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ROBERT PAUL [center]**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ED RIEDEL**



There are many symptoms that might make older adults – and those closest to them – start to worry about the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease and other age-related brain disorders.

They can include an increase in the frequency of fairly routine memory lapses, such as when persons forget why they walked into a room or where they last left their keys, wallet or sunglasses. In other cases, individuals might start repeating themselves during conversations.

No matter what trips the alarm for someone to go visit a doctor, newly diagnosed patients and their family members will end up facing some version of the same question:

“What’s going to happen next?”

A precise answer remains elusive.

“Historically, our answer is that individuals with neuro-degenerative disorders will experience worse symptoms as the disease progresses,” University of Missouri–St. Louis Professor Robert Paul says. “But the rate of progression differs from one person to the next. We know, on average, that individuals will develop cognitive symptoms of sufficient severity to impair their ability to manage daily living skills like cooking, driving, managing their medication and staying on top of their bills.

“However, we cannot predict the timing of these progressive changes for each individual using traditional clinical techniques.”

Paul is one of the researchers trying to unlock those answers in just one of the projects he’s leading in his role as director of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health.

His team is taking a new approach, using advanced neuroimaging and high-powered computational algorithms to find solutions.

“Clinical scientists are trained to think mechanistically – variable Y is due to variable X,” Paul says. “But degenerative brain disorders are more likely to involve interactions among multiple variables that differ in small but meaningful ways for each individual, even though the final expression of symptoms looks similar.”

Technical advances and greater computing power make it possible to identify the combination of factors that work in tandem to increase individual risk.

The work Paul’s team is doing is well aligned with the goals of the University of Missouri System’s Precision Health Initiative, which aims to capitalize on advances in genetics, biology, big data, bioengineering and medical technologies to usher in a new era of personalized health care for Missourians and other clinical populations around the world. The initiative is manifested in the NextGen Precision Health Institute being built in Columbia, Missouri.



**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR RACHEL WINOGRAD [front, third from left]**



**Paul's work also fits well with the historical origins of MIMH.**

The institute was established in 1962 as the Missouri Institute of Psychiatry on the grounds of the St. Louis State Hospital as the research and teaching arm of the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

The University of Missouri–Columbia School of Medicine took over its operations in 1965, though it remained in St. Louis, closely connected to the Department of Mental Health.

Much of the early work at the institute – beyond training mental health professionals for public clinical psychiatry – was in bioinformatics, the science of collecting and analyzing complex biological data, with a goal to inform patient care.

Over the years, the institute expanded its focus to include behavioral health as well as prevention, outreach and professional education and, more recently, policy

research, program evaluation and public education about mental and addictive disorders.

MIMH changed its academic affiliation to UMSL as part of the Office of Research Administration in 2010, not long after Joe Parks, the chief clinical officer at the Department of Mental Health, took over as its director. Paul succeeded him in 2014, the same year the institute moved its physical location away from the state hospital to UMSL's startup incubator, Innovative Technology Enterprises, in St. Louis County.

Each of its project teams is self-sustaining, covering expenses with grant funding. Collectively, MIMH investigators were awarded more than \$9 million in external funding last year, much of it from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the National Institutes of Health.

“The great thing about MIMH is that if you have a particular area of interest and you’re able to cobble together the funding, you can do it,” says Ed Riedel, a project director with a background in social work who joined the staff at MIMH in 2008. “We’ve gotten really good at writing really good grants.”

*Back row from left:*

- Alex Duello**
- Lillie Jackson**
- Sarah Phillips**
- Phil Horn**
- Aaron Ruiz**
- Lauren Green**
- Paul Thater**
- Sandra Mayen**
- Maggie Nagle**

*Front row from left:*

- Erin Stringfellow**
- Kori Richardson**
- Suzanne McCudden**

PRINCIPAL  
INVESTIGATOR  
RACHEL KRYAH



**MIMH investigators** cover the entire health care continuum from innovative biomarker discovery to program evaluation, professional training and community prevention, though some projects aren't limited to a single category.

The institute manages to touch people in all 114 counties of the state.

Rachel Christiansen Taube is the director of Mental Health First Aid, a public education program that teaches participants to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental health disorders or crisis situations. Riedel also has assisted her in training all the instructors across the state - about 300 of them. Those instructors have, in turn, taken the lessons to more than 50,000 Missourians through the eight-hour training program since 2008.

discuss sexual health. Bailey-Burch and her team have expanded their focus to include sexual risk avoidance education for minority youth in the St. Louis metropolitan area in an effort to reduce teen pregnancies. Riedel, Jeffrey Noel, Elizabeth Sale and Rachel Kryah all work in program evaluation, making sure that practitioners on the ground are following best practices and getting results in areas of suicide prevention, substance use disorder and children's mental health.

Kryah has a long-standing connection with one of Columbia's largest pediatric offices, starting with Boone County Project LAUNCH - Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health - evaluating the effectiveness of the social and emotional supports it provides patients through the HealthySteps program.

"We're evaluating and working with those folks to help them measure what they're

"What I'm excited about is how comprehensive we're trying to make our work and our approach," Winograd says. "We have our fingers in all types of drug and opioid-related data from all over the state and communicate with medical examiners looking at death reports to really get a sense of patterns and trends and emerging threats that are happening in Missouri from a public health and epidemiological standpoint.

"Then we have team members who are going out into the community and doing trainings or giving naloxone in barber shops or homeless shelters and actually implementing programs that work to save lives. We design clinical strategies and approaches, influence state policy and create research documents and publish papers highlighting our findings. There's not an aspect of drug use or addiction or overdose that we're not touching."

- Robert Paul, director, MIMH

## "THE VALUE OF THIS PLACE IS THE STRENGTH OF ALL THE TEAMS."

"That's one of the things I'm most proud of, and something we do really well," Riedel says.

It is nowhere near the only thing.

Senior Research Associate Brendolyn Bailey-Burch, who has been part of MIMH for more than 23 years, has worked with her team at the community level to reduce health disparities. Most recently, they've implemented prevention programs aimed at cutting down on substance use and the spread of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis among minorities through education.

"Our award-winning Girls Holla Back! program has reached over 1,000 African American women and girls and has had a profound impact on their lives," Bailey-Burch says.

The program takes an intergenerational approach to substance use and HIV prevention, and it provides a platform for girls and their female caregivers to openly

doing and feed that back to them so that they can provide the best services possible," Kryah says. "We have these wonderful relationships. A lot of people tend to be scared of evaluators. It feels more like we're on the same team here. We all want the same thing."

MIMH has played a substantial role in Missouri's efforts to quell the opioid crisis that's been surging in the state over the past decade. Associate Professor Rachel Winograd directs the Missouri Department of Mental Health's State Targeted Response and State Opioid Response projects, launched in 2017, with the backing of two federal grants totaling over \$65 million.

Winograd also leads the Missouri Opioid-Heroin Overdose Prevention & Education project, which aims to reduce overdose deaths through expanded access to overdose education and naloxone.

As focused as many MIMH researchers are on initiatives in Missouri, the institute's work also stretches beyond its borders and around the globe to more than 15 countries.

Paul is part of an international consortium working with long-range data from HIV/AIDS patients in Bangkok, Thailand, exploring the dynamics between infection, the immune system's response and the impact on the brain.

"The value of this place is the strength of all the teams," Paul says. "UMSL leadership has fostered a research culture that allows innovation, creativity and resources to go after the most vexing challenges related to mental health, including clinical conditions others might consider impossible to resolve. For our teams, the question isn't if we can solve the problem but rather how quickly? And we are moving very fast at present." ≡

MISSOURI INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

# MIMH GRANTS & FUNDS

FISCAL YEAR 2019

## Four Areas of Impact

*Community  
Outreach*

6 projects

\$1,441,609

*Development  
and Evaluation*

40 projects

\$5,448,663

*Professional  
Training*

5 projects

\$573,283

*Research*

24 projects

\$4,338,513

75 projects totaling \$11,802,068

# 114 OF 114

MIMH IMPACTS PEOPLE IN EVERY COUNTY OF MISSOURI



MIMH works  
beyond state  
borders  
and around  
the globe



# a family on campus

The Honors College fosters student individuality within tight-knit community

By Jessica Rogen

There are a lot of words that could describe the Pierre Laclède Honors College at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

“Invested” is the first that comes to Maddie Woodham’s mind but there’s also “quirky.” Sarah Wilson offers up “inclusive” and “satire,” and for Associate Dean Dan Gerth, it’s “humor” and “mentors.” Monique Edwards chooses “empowering” and “connection.”

For the college’s dean, Edward Munn Sanchez, the choice is obvious.

“Fun,” he says. “It’s something that’s hard to explain because the goal isn’t to have fun. People are here doing their work, doing what they want to do. But it is really a place where people are enjoying themselves.”

“There is not a single day where there isn’t something that you laugh at, and there’s not a single day where you don’t have an enjoyable conversation. It’s amazing, when that happens every day, how enjoyable that is. It makes the Honors College a truly humane place.”

Residents of the upperclassmen Honors College dorm, Villa North Hall, (clockwise from left) Jenna Haddock, Simon Langrehr, alumnus Tanner Emring, Maddie Woodham and Madison Koogler gather for a meal.

*“Everyone knows everyone really quickly.  
We become a family fast.”*

– Associate Dean Dan Gerth



Honors student Hunter Campbell consults with Dean Edward Munn Sanchez in his office.

That thread of joy and good humor runs through the college’s often-overlapping academic, extracurricular and social spheres – even its halls thanks to a gaggle of students who covered all resident paintings’ eyes with googly ones. The result is a unique, tight-knit academic and social community within the larger university setting that enhances students’ experiences by supporting growth and individual thought.

About 600 of UMSL’s approximate 7,000 undergraduates are working toward an Honors College certificate in addition to a major in a different college. By serving students from a wide array of disciplines, the college – which is celebrating its 30th anniversary – upends the definition of typical liberal arts education.

“It’s really more for students who are intellectually curious, that want to do something beyond what they would usually do in their majors,” Munn Sanchez says. “That can be in the classroom, but it can also be outside of the classroom.”

Every freshman who enters the college takes the “Cultural Traditions” seminar, which surveys Western and non-Western cultures and introduces students to the higher education experience. The shared course has the side benefit of creating strong bonds among classmates.

Another shared experience comes in the form of the Pierre Laclède Honors College Student Association, to which every student automatically belongs. PLHCSA organizes official events at least monthly.

That includes the iconic Paint-A-Palooza, where students – and the dean

– dress in white UMSL shirts and fling powdered paint at each other. Then there’s Haunted Honors, where student organizations decorate rooms in the college for an unusual but terrifying Halloween haunted house, and the trivia night “Are You Smarter than the Professors?” which pits students against teachers.

“The fun part about the Honors College community is it’s very fresh,” says Wilson, current PLCHSA president and a recipient of the all-inclusive Opportunity Scholarship. “Everyone always brings their own ideas. There’s always memes going around. It’s also PLHCSA’s job to keep that comedy going.”

But it’s not just for fun and community building. Though each event is free, all student association events raise money for a charity – this year’s is Evelyn’s House, the BJC hospice.

Community involvement is a hallmark of the Honors College experience. Edwards – an education studies major who hopes to become an advisor – was inspired by Rob Wilson’s “Where We Live” class, which brought her out of the classroom and into the community to create a project for a city leader.

“Not all are service oriented, but each class is engaging,” Edwards says. “They usually make sure to let us know it’s a group environment. It prompts something inside of me to share what I think. You feel like you have something to contribute, and that’s very empowering.”

Many of the college’s interdisciplinary classes couldn’t be found elsewhere such as “History of Conspiracy Theories” or “Swipe Right: Mathematics of Modern Dating and Love.” But

what they have in common is a focus on producing excellent writing. Throughout school, students work on a portfolio containing both school work and practical documents such as résumés that they review with a faculty mentor before graduation.

The writing focus materializes in the college’s twin journals: Bellerive, an annual literary magazine, and Brain Stew, a biweekly zine that’s a home for uncensored student thought and encapsulates the college’s sense of satirical humor.

“It’s really easy to miss that in all the tomfoolery there’s a lot of really good writing, and there’s a lot of good writing done by people in different disciplines,” Munn Sanchez says. “Irreverence is at the heart of the college. It’s a critical stance that you’re trying to teach students to have – to look at their own assumptions and ask questions about them in a significant and real way.”

That speaks to Edwards’ view of the college – an enhancement of her time at UMSL that opened up opportunities such as joining the Student Mentor Advisory and Recruitment Team.

“I didn’t know how much people noticed me,” she says. “The Honors College really makes me feel like an individual.”

That’s a sentiment echoed by Woodham.

“We want you to be here at the Honors College, and we’re going to make sure we do things along the way to show you that we care,” she says. “I think that’s the best part.” ≡



**Hey alumni!**

The Honors College students have a question for you. Turn to page 39.

Top: Honors College student Bria Hathorn studies in the popular Provincial Hall gathering space adjacent to the dean's office.

Bottom: Students partake in the annual Pierre Laclède Honors College Student Association event Paint-A-Palooza.



Jacob Smith allowed himself a brief moment to marvel at the turnout when the Able-Disable Partnership gathered for its first meeting of the 2019-20 academic year.

Only one or two chairs remained unfilled as a group of 30-some people packed into the small meeting room on the third floor of the Millennium Student Center at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

There were men and women, students of different races and ethnic backgrounds – all inspired by the chance to raise awareness of people with physical as well as intellectual and developmental disabilities and advocate for ways to improve their experiences on campus.

“It’s been pretty amazing,” Smith says. “There was a time when this was just an idea in my head.”

About a year earlier, Smith, a triple major in psychology, history and secondary education, joined the Student Government Association as a means of getting involved. The Jefferson College transfer was meeting with Myrina Otey, then the SGA’s student director of diversity and inclusion, and they were discussing ways UMSL could be more inclusive for racial and ethnic minorities as well as LGBTQ+ members of the campus community. Smith urged her to also give a voice to students with disabilities.

There currently are 420 students at UMSL registered to receive accommodations from Disability Access Services, though the number of students with disabilities is almost certainly higher because not all disabilities are reported.

Smith remembers Otey asking him if there was a student organization devoted to disability issues. When he answered that there wasn’t, she told him he should start one.



# ABLE-DIS PARTNER

AIMS TO MAKE UMSL MORE INCLUSIVE FOR STUDENTS



# ABLE SHIP

WITH DISABILITIES By Steve Walentik

“You’re right, I should,” he said.

That set the process in motion.

Smith had been challenged by his own disability – autism – throughout his life. At the time, he was volunteering with UMSL SUCCEED, the post-secondary program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He felt motivated to try to make a difference.

He met Luke Barber through the SUCCEED program and asked if Barber, a dual major in public policy administration and social work, would like to help develop a disability-focused student organization.

Barber had participated in the Missouri Developmental Disability Council’s Partners in Policymaking program in 2018 and was eager to join the effort. It was his idea to call it the Able-Disable Partnership.

Jacob Brandt, a computer science major who’d befriended Smith while at Jefferson

“This group has definitely opened people’s eyes,” Brandt said. “A year ago, I wasn’t very big in the disability access stuff at all, and now I’ve become a huge advocate. The more I saw, the more I immersed myself with this diverse group of people, I saw the problems that are in place. When we talk to people, they just go, ‘You know what? You’ve got a point there. I never thought about that. I never considered that.’”

This semester, Brandt and fellow student Maxwell Agbakpem, who uses a wheelchair, worked with Dean of Libraries Christopher Dames and other staff members to help create an accessible study room in the Thomas Jefferson Library. They are also adding an accessible desk to the computer lab.

*“When we talk to people, they just go, ‘You know what? You’ve got a point there. I never thought about that. I never considered that.’”*

–Jacob Brandt

College, also got involved as the partnership was getting off the ground. So, too, did Kevin Hill, a business major who’d led an earlier effort to create such an organization.

They only needed to gather six more signatures from interested students before they could petition to become an officially recognized student organization. They won approval in January with Associate Teaching Professor Leighanne Heisel from the Department of Communication and Media and Assistant Professor Lauren Obermark from the Department of English serving as their faculty advisors.

Smith’s original vision for the partnership was to generate broad awareness for disability issues, and the organization has hosted a series of forums starting last spring on visual impairment and autism.

But he and his co-founders have also seen specific areas where UMSL can improve to meet the latest Americans with Disabilities Act standards and become a more welcoming place for students with disabilities.

Hill had started a list of places on campus that were difficult to navigate for people with physical impairments. The Able-Disable Partnership has been adding to it and next semester plans to hold a “Disability Walk and Roll” event – similar to the SGA’s annual safety walk – to move around campus looking for areas of concern.

Beyond the infrastructure issues that might exist, the Able-Disable Partnership has also been working with other student groups and educating them on being more inclusive for people with disabilities.

People at UMSL have been open to listening and making changes.

“Now that they’re hearing a lot of these issues, they’re very willing to work with us,” Smith said. “I know a lot of the people that we’ve worked with and met with, they’re really excited about this group. They love that this came together.” ≡

EMERSON  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOLARSHIP  
STUDENTS  
GIVE AS MUCH  
AS THEY GET

**EMPOWERING**  
THE  
**FUTURE**

By Jessica Rogen

**This fall** marked five years since Emerson stepped forward in the wake of the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, with a commitment to help rebuild, heal, empower and change the community through the transformative power of education.

In September 2014, the global manufacturing and technology company, which is headquartered in Ferguson, announced it would donate \$1.5 million for University of Missouri–St. Louis scholarships dedicated to students from north St. Louis County. The resulting Emerson Community Scholarship Program awards annual \$5,000 grants to eligible UMSL students from 13 area high schools with preference given to those pursuing degrees in business or in STEM disciplines.

“Research shows a college education is influential in terms of a person’s lifetime earnings potential, career opportunities, job satisfaction and community involvement,” says Dave Rabe, Emerson vice president of corporate social responsibility. “We wanted to help make college more feasible for students with limited financial means from north St. Louis County high schools, and especially for those who are the first generation of their families to attend college. UMSL came to us with a sound proposal, and we’ve been pleased with their stewardship of our funding and to see the results.”

A big benefit of the scholarship, explains UMSL Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Alan Byrd, is that it allows students to focus on school – not just on making ends meet financially.

“St. Louis has gone through a lot over the last decade,” he says. “For students from north county, knowing they will have a scholarship waiting for them at UMSL when they complete high school does a lot for their confidence, morale and state of mind. It was a life-changing opportunity for many of these students and their families.”

Since 2015, the scholarship has benefited 64 individuals, with 39 studying business or STEM-related majors. Of the total recipients, almost half are first-generation college students.



▼ Here’s a look at five Emerson Scholars who have found **success and more.**

## **AWA KONTE**

### **Biology and Psychology**

The catalyst for Muhammad Ali’s career came in the form of a stolen red bike and a policeman who encouraged him to box rather than seek revenge.

“That was his red bike moment,” Awa Konte says. “It’s when something significant or life changing happens.”

Her epiphany, though less dramatic, was no less meaningful.

That came during instructor Rob Wilson’s course “The Disease of Fear and the Fear of Disease,” which opened up Konte’s eyes to public health.

“We talked about the CDC and all these other organizations,” Konte says. “I was like, ‘Wow.’”

As a result, Konte hopes to eventually work with under-resourced communities in a public health capacity. She’s also planning to attend medical school after her expected May 2020 graduation.

For the moment, however, she’s relishing her remaining time at UMSL where she’s deeply involved on campus. One standout experience was being a peer mentor for the Office of Residential Life and Housing, which helped cover school expenses in conjunction with the Emerson Scholarship. Receiving both meant Konte didn’t have to rely on loans.

“The letter came on my birthday,” she recalls. “My sister and I opened it. I was super excited and grateful and appreciative.”



## FREDRICK MUIKIA

### Computer Science

People have made the difference for Fredrick Muikia.

New friendships with other Kenyan immigrants helped smooth the transition to the U.S. and ninth grade at Hazelwood West High School in 2011. Then, Derrick Freeman, assistant director of Multicultural Student Services, made the difference from high school to UMSL.

“We have amazing mentors,” Muikia says. “He’s walked me through the whole journey from picking classes and professors, getting tutors and connecting with events, with groups. More than just school advice.”

Muikia found UMSL thanks to his high school guidance counselor, who encouraged him to apply for scholarships. Receiving the Emerson Community Scholarship made choosing UMSL easy.

“I was relieved and happy because I knew I wouldn’t have to work as much while I went to school at the same time,” he says. “Also, it took pressure off my parents.”

At UMSL, Muikia chose computer science, which aligns with his interest in solving problems.

“Technology is everything right now,” he says. “I didn’t want to just watch while everything is moving but to understand where all this is going, be a part of it.”

## EMMA NORMAN

### Business Administration

Emma Norman believes in the universal power of coffee.

She’s hoping to use the beverage, and her UMSL education, to help forge bonds among neighborhoods.

“I have always had a dream of opening my own nonprofit coffee shop one day in the St. Louis area to help reunify our city,” she says. “There’s so much division, and coffee is one drink that people – no matter where you’re from or your age or race or anything – bond over. I see

so much creativity in St. Louis, but there is not always space for people to cultivate it, especially those who come from lower-income areas.”

Though it was that aspiration that led Norman to business school, the Emerson Community Scholarship combined with the Opportunity Scholars Program made her choose UMSL. As a first-generation student and the second of seven siblings, those scholarships were instrumental in allowing her to attend a four-year institution.

At UMSL, Norman found marketing, which lets her incorporate creativity with her business acumen. She also discovered Campus Crusade for Christ, a student organization that has become the sophomore’s spiritual home on campus.

Norman has participated in mission trips to Guatemala and Israel and plans to do so again. She’d like to eventually use proceeds earned at her coffee shop to support full-time missionaries.

“My faith is a really big part of my life,” she says. “I want to better society and impact the world.”

*“I want to better society and impact the world.”*

– Emma Norman



## MALEAH LUCAS

### Education

In high school, Maleah Lucas was worried about her future. The first-generation student applied to college in the wake of her father's death with the knowledge that, as one of five siblings, she'd have to pay her way or not attend.

Receiving the Emerson Community Scholarship changed everything.

"I was driving, but I had to pull over," Lucas says. "I screamed at the top of my lungs because I was so relieved. I kind of talked to my dad a little bit like, 'OK, I don't have to worry about this anymore.'"

Now in her sophomore year at UMSL, Lucas is excited to begin working toward a degree in education. She's driven by her desire to do good.

"I always knew I liked helping people," she says, explaining she'd witnessed disengaged peers not graduate. "I want to make an impact, help them enjoy school and say that it can be fun."

She's inspired by Multicultural Student Services coaches who helped her through some difficult moments her

first year. That, along with watching her family struggle with her father's death, has inspired Lucas to aim for a master's degree in counseling.

That's just one of her big dreams.

"I'm going to do my best to work toward them," she says. "I want to make my dad proud."

## RACHEL FANTROY

### Nursing

The human body has long fascinated Rachel Fantroy. Growing up, she'd watch National Geographic specials to get a glimpse inside.

"I took all the health classes I could," the alumna says. "That something is always going on within us to keep us alive is really cool."

Fantroy uses that knowledge on a daily basis as a nurse on the chemotherapy floor of Mercy

Hospital. Her long-held aspiration to help people coalesced into a nursing career when her mother was diagnosed with cancer.

Her mother passed away shortly before Fantroy started at UMSL. Living on campus, which the Emerson Scholarship made possible, helped her through that rocky time.

"The scholarship gave me that chance to be independent and figure out life on my own, which was hard but possible," Fantroy says. "It got me out of my comfort zone."

The difference the nurses made for her family inspired Fantroy, and now one of her goals is to become a Spanish-English medical translator to better help others.

"I like to spend my time getting to know my patients, their backgrounds and their families," she says. "Cancer patients are really positive even though a lot of them face a bad outcome. I think it's important to have a good health care team that cares about you beyond your illness." ≡

*"The scholarship gave me that chance to be independent and figure out life on my own."*

– Rachel Fantroy

# Alumnus Adrian O. Walker

THE GREENS PROUDLY PRESENTS

# WE MATTER

a solo exhibition by Adrian Octavius Walker

Adrian Walker's new body of work explores Black American beauty traditions among Black men. The intimacy that Walker depicts in each photograph erases the possibility of threat often assigned to black men and instead pushes the viewer to see the power of kinship within the Black community. *We Matter* is a visual and sonic experience in which Walker seeks to expand notions of blackness by challenging the American socialization of black men.

Represented by Pt.2 Gallery | Oakland, CA

@aocaviusw



When Adrian O. Walker first enrolled in the University of Missouri–St. Louis, he was a photography major.

That didn't last long, though.

"When I got to the class, I saw that everybody had a camera. I was like, 'What the heck?'" Walker says. "I didn't know I had to buy a camera for the class. I thought it was something where they were going to let us borrow one. I had to drop the class because I couldn't afford to get a camera. I was a freshman in college. I was already broke.

Walker found sociology through MK Stallings, a friend working in the department at the time, and graduated with his UMSL degree in 2010. Walker gravitated back to photography when he and friends founded Made Monarchs – a blog that grew into an online media and events company. He also went on to earn undergraduate certificates in photography and gender studies.

He never thought he was "making work." He was just doing what he loved.

# sees the world through his own lens

By David Morrison



"I take what I learned from the sociology side of things and create relationships between me and the subject," Walker says. "I'm able to make a connection in the most rational way. I'm human. They're human, so I can connect with them."

By showcasing his subjects' humanity, Walker's work has earned tremendous acclaim. He was one of 47 artists chosen for this year's Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition. His photo "Black Virgin Mary" will be on display in The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., until next August, then travel with the exhibition to two other museums through 2022.

Walker is also one of only seven artists among those 47 whose work has been singled out for a special prize during the exhibition.

"It's really an amazing experience," Walker says.

## We Matter

The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery selected Walker's photograph "Black Virgin Mary" (on this page) as part of this year's Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition. It is collected in his book "We Matter" along with his work "Breath" (bottom right).

Top right: Adrian O. Walker shows his works at The Greens in Columbia, Missouri.



**"I'm able to make a connection in the most rational way. I'm human. They're human, so I can connect with them."**

**Adrian O. Walker, BS 2010**



Walker's photo in the exhibit comes from his latest collection, titled "We Matter," which explores beauty traditions among African American men. Walker says he imbues each portrait with an intimacy that erases the possibility of threat often assigned to black men and instead pushes the viewer to see the power of kinship within the black community.

He strives, for example, to recast the durag – often seen as a menacing feature on black men – as what it actually means to his community.

"It's something we wear to protect our hair. It's not just a durag, it's a crown," Walker says. "This crown symbolizes a lot when it comes to protection. Being looked at as a threat is a threat in itself. We are merely creating art on top of our heads.

**In the aftermath** of the Michael Brown shooting in 2014, Walker began working to portray a different side of African American communities. A native of north St. Louis, Walker knew the Ferguson area well, had friends from there and, through his work, wanted to show the side of its people that he felt was missing from the newscasts. In 2015, he self-published his book of photography from that time, "My Lens, Our Ferguson," which was shortlisted for the Paris Photo-Aperture Foundation First PhotoBook award that year.

"It taught me how to slow down," Walker says. "I wasn't out there taking photos like wildfire, just trying to get the best image to put up on Instagram and get the most likes. I waited. I was just taking images on my camera – aka iPhone because no one wanted anything pointed at them during that time in Ferguson – and I made something happen out of it. It got me to where I am now.

Walker lives in Oakland, California, and works for VSCO, a creative channel that builds tools, spaces and connections. Oakland's Pt. 2 Gallery represents Walker, and he wants to keep revealing truths through his photography.

Or making work, whatever you want to call it.

"I'm forever a student, and I'm always seeking out help or trying to read something or making more connections," Walker says. "I don't know where I want to be. I just know I want to keep going. ☰





# GLORIA CLARK RENO

presides over the state's largest judicial circuit

By Steve Walentik

**Judge** Gloria Clark Reno has been away from the action of the courtroom over the past year since she began presiding over Missouri's 21st Judicial Circuit, the state's largest.

But she's had plenty of other responsibilities to keep her busy.

"Everything comes through this office," Reno says from her fourth-floor quarters in the St. Louis County Courthouse in Clayton, Missouri. "You get a different viewpoint of the court, and you really understand this is a multimillion-dollar operation. There are a lot of tax dollars that go to operating this court, and it belongs to the citizens of St. Louis County. We want to make sure that we take care of the physical plant and provide excellent service to the public."

One of her first meetings in the new position last fall was with the risk management staff – to talk about insurance. Reno has since found herself addressing matters of courthouse security and whether the elevators are operating properly. That's in addition to working with her fellow judges and their dockets.

Reno was honored when they chose her for the two-year appointment – even more so because she is the first African American to ever hold the post.

"Anytime you are the first at anything, I think it's important," she says. "For me, it's important that I do a really good job because you always want to make sure that you leave the door open for someone else to follow."

Reno knew from a young age she wanted to go into law, though she hadn't necessarily envisioned becoming a judge.

When she enrolled at UMSL, she majored in English, thinking the language and writing skills she gained would help in her legal career.

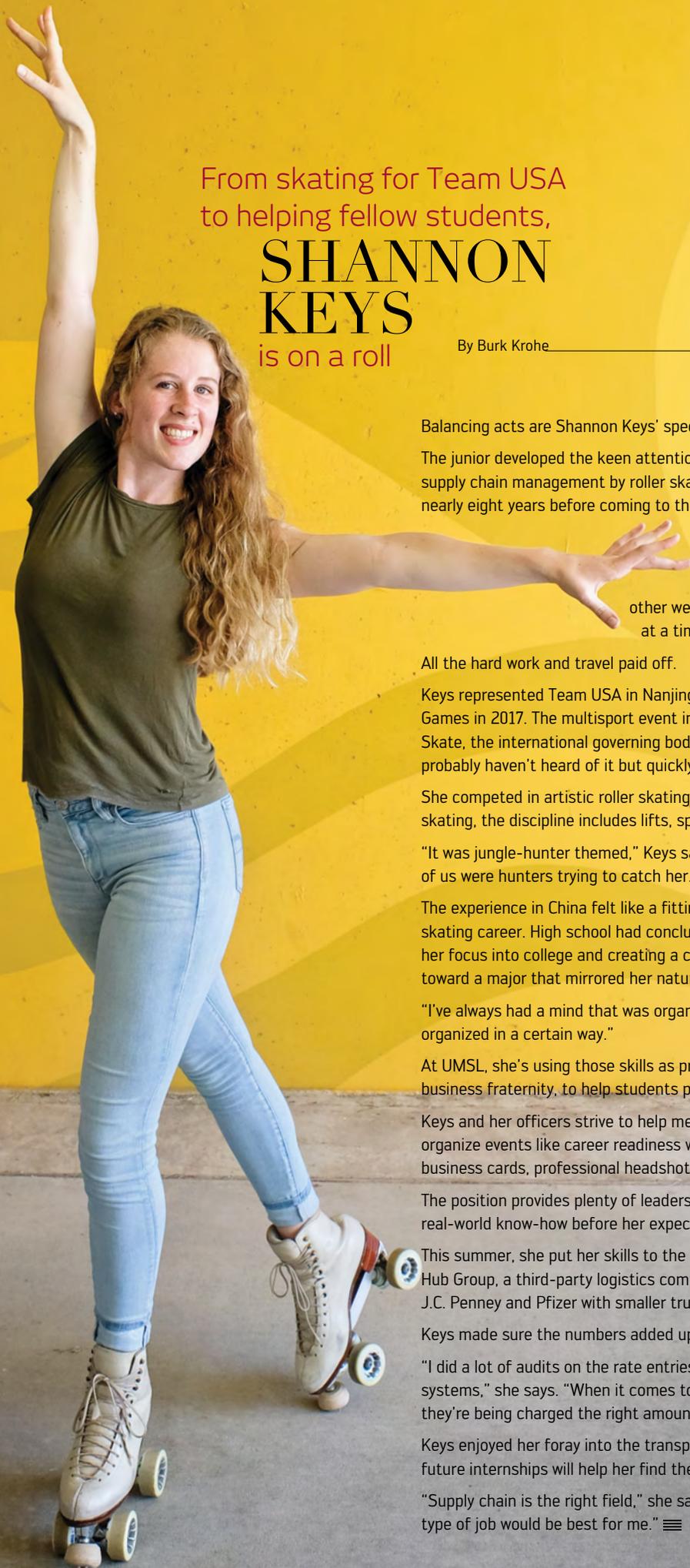
After earning her bachelor's degree in 1973, Reno taught English at Maplewood Richmond Heights High School while her son was young. She later went to law school at Saint Louis University and, after serving a clerkship in St. Louis County, took a position in the St. Louis Public Defender's Office. It was an ideal training ground for being a litigator.

Reno moved on to try civil cases in private practice. But the perspective she gained as a public defender, seeing the imbalances in the criminal justice system, stayed with her when Gov. Bob Holden appointed her to associate circuit judge in 2002 and when Gov. Jay Nixon named her circuit judge in 2009.

In her position as presiding judge, she's been part of the team, spearheaded by UMSL Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Beth Huebner, working to reduce the St. Louis County jail population as part of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge.

"Our legal system has many imperfections, but for me, it is still one of the best in the world," Reno says.

She wants it to work fairly for everyone. ■■■



From skating for Team USA  
to helping fellow students,

# SHANNON KEYS

is on a roll

By Burk Krohe

Balancing acts are Shannon Keys' specialty – literally and figuratively.

The junior developed the keen attention to detail and precision necessary for supply chain management by roller skating competitively and internationally for nearly eight years before coming to the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

"It was a lot of commitment," Keys says.

"My coach lived in Chicago, so I traveled there every weekend – or every other weekend – and trained up there for weeks at a time during the summers."

All the hard work and travel paid off.

Keys represented Team USA in Nanjing, China, at the inaugural World Roller Games in 2017. The multisport event includes 11 roller sports regulated by World Skate, the international governing body. She adds with a laugh that most people probably haven't heard of it but quickly notes the competition is Olympic caliber.

She competed in artistic roller skating as part of a quartet. Akin to figure skating, the discipline includes lifts, spins, footwork and synchronization.

"It was jungle-hunter themed," Keys says. "One of us was an animal, and three of us were hunters trying to catch her. That was the story of our routine."

The experience in China felt like a fitting final chapter to her competitive skating career. High school had concluded as well. With both ending, Keys put her focus into college and creating a career path for herself. She gravitated toward a major that mirrored her nature.

"I've always had a mind that was organized," Keys says. "I like to see things organized in a certain way."

At UMSL, she's using those skills as president of Delta Sigma Pi, a coed business fraternity, to help students prepare for a life beyond graduation.

Keys and her officers strive to help members develop professional skills. They organize events like career readiness workshops where students can get free business cards, professional headshots and networking tips.

The position provides plenty of leadership experience, but Keys is also seeking real-world know-how before her expected graduation in December 2020.

This summer, she put her skills to the test as a procurement intern with Hub Group, a third-party logistics company that matches large companies like J.C. Penney and Pfizer with smaller trucking companies to move freight.

Keys made sure the numbers added up.

"I did a lot of audits on the rate entries put into the transportation management systems," she says. "When it comes to people's money, you want to make sure they're being charged the right amount."

Keys enjoyed her foray into the transportation industry, but she anticipates future internships will help her find the right path.

"Supply chain is the right field," she says. "I just need to find exactly what type of job would be best for me." ≡



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NASA  
postdoc  
**NATHAN ROTH**  
examines the solar system

By Timothy Wombles

“My program has given me opportunities I’d never dreamed of,” Roth says. “I’ve gone across the country and traveled the world. I’ve observed comets with state-of-the-art telescopes. I mean, I’m going to start a postdoc at NASA.”

But landing the fellowship certainly wasn’t easy. Gibb, his thesis advisor, was an invaluable mentor.

“She taught me everything I know,” he says, “Analyzing data, writing funding and observing proposals, everything.”

Roth also credits much of his success to his outstanding colleagues and the connections he made through the physics program.

For his work at UMSL, Roth analyzed comets’ compositions by looking at their comas, or tails of ice and dust, using single telescopes. At NASA, he’ll be utilizing the 66-dishes of the Atacama Large Millimeter Array – the most sensitive radio array in the world. He’ll be synergizing the near-infrared work he did at UMSL with radio and submillimeter observations, which will allow him to look for more complex molecules, including organics like sugars and simple alcohols.

Eventually, when the much-anticipated James Webb Space Telescope launches, he’ll be working with that, too.

“It’s designed to peer back to the furthest reaches of the universe, so its sensitivity to things in our solar system will just be incredible,” Roth says. “It’ll revolutionize our understanding of comets.”

He’s got many more questions he wants to answer at NASA.

But all this had to wait. After he and his wife relocated to Maryland in early September, Roth immediately flew to Spain for training on the IRAM 30m radio telescope in the Sierra Nevada mountains. After that, he whisked away to Geneva, Switzerland, for an American Astronomical Society conference.

But Roth doesn’t mind his own life’s far-flung orbit.

“It’s nuts – but also fun,” he says, “I love the fast-paced nature. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.” ≡

**N**athan Roth didn’t plan on getting into comets when he came to the University of Missouri–St. Louis as an undergraduate student.

He knew he wanted to study physics, but it wasn’t until his junior year when he took an astrophysics course with Professor Erika Gibb that he discovered his interest in protoplanetary disks, dense clouds of dust and gas surrounding certain stars.

He landed a summer research position in Gibb’s lab and, from there, transitioned to studying comets with her.

“It was sort of an accident,” he says. “I fell into it. But once I started, I really loved it.”

It has all been part of a journey that has taken him from a BS and PhD at UMSL to NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, where Roth started a highly competitive postdoctoral fellowship in September.

As a graduate student, Roth picked up a NASA Earth and Science Fellowship. He worked at UMSL’s own Richard D. Schwartz Observatory before moving on to bigger telescopes – eventually flying to Mauna Kea, Hawaii, to use the iSHELL spectrograph at the NASA Infrared Telescope Facility. He observed firsthand the comet 46P/Wirtanen’s close approach in 2018.

Political  
passion  
drives  
**JULIA  
SPOERRY**  
to serve the  
underserved

By Burk Krohe

Julia Spoerry has had a “political fire” in her belly since the 2000 presidential election.

She recalls staying up to watch the election results for an extra credit assignment.

“I remember sitting in front of my grandma’s TV,” Spoerry says. “Watching and coloring all the states and then being distraught that I wasn’t going to get the points because Florida had turned purple – because I had colored it blue and then red.”

She was enraptured by the process and knew something had been awakened.

Now Spoerry is using that fire to complete a master’s in public policy administration at the University of Missouri–St. Louis while working as a community development specialist for the city of Florissant – and balancing her family responsibilities.

Graduating high school at the height of the financial collapse, Spoerry delayed college and, several years later, began taking classes at St. Louis Community College. Her path forward wasn’t clearly formed, but it had to include two things: hard skills and the ability to help people.

After graduating with her associate degree, another election had a profound effect on Spoerry. She watched the results of the 2016 presidential election and was spurred to work harder, starting her BSPPA coursework at UMSL to fight to protect those who felt vulnerable.

“I knew that there was no more going forward at a comfortable pace,” she says.

Spoerry became involved with professional development opportunities outside of school. In April of 2017, she attended the Partners in Governance Conference in Columbia, Missouri. It led her to contact the director of community development for Florissant, Missouri. Soon she had a job.

Then in 2018, Spoerry landed the Coro Women in Leadership Fellowship from FOCUS St. Louis. The three-month program helps women refine their leadership competencies. She appreciated the opportunity to speak with regional business and civic leaders.



“They are a phenomenal organization that really encourages us to think regionally and to ask good questions,” she says.

Last semester, Spoerry thought globally at UMSL as part of the Future of My City project, which promotes intercultural research between American Rust Belt cities and those in the Ruhr area of Germany. Todd Swanstrom, E. Desmond Lee Endowed professor of community collaboration and public policy, led Spoerry’s team, which won first place for research on equitable redevelopment in legacy cities such as St. Louis and Dortmund, Germany.

“I am very grateful to my professors in the MPPA program,” she says. “They understand that the point is to put good leadership – for local government, for nonprofit, for research professionals – into St. Louis and our region.”

Now, Spoerry uses those skills to serve the residents of Florissant. Her office facilitates programs related to community development block grants, including home improvement loans; emergency heating and cooling grants; mortgage, rent and utility assistance; volunteer efforts; down payment assistance and other housing resources.

These programs benefit residents, and for Spoerry, that’s the job. For her, public policy should make people’s lives better and cultivate opportunities for the citizenry.

“I feel a lot of compassion because I know that if you run the simulation of my life 100 times, I don’t end up here many of those,” Spoerry says. “If any one of the cards on my house of cards had buckled, I wouldn’t be here. I want to make sure that other people get the opportunities, the leg up, that I got.” ☰



## CLASS NOTES

### Let us know what you're up to!

Send class notes and life updates to:

[alumni@umsl.edu](mailto:alumni@umsl.edu)  
**314-516-5833**  
[umslalumni.org](http://umslalumni.org)

### Stay Connected

We want to hear from you! Share your news, photos and follow us at @UMSL.



## 1960s

**Stephen Novack**, BA 1968, was recognized by Chambers and Partners USA for his firm's work in commercial litigation in Illinois. Stephen is a partner and co-founder of Novack and Macey LLP.

**Kirk Richter**, BSBA 1968, received the 2019 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award presented by the UMSL Alumni Association at the annual IGNITE! conference on Aug. 24.

## 1970s

**Thomas Tusinski**, MEd 1971, was inducted into the Greater St. Louis Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame on April 18. Thomas taught physical education at Bayless High School for 30 years.

**Patrick Gadell**, BA 1973, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2019 UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 10. Patrick is an attorney.

**Kenneth Slavens**, BA 1974, MA 1976, joined the senior arbitrator panel of United States Arbitration & Mediation. Kenneth is a partner at Husch Blackwell.

**L. Jack Vasquez, Jr.**, BA 1974, was appointed as district director of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's St. Louis District office.

**Thomas Hilton**, BSBA 1975, joined the Missouri Society of CPAs as chair. Thomas is a partner in the forensic and litigation services group at Anders CPAs + Advisors in St. Louis.

**Kevin Mansell**, BSBA 1975, was elected to the board of directors for Columbia Sportswear Company.



## Honoring alumni The UMSL Alumni Association recognized the 2019 Distinguished Alumni awardees during the 28th annual Founders Dinner on Oct. 10 at the Ritz-Carlton in Clayton, Missouri.

This recognition is bestowed on alumni whose extraordinary careers and significant roles in community service set them apart from their peers. This year's honorees are (from left) Orvin Kimbrough, MBA 2002; Patrick Gadell, BA 1973; Sara Foster, BA 1983; Tom Migneron, BSBA 1982; and Gary Morse, MA 1983, PhD 1985. Luigi Wewege, BSBA 2009, received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.



Photo by Phil Shoulberg Photography

## Joe Blanner has vision

After serving for a few years on the Alumni Association Governing Board as chair of the advocacy committee, chair of the leadership council committee and, most recently, as vice president, Joe Blanner's now trying the role of president on for size.

With the full support of the board behind him, he sees the board committees, particularly the engagement committee, as a way to fully impact the alumni and community and grow support for existing and emerging alumni affinity groups. A partner with the law firm of McCarthy, Leonard & Kaemmerer, he graduated from UMSL in 1998 with a BSBA.

**Lee Rauhut**, BA 1975, retired from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Records Management Center in St. Louis.

**Connie Burkhardt**, BA 1976, received the National Wildlife Federation Conservation Achievement Award in Conservation Leadership in recognition of her efforts to protect Missouri wildlife and habitat through co-founding the Katy Land Trust and Magnificent Missouri.

**Linda Birtley**, BSAJ 1977, MA 1982, joined Union Presbyterian Seminary as director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

**Scott Stream**, BSBA 1978, was named to the board of the St. Louis Association of Health Underwriters as treasurer. Scott is the owner of Stream Benefits Group.

## 1980s

**Carol Felzien**, BA 1980, joined the board of directors of Volunteers in Medicine St. Charles. Carol is the director of administration at the Hammond Institute for Free Enterprise at Lindenwood University.

**Frederick Langeneckert**, BSBA 1980, MBA 1990, was promoted to vice president of information security at KM2 Solutions.

**Henry Miller**, BSBA 1980, joined Winning Technologies as controller in O'Fallon, Missouri.

**Thomas Migneron**, BSBA 1982, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2019 UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 10. Thomas is a retired general partner at Edward Jones.

**Sara Foster**, BA 1983, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2019 UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 10. Sarah is the executive vice president of talent and corporate administration at Commerce Bancshares, Inc.

**Gary Morse**, MA 1983, PhD 1985, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2019 UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 10. Gary is the vice president of research and development at Places for People.

**Stephen Moehrl**, BSBA 1985, was awarded the Distinguished Achievement in Accounting Education award by the American Institute of CPAs for exemplary teaching and research contributions.



Outside of St. Louis? Interested in advocacy?  
 Want to get more involved?  
 Contact [alumni@umsl.edu](mailto:alumni@umsl.edu).

**Renee Hardin-Tammons**, BSAJ 1986, was appointed as circuit judge for the 21st Judicial Circuit by Gov. Mike Parson in August 2019.

**Debra Harper-LeBlanc**, BGS 1986, spoke at the UMSL commencement ceremony on May 17 as one of the alumni speakers. Debra is the academic dean of liberal arts at St. Louis Community College-Forest Park.

**Mike Klinghammer**, BSBA 1987, joined the city of St. Charles as an economic development specialist.

**Scott Ream**, OD 1987, spoke at the UMSL commencement ceremony on May 17. Scott is an optometrist at Ream Optometry in Thayer, Missouri.

**Zella Williams**, MEd 1987, EDSP 2010, EdD 2011, was re-elected to the Hazelwood School District Board of Education.

**Patricia Bedborough**, BSBA 1988, received the Association of School Business Officials International Distinguished Eagle Award 2018. The award honors visionary K-12 school business leaders who have improved student achievement and enriched their school communities. She was also elected board president of the Missouri Association of School Business Officials. Patricia is the chief financial officer for the Parkway School District.

**Steve Genazzi**, BA 1989, was promoted to assistant vice president of enterprise applications at CSI Leasing Inc.

**Martha Staggs**, BSEd 1989, MEd 1993, was appointed to the Missouri Commission on Human Rights.

## 1990s

**Janet Bartlett**, BSBA 1990, launched new sales coaching company, The Growth Coach North Puget Sound, which specializes in helping business owners and company leaders build better businesses and live more balanced lives.

**Gregory Lukeman**, MBA 1990, joined Duo Dogs as executive director.

**Stacy McMurray**, BSBA 1990, spoke at the UMSL commencement ceremony on May 17. Stacy is a past-president of the UMSL Alumni Association.

**Kenneth Puzder**, BSBA 1990, joined Exactus Inc. as its chief financial officer.

**Scott Strothkamp**, BSBA 1990, joined Wolff & Taylor, P.C. as partner.

**Jean Evans**, BA 1991, became the executive director of the Missouri Republican Party. Jean is a real estate professional and president of Game On Volleyball.

**Michael Swaringim**, BGS 1991, was re-elected to the Fort Zumwalt School District Board of Education.

**Michael Mohr**, BSBA 1992, BS 1992, received a 2019 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on May 1. Michael is the owner and founder of Mohr Advantage, LLC.

**Elke Buckland**, BA 1993, was named executive director of the Saigh Foundation.

**Mark Deadwyler**, MBA 1993, received a 2019 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on May 1. Mark is senior vice president and chief financial officer of Global Operations at Teva Pharmaceutical.

**Loralee Mondl**, BS 1993, BSEd 1996, was re-elected to the Rockwood School District Board of Education. Lorelee is a teacher at Marquette High School.

**Stephen Savis**, BSBA 1993, MBA 1995, MS 1998, joined the board of FOCUS St. Louis. Stephen is the vice president of human resources at North America Crop Science at Bayer.

**Brian Bredensteiner**, BSBA 1994, joined First State Bank as executive vice president of retail and customer engagement.

**Rachel L. Pickering**, BA 1994, was appointed to the Third Judicial District Court by Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly. Rachel is an assistant solicitor general in the Office of the Attorney General in Kansas.

## A capital visit Washington, D.C.-area alumni welcomed Interim Chancellor and Provost Kristin Sobolik to their fall gathering at the Cosmos Club in October.

Chancellor's Council member Dick Jung, BA 1971, and his wife, Jan Anderson, hosted and gave a brief history of the club, its programs and its members – many who have won Pulitzer or Noble Prizes – and some who have even appeared on their countries' postage stamps. The Washington group meets once in the spring and in the fall and is a great opportunity to network with UMSL alumni from a variety of work and volunteer environments such as the United States Department of State, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, the World Health Organization and many institutions of higher education.

**Nancy Hawes**, BA 1995, was recognized by the St. Louis Business Journal in its annual list of Most Influential Business Women. Nancy is a shareholder at Polsinelli.

**Richard Todaro**, BSBA 1995, was appointed to the board of directors for WidePoint Corporation.

**Tiffany Anderson**, MEd 1996, was appointed to serve on the Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority by Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly. Tiffany is Topeka Public Schools superintendent.

**Nguyen Violette**, BA 1996, joined the St. Louis Asian American Chamber of Commerce as president. Nguyen owns ProShred in St. Louis.

**Laverne Ford-Williams**, MEd 1997, EDSP 2010, was re-elected to the board of education for the School District of



**Celebrate your 50th Reunion with UMSL classmates and friends** Alumni have gathered to celebrate their 50th reunions back where it all started – at the University of Missouri–St. Louis – since the Class of 1967 marched in the 2017 commencement ceremonies.

This year, dedicated to the Class of 1970, will be no different! Join friends to relive some of your fondest memories over a weekend of activities. Take a tour of the campus to see the buildings where you went to class and where students still work and play, gather together over a meal with fellow alumni, receive a commemorative 50-year pin and don a golden gown Saturday for commencement. Save the date for May 15-17, 2020, and look for a formal invitation in your mailbox.

University City. Laverne is assistant principal at Brittany Woods Middle School.

**Tina Clark-Scott**, MEd 1998, was honored by the St. Louis American Foundation as a Salute to Excellence in Education awardee. Tina is the assistant superintendent of academics and support services for the Normandy Schools Collaborative.

**Marcela Manjarrez Hawn**, BS 1998, was recognized by the St. Louis Business Journal in its annual list of Most Influential Business Women. Marcela is the senior vice president and chief communications officer for Centene.

**Gwendolyn Diggs**, MEd 1999, joined the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis as vice president.

**Laura Faletti**, BSACC 1999, was promoted to supervisor in the outsourced accounting services group at Anders CPAs + Advisors.

**Gregory MacKey**, MAcc 1999, was promoted to corporate controller at Doe Run Company.

**Art McCoy II**, MEd 1999, PhD 2002, was honored by Marquis Who's Who with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award. Art is the superintendent of the Jennings School District.

**Kent Shaw**, BA 1999, wrote "Too Numerous" published by University of Massachusetts Press, which awarded the work the Juniper Prize for Poetry. Kent is an assistant professor of English at Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

**Tamara Sunkett**, MEd 1999, joined the Mehlville School District as the principal of Oakville High School.

## 2000s

**Opal Jones**, BSBA 2000, MBA 2017, received a 2019 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on May 1. Opal is the president and chief executive officer of DOORWAYS.

**Nathan Landsbaum**, MBA 2001, was appointed to the Missouri Health Insurance Innovation Task Force and was named to the board of directors for Emmaus Homes. Nathan is the president and chief executive officer of Home State Health.

**Brandi Miller**, BS 2001, was re-elected to the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District Board of Education.

**Paul Mueller**, BSBA 2001, joined TurboTech as marketing, production and sourcing manager.

**Stacy Siwak**, MEd 2001, was elected to the School District of Clayton Board of Education.

**Margaret Bultas**, BSN 2002, PhD 2010, received an Excellence in Nursing Award from St. Louis Magazine on April 18. Margaret is an associate professor and coordinator of the traditional BSN option at Saint Louis University.

**Christine M. Figge**, BSACC 2002, MAcc 2003, was named a partner in the business advisory service group at RubinBrown LLP.

**Orvin Kimbrough**, MBA 2002, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2019 UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 10. Orvin is the president and chief executive officer at Midwest BankCentre.

**Benjamin Politte**, BA 2002, joined Confido as business operations manager.

**Jessica Portis**, BSACC 2002, received a 2019 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on May 1. Jessica is a partner at Mercer Investment Consulting.

**Petra Baker**, MEd 2003, EDSP 2008, was honored by the St. Louis American Foundation as a Salute to Excellence in Education awardee. Petra is the principal of Gateway Michael Elementary School.

**Nicholas Bowman**, BA 2003, MA 2004, joined the College of Media & Communication at Texas Tech University as an associate professor of journalism and creative media industries.

**Vickie Collier**, BSW 2003, was selected as the new executive director of Infant Loss Resources.

**James Flynn III**, BSBA 2003, was named chief executive officer at Unity Medical & Surgical Hospital.

**Charles Hinderliter**, BA 2003, was elected to the board of directors of Citizens for Modern Transit. Charles is director of government affairs for St. Louis Realtors.



Alumni and friends (from left) David Dodd, BSBA 2012; Elizabeth Dodd, BA 2004, with Mháire Dodd; Natalie Raney, BM 2009; David Gonzales; O. Vanessa Avery, OD 2013; Dante Avery, BS 2009 reunite for a weekend of soccer in San Francisco.



Forward Tommy Naumann takes aim.

Photo by Athlete's Eye Photography

## Kicking it on the west coast

The Alumni Association traveled to San Francisco on Sept. 6-8 with the UMSL men's soccer team. Alumni, parents and staff cheered on the Tritons for games against Notre Dame de Namur University and the Academy of Art University.

The more-than-500 alumni living and working in the San Francisco region were invited to attend the weekend of soccer, receptions and a mini 50th class reunion at Fisherman's Wharf.

**Martin Kardos**, BSBA 2003, MBA 2005, was named to the Kilgore College Hall of Fame. Martin is managing director of central and eastern Europe for CSI Leasing in Slovakia.

**Sarah Vacek**, BSEd 2003, was re-elected to Orchard Farm School District Board of Education.

**Kara Bailey**, BSEd 2004, opened a new restaurant, Knockout BBQ, with husband and partner, David Bailey. Knockout BBQ is one of eight restaurants in the Bailey's restaurant family.

**Gayla D. Sisk**, BS 2004, BSW 2004, MSW 2007, was promoted to executive director of Serenity HospiceCare.

**Jessica Bueler**, BSBA 2005, was named one of the 2019 St. Louis Women of Achievement and received the Community Betterment Award. Jessica is the founder of Welcome Neighbor STL.

**Jeanne Dee**, BSACC 2005, was appointed to the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership's board by St. Louis County Executive Sam Page. Jeanne is a partner at Anders CPAs + Advisors.

**Mary Epperson**, BSN 2005, MSN 2008, received an Excellence in Nursing Award from St. Louis Magazine on April 18. Mary is a pediatric neurology nurse practitioner.

**Kenneth Wetstein**, PhD 2005, joined Eastern Illinois University as vice president for university advancement.

**Amanda Nivens**, BSBA 2006, BSACC 2007, MAcc 2011, joined Malisko Engineering Inc. as director of finance.

**Nicholas Gibson**, BSBA 2008, was appointed to the First State Community Bank board of directors. Nicholas is the chief operations officer of Lee Mechanical Contractors.

**Craig Hadley**, MA 2008, was hired to be the executive director of the Dennos Museum Center at Northwestern Michigan College.

**Chris Hubbard Jackson**, MEd 2008, PhD 2011, was selected as the American Association of University Administrators 2019 MacVittie Emerging Leader. Chris is director of institutional research at St. Charles Community College.

**Philip Kirkpatrick**, MBA 2008, was a recipient of the St. Louis Business Journal's 2019 Corporate Counsel Awards. Philip is regional general counsel of North America for Rabo AgriFinance.

**Bradley Lyons**, MFA 2008, co-authored "America's Holy Ground: 61 Faithful Reflections on Our National Parks," published by Chalice Press.

**Lakesha Mathis**, BA 2008, was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of its 2019 Diverse Business Leaders. Lakesha is the program director of inclusive business solutions for the St. Louis Regional Chamber.

**Amber Mitchell**, BA 2008, MEd 2013, MEd 2017, received the 2019 SEMO Counselor of the Year Award at the St. Louis American Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Awards Gala. Amber is a school counselor at Ritenour High School.

**Andrea Puricelli**, BS 2008, was promoted to lead the production engagement resource center at Inlanta Mortgage, Inc., in Pewaukee, Wisconsin.

**Isaac Butler**, MBA 2009, was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of its 2019 Diverse Business Leaders. Isaac is the vice president of diversity and inclusion at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy.

**Antionette Carroll**, BS 2009, MA 2012, was featured on Facebook's podcast, Three and a Half Degrees: The Power of Connection. Antionette is the president and chief executive officer of Creative Reaction Lab in St. Louis.

**Carolyn Chrisman**, MA 2009, was appointed to the Missouri Women's

## A Night for Advocacy

Over a dozen current and former Missouri legislators gathered in the lobby of the Patient Care Center on South Campus at the University of Missouri–St. Louis on Oct. 17 for the third annual UMSL Alumni Association Legislative Advocacy Reception.

Interim Chancellor and Provost Kristin Sobolik opened the event along with State Rep. Kevin Windham and Missouri Sen. Brian Williams. The College of Nursing and the College of Optometry were the focus of this year's reception, and representatives of both presented on their current research, student bodies and initiatives – focusing on how their work helps promote the health and well-being of Missourians.



Photo by Phil Shoulberg Photography

Council by Gov. Mike Parson. Carolyn is the executive director of the Kirksville Regional Economic Development.

**Stephanie Hudson**, MEd 2009, joined the School District of University City as St. Louis County Special School District area coordinator.

**Ruth Petrov**, BSN 2009, was re-elected to the Pattonville School District Board of Education.

**Katherine Walter**, BSW 2009, was announced as interim CEO of Kids In The Middle, a nonprofit agency providing counseling services for children and families.

**Luigi Wewege**, BSBA 2009, received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award at the 2019 UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 10. Luigi is senior vice president of Caye International Bank.

## 2010s

**Nora Black**, MBA 2010, joined the board of the St. Louis Area Foodbank. Nora is the vice president of human resources at Lanter Delivery Systems.

**John Davis**, BSBA 2010, joined Investa Management as director of finance and accounting.

**Aaron Ezell**, BSBA 2010, spoke at the UMSL commencement ceremony on May 17 as one of the alumni speakers. Aaron is a financial advisor at Edward Jones.

**Lacey Shalenko**, BSBA 2010, MBA 2012, joined Wabash Valley College as head women's basketball coach.

**Travis Short**, BA 2010, joined TD Ameritrade in investor services.

**Brian Shull**, BA 2010, was promoted to senior in the audit and advisory services group at Anders CPAs + Advisors.

**Janae Alfred**, MEd 2011, MEd 2012, PhD 2018, was named principal of Barbara C. Jordan Elementary School in the School District of University City.

**Ron Austin**, MFA 2011, wrote "Avery Colt Is A Snake, A Thief, A Liar" published by Southeast Missouri State University Press. Ron is a lecturer at Washington University in St. Louis and a senior editor for December magazine.

**Tamar Hodges**, BSN 2011, joined Husch Blackwell's health care practice as an associate in the firm's Jefferson City, Missouri office.

**Pamela Piel**, MSN 2011, received an Excellence in Nursing Award from St. Louis Magazine on April 18. Pamela is a nurse

practitioner on the Pediatric Advanced Care Team at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

**Gabrielle Clay**, BA 2012, was named by St. Louis Business Journal as one of the 2019 30 Under 30 honorees. Gabrielle is a senior project accountant for HOK.

**James Holloran**, MEd 2012, joined ParkerGale Capital as a principal in Chicago.

**Daniel Myers**, OD 2012, joined Mind-Eye Institute in Illinois as an optometrist.

**David Shanks**, MEd 2012, MEd 2013, joined Lincoln Middle School in East St. Louis as principal.

**Nesmira Muratovic**, BSBA 2013, was named by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of the 2019 30 Under 30 honorees. Nesmira is a retail risk and supervision oversight manager for TD Ameritrade.

**Melanie Adams**, PhD 2014, was named director of the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum in Washington. Founded in 1967, the museum's mission is to build community bonds by examining social issues impacting the DC-metropolitan area.

**Sharonica Hardin-Bartley**, PhD 2014, received the New Superintendent Award for the St. Louis District from the Missouri Association of School Administrators. She



## In Memoriam

### 1960s

Vivian Kuchner, MEd 1967, on Feb. 13  
 James Telken, MEd 1969, on March 20  
 Florence Vogel, BA 1969, on April 14

### 1970s

Brian Barry, BEd 1970, MA 1981, on June 6  
 Ronald Sauer, MEd 1971, on June 1  
 Peter Rein, MEd 1971, on April 26  
 Thomas Usher, BSBA 1972, on April 3  
 Kenneth Moore, BSBA 1972, on April 27  
 Cornelius Carroll, BSBA 1972, on April 30  
 Ruth A. Hladnick, BA 1974, on March 27  
 Betty Dooley, MBA 1974, on April 10  
 Cheryle Dyle-Palmer, BA 1974, MA 1976, on April 13  
 Michael McConnell, BEd 1976, on Jan. 28  
 Richard Peterson, BSBA 1976, on April 15  
 William Garrick, BA 1977, on Jan. 26  
 Barry Kayes, MS 1977, on March 24  
 Jeannine Schleicher, BEd 1978, on July 1

### 1980s

Charles Buck, BSW 1984, on April 27  
 Barbara Lee, MEd 1985, on May 21  
 Daniel Ginsparg, BSBA 1986, MBA 1989, on July 19  
 Rosemary Fulhorst, BGS 1987, on Jan. 1  
 Margaret O'Connor, MEd 1987, MA 1996, MA 1999, on May 18  
 Kevin Fete, OD 1987, on Aug. 14

### 1990s

Todd Beckley, BA 1992, on May 31  
 Karl Pieper, BSBA 1993, on Jan. 22  
 Rebecca Walstrom, MEd 1998, on May 13

### 2000s

Virginia Frantz, BGS 2002, on June 1  
 Kenneth Harrison, MFA 2007, on Jan. 10  
 Brian Young, BA 2007, on May 4

### 2010s

Krystal Ofodile, MEd 2010, on April 14  
 Lanae Simon, MBA 2011, on June 20  
 Stephen Gann, BSACC 2012, on May 18

is superintendent of the School District of University City.

**Joseph Giebe**, BSBA 2014, joined Boeing as a supply chain management analyst.

**Emma Miller**, BSBA 2014, was promoted to senior employee relations manager, IT consultants at the Intersect Group in Atlanta.

**Kathleen Riddler**, BS 2014, MA 2016, MBA 2018, spoke at the UMSL commencement ceremony on May 17 as one of the alumni speakers. Kathleen is a business communications specialist at Express Scripts.

**Shelby Sharp**, BSBA 2014, joined Arundel Lodge as marketing and communications manager.

**Semir Vajzovic**, BSEE 2014, spoke at the UMSL commencement ceremony on May 17 as one of the alumni speakers. Semir is an engineer at Ameren.

**Kelly Fischer**, MBA 2015, joined Benson Hill Biosystems as its vice president of people.

**Nicole Menichino**, BSN 2015, was one of 10 honorees in the 2019 Heart of Health Care program hosted by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Nicole is an intensive care nurse at St. Luke's Hospital.

**Luimil Negrón-Perez**, MME 2015, MA 2015, was named a 2019 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and exceptional accomplishments of women. Luimil is a doctoral student in the College of Education, and she's the graduate assistant for Latino recruitment and retention for the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Jennifer Victorian**, MEd 2015, was promoted to engagement and communication specialist at IMPACT Group.

**Sheila Walker**, MEd 2015, was elected to the Ferguson-Florissant School District Board of Education.

**Jason Haney**, MBA 2016, was named vice president of operations for the American Health Plans division of American Health Partners.

**Sara Hardin**, BA 2016, was promoted to content development specialist at Elsevier.

**Makita Hill**, MPPA 2016, was promoted to leadership program manager at FOCUS St. Louis.

**Shea Sumpter**, BLS 2016, joined Rich East High School in Park Forest, Illinois, as assistant coach.

**Stacy Adams**, MBA 2017, was honored with one of the St. Louis Business Journal's 2019 HR Awards. The program recognizes the best human resources programs or practices that have had a positive impact on employees and their organizations. Stacy is an account manager at Express Scripts.

**Ashley Johnson**, BSW 2017, was named a 2019 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and exceptional accomplishments of women. Ashley is the case manager for UMSL Student Social Services.

**Brent Martin**, BSACC 2017, MAcc 2018, was promoted to staff accountant at SFW Partners, LLC.

**Ryan Morse**, MAcc 2017, was promoted to senior audit associate in the audit and advisory services group at Anders CPAs + Advisors.

**Gloria Patterson**, MEd 2017, received a 2019 Inspiring Teachers Award from the Challenger Learning Center-St. Louis. She teaches at Jennings Junior High School.

**Tony Withouse**, BS 2017, joined Sauce on the Side as director of sales and marketing.

**Abdulrahman Bakhsh**, BSBA 2018, joined Computer World WLL as an account executive.

**Sarah Boyer**, BA 2018, joined Northwestern Mutual as a client service representative.

**Karl Guenther**, MA 2018, was appointed director of UMSL's Anchor Institution Initiative. UMSL was among 31 universities selected to take part in the Higher Education Anchor Mission Initiative.

**Cindy Ho**, BSACC 2018, joined the tax department of Schowalter & Jabouri, P.C.

**Natalya Narishkin**, MA 2018, joined PGAV Destinations as content researcher and interpretive planner.

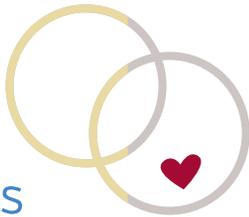
**Katy Robertson**, MBA 2018, joined Jazz St. Louis as director of development.

**Nicole Gevers**, BSCIE 2019, was named a 2019 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and exceptional accomplishments of women. Nicole is an assistant civil engineer at Burns & McDonnell in Kansas City, Missouri.



**Honors College students Sarah Wilson, Maddie Woodham and Monique Edwards have a question for you.**

To learn more about them, turn to page 15.



## Bliss

Rachel Vance, BSN 2015, to Jordan Schlueter on Oct. 13, 2018

Kaleb Hicks, BA 2015, to Jamie Gunn, MA 2015, on Oct. 20, 2018

Josh Hart, BSBA 2016, to Amber Peterson on Nov. 3, 2018

Allison Benda, BA 2014, to Joe Wieczkowski, BSBA 2014, on Nov. 10, 2018

Taylor Freiner, BS 2017, to Jessica Sauer on July 27, 2019

David Levalds, BSBA 2002, to Megan Timmerman on Aug. 3, 2019

Miranda Hall, BSEd 2016, to Jack Brannaker on Aug. 9, 2019

Justin Francik, BSBA 2019, to Sierra McClure on Aug. 9, 2019

Marisol Ramirez, MFA 2015, to Isaac Saldivar on Sept. 2, 2019

Breanna Baur, BA 2016, to Branden Siebuhr on Oct. 12, 2019

Victoria Gengler, BSW 2011, to Thomas McCarty on Oct. 19, 2019

Melissa Roth, BS 2016, to Matthew Goodspeed on Oct. 25, 2019

Melissa Jo Schnefke, BSN 2016, to Ryan Hickerson on Nov. 2, 2019



## Hey alumni!



**What's your favorite memory about getting distracted from studying while at UMSL?**

Email your answer to [magazine@umsl.edu](mailto:magazine@umsl.edu). We'll run some of our favorites in the next issue.



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