

# UMSL

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2019

## A lasting legacy

Retiring Chancellor Tom George reflects on 16 years at UMSL







## SHUTTER STOP

In a moment marked by pure UMSL pride, members of the Orientation Leader team and professional staff struck a pose during the Homecoming Lip Sync Competition on Feb. 22. The annual homecoming tradition creates enduring memories and amplifies the university's vibrant student experience. See page 6.

# IN THIS ISSUE



## ON THE COVER

During his 16 years at UMSL, Chancellor Tom George has overseen a physical transformation of the campus while also helping the university deepen its roots as an anchor institution in the St. Louis region. With his retirement approaching Sept. 1, he reflects on the people and moments that impacted his chancellorship.

### Chancellor

Thomas F. George

**Vice Chancellor  
for Advancement**  
Paul Herring

**Associate Vice  
Chancellor for  
Marketing and  
Communications**  
Bob Samples

**Senior Director  
of Communications**  
Justin Roberts

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Sara Bell

**Art Director/  
Design**  
Wendy Allison

**Photographer**  
August Jennewein

**Design**  
Marty Baragiola

**Writers**  
Sara Bell  
David Morrison  
Jessica Rogen  
Steve Walentik

**Printer**  
Ovid Bell Press, Inc.

## DEPARTMENTS

2..... Shutter Stop

6..... In the Spotlight

28..... UMSL Network

32..... You Belong



The University of Missouri–St. Louis publishes **UMSL MAGAZINE** for alumni and friends. The magazine highlights excellence at the university. Circulation is 105,000, and the magazine is released twice a year.

**UMSL Magazine** | Office of Marketing and Communications  
60 J.C. Penney Building | 1 University Blvd. | St. Louis, MO 63121  
magazine@umsl.edu | umsl.edu/magazine | 314-516-5827

**Address Updates** | Office of Alumni Engagement  
414 Woods Hall | 1 University Blvd. | St. Louis, MO 63121  
umslalumni.org | 314-516-5833

# 10

## Cultural exchange

In a Guatemalan trek, 12 nursing students learned traditional techniques to advance modern practice.

14

**End of an era**

Tom George, UMSL's longest-tenured chancellor, will retire Sept. 1 after 16 years of service.



16

**From soldier to civilian**

More than 400 veterans blend into the fabric of UMSL's student population. Civil engineering major Paul Nator and four others share stories about their transitions to higher education.

8

**Crusaders for character education**

Research and resources from the Center for Character and Citizenship are informing policy decisions around the globe.

22

**Replicating a mother's milk**

A PhD student is synthesizing natural sugars that could hold the keys to more nutritious baby formula.

25

**An open door**

Alumna Shante Duncan presents powerful messages to women across St. Louis and houses some of the most vulnerable.

TWO-TIME ALUMNUS. ASSOCIATE VICE PROVOST FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

# D'ANDRE BRADDIX

## IT'S ALL ABOUT UMSL.

When my friends and I get together, it's as if no time has passed. Our conversations are almost always about our golden days at UMSL. Last year, my friends and I hosted a mini-reunion with 22 other UMSL alumni. We spent the entire evening reminiscing about our time in student government, Greek life, going to UMSL basketball games and living on campus.

## I BECAME INTERESTED IN HIGHER EDUCATION FROM SEEING MYSELF AND OTHERS DEVELOP AT UMSL.

As a first-generation college student, I expected to grow academically when I came to UMSL, but I had no idea that I would also develop as a person. It's an amazing feeling when you see students realize their full potential, and working at UMSL allows me that opportunity every day.

## A DEFINING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## EACH DAY IS SO DIFFERENT. THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT MY JOB IN STUDENT AFFAIRS.

I oversee Student Social Services; Career Services; Residential Life and Housing; Student Involvement; the Millennium Student Center; Health, Counseling and Disability Access Services; Student Conduct and Community Standards as well as the strategic initiatives for the division. My work varies so much from day to day, but it's all about the student experience. The needs and interests of our students constantly shift, so we have to regularly re-evaluate our resources and services to ensure we're doing our best to support students.

## ONE OF OUR MAIN GOALS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS IS TO SEE MORE STUDENTS ENGAGED ON CAMPUS.

We are always seeking to get more students active on campus. Whether it's in the form of joining a student organization, living on campus, working out at the recreation center or grabbing a coffee with faculty or staff, we simply want our students to feel connected to UMSL. Engaged students help to create a more vibrant campus. Additionally, research shows that students who are involved on campus perform better academically and are more successful when job seeking after graduation.

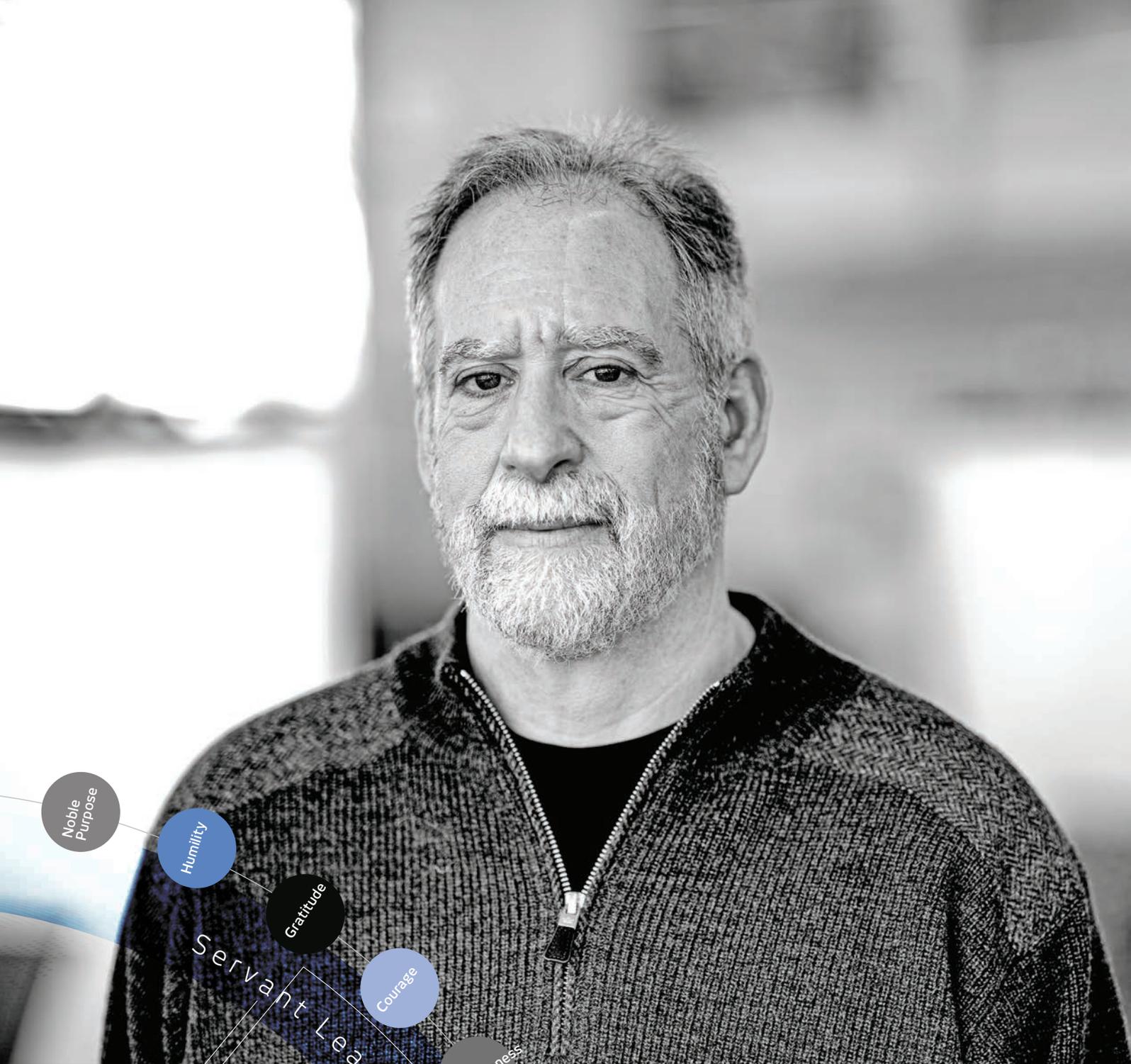
## DESCRIBING THE UMSL STUDENT EXPERIENCE IS THE MILLION-DOLLAR QUESTION.

We provide so many different opportunities for students at UMSL, it's almost impossible to generally define the student experience. However, I would definitely consider the diversity we promote across campus – coupled with our commitment to civil discourse and mutual respect – a major aspect of the UMSL student experience. Fortunately, there is nothing homogeneous about our campus, so students are constantly being exposed to people of different races, ages, religions, political views, etc. I believe that this exposure to different backgrounds and viewpoints provides our students with a fairly unique advantage in today's global society. ≡

## BRADDIX DEVELOPED HIS CAREER AT UMSL AND IS NOW WORKING TO PROVIDE THAT EXPERIENCE FOR OTHERS

As told to Sara Bell





Noble Purpose

Humility

Gratitude

Courage

Forgiveness

Foresight

Empowerment

Stewardship

Servant Leadership Virtues

In fall 2018, the John Templeton Foundation awarded a \$2.4 million grant that **supports further development of the Cultivating Virtue in Leaders program**. With the grant money, the center hopes to expand the CViL program to 100 educational leaders in the St. Louis region over the next three years.

In spring 2018, the center earned a \$3 million grant from the Kern Family Foundation **to support a professional development and mentoring program** aimed specifically at emerging school leaders.

\$2.4M

\$3M

By The Numbers

# CHARTING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Center for Character and Citizenship claims global attention for emerging school leader programs

By David Morrison

January wasn't even over and Marvin Berkowitz had already served as an international expert on character education in the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates to kick off 2019.

His calendar for the rest of the year, too, was nearly full. He had business trips to Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Colombia and Germany on the books.

Such is the life of one of the world's foremost experts in character education, a learning philosophy that prizes nurturing the development of core ethical values, virtues and critical thinking for students and school leaders alongside more traditional scholastic disciplines.

Berkowitz is one of the co-directors and the public face of the University of Missouri–St. Louis Center for Character and Citizenship, which exports research, programming and tutelage from its home in the College of Education to regional, national and international audiences of school and civic leaders.

The UAE and Colombia are calling upon the center's resources to inform national policies. Indonesian scholars are citing Berkowitz's papers daily as that nation's schools move toward a character education curriculum.

"A number of these countries are trying to do national healing and think that investing in the character of the citizenry is one of the important elements," Berkowitz says.

Melinda Bier, Berkowitz's co-director, says interest in character education is also on the rise in the U.S. and is even attracting the renewed support of government agencies. The final report of the Federal Commission on School Safety, presented to President Donald Trump in December, devoted a whole chapter to the topic. Berkowitz's PRIMED model – prioritization, relationships, intrinsic motivation, modeling, empowerment and developmental pedagogy – was included among the commission's five recommendations. Berkowitz developed the model through analysis of more than a decade of research into the outcomes different character education strategies produce in students, teachers and school administrators.

**"I tell principals all the time that, if they are effective at getting every teacher to be the best they can be, then they can sit in their office and play Angry Birds all day long and the school is going to be great,"** Berkowitz says. "Our primary task is shifting that

mindset to a focus on helping teachers be the best they can be. Ultimately this is about building a better world by nurturing the flourishing of human goodness in people."

The center has also found success as a clearinghouse for character education information. It has considerably widened the availability of its Leadership Academy in Character Education, which has accounted locally for nearly one in five designations for national schools and districts of character during the past decade.

Since its founding in 2005, the center has grown to encompass 18 full- or part-time staff members, including endowed professors, postdoctoral fellows, national award-winning school leaders, doctoral students and a senior scholar. It also has a network of local and national leading scholars and practitioners, along with a set of master's and doctoral-level graduate students.

Character education is also making inroads into some of the College of Education's postgraduate programs. With Dean Ann Taylor on board, the Department of Educator Preparation and Leadership added a required course in character education into the curriculum and is considering a leadership/character cohort in the EdD program.

**"There is a nationally recognized need for new approaches to leadership,"** Bier says. **"You have to look at different approaches to leading people.** A lot of that is around teams, around collaboration, around a lot of the principles that have been primary in character education, about building communities of character." ≡



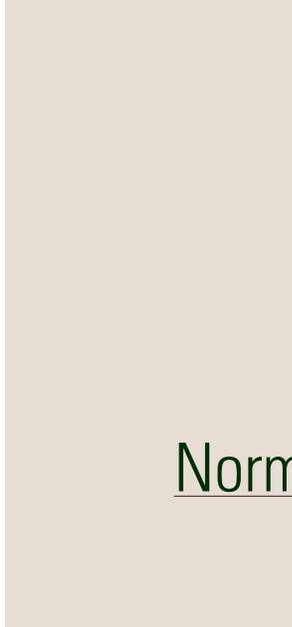
Left: Marvin Berkowitz, the Sanford N. McDonnell Endowed Professor in Character Education, is a leading expert in character education and developed the PRIMED model, which is being referenced by government agencies.

Above: Melinda Bier, co-director of the Center for Character and Citizenship, works with aspiring principals during a spring Character Education in Emerging Leaders Academy seminar.



# back to the BasiCs

Guatemala trip challenges nursing students to learn new diagnostic techniques, empowers future practice | By Jessica Rogen



## Norman Njihi

had already experienced a long morning of seeing patients when the translator suggested it would be a good moment for him to take his lunch break.

One more, Njihi insisted, and the translator called for the next in line.

It was a family of six.

"I was expecting one," the University of Missouri–St. Louis doctor of nursing practice student recalls, laughing. "Should I start with the youngest, or do I start with the oldest? The dynamics demanded a lot of time management, and of course, there's translation, so that takes time. Also, learning, if one child has this issue and the second child has this issue, you know what, you treat every single child."

Learning how to care for families rather than individuals was just one rare challenge Njihi and 11 of his College of Nursing peers faced this January in Guatemala. The trip was the inaugural excursion in what will be biannual study abroad opportunities. Every third year, the College of Nursing will return to the same villages and serve six communities in total.

Organized by Interim Associate Dean for Academic Programs Natalie Murphy in conjunction with the nonprofit Nursing Heart, Inc., the student nurses visited the indigenous communities of El Quimal La Joya and Alotenango, where they set up primary care and women's health clinics.

They served more than 550 patients, including three treated with cryotherapy for precancerous cervical lesions. During the weeklong experience, students earned three credits and 40 residency hours toward their degrees.

Assistant Teaching Professor Lisa Merritt accompanied Murphy, who, thanks to previous medical trips to Guatemala, knew how to prepare. She budgeted some of the cost of supplies into the trip fee, took donations and paid the remainder herself. Into their collective 27 suitcases, the group packed medication, basic equipment and supplies, entertainment and gifts for the children and one plastic princess crown, which Murphy wore until she bestowed it on her final patients, a mother and daughter.

**"I left behind a huge suitcase full of probably 75 pounds of medication,"** Murphy says. **"Mostly ibuprofen, Tylenol and vitamins. The pharmacist literally hugged me and cried because they would have meds for a couple weeks."**

Above: Interim Associate Dean for Academic Programs Natalie Murphy crowns a patient with a plastic tiara.

Center: DNP student Norman Njihi examines a young child in El Quimal La Joya.

Far left: Student nurse Kelly Lucash serves one of the 550 patients UMSL representatives cared for during the weeklong trip.

**In both villages, residents invited the student nurses into their homes, shared stories, cooked traditional lunches and performed elaborate welcoming and farewell ceremonies.** In El Quimal La Joya, which had never before been visited by medical providers, the group arrived to find that the community had created a pine bough and rose petal path leading to the site of the makeshift clinic – the schoolhouse.

“It was really beautiful,” psychiatric nurse practitioner student Rebecca Palmer says. “Whenever we were leaving, they had goodbye ceremonies for us, and they were just so thankful and grateful to have the access to the medical care those couple of days.”



Above left: The UMSL and Nursing Heart, Inc. team celebrates its arrival in El Quimal La Joya.

Above right: DNP student Rebecca Palmer learns how to prepare a traditional meal, including tortillas.

Top right: A pine bough and rose petal path led to the schoolhouse, which served as a makeshift clinic.

The 10 DNP and two RN-to-BSN students also spent two days in Antigua, where they recovered from the flight, explored and learned how cervical cancer lesions turn white when painted with a diluted vinegar solution. This screening technique was one of several back-to-basics tests the students mastered during the following days. Another was examining the conjunctival sac of the eye, which appears pale in anemic patients.

Learning how to diagnose patients without the ease of modern testing was part of what Murphy hoped her students would gain from the experience.

“They learn to depend on their own assessment skills, and you watch their confidence grow over the week,” she says. “It’s fun to watch them struggle through seeing four patients on Monday and be able to see 20 on Friday and do so in a really organized and effective way. It’s a neat thing to watch them grow.”

Aside from pelvic exams and cervical cancer screenings, the nurses treated high blood pressure, diabetes, skin infections, cerumen-impacted ears, old cooking fire injuries, malnutrition, parasites, anemia and more. They also assisted community members suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder due to a volcano eruption in June.

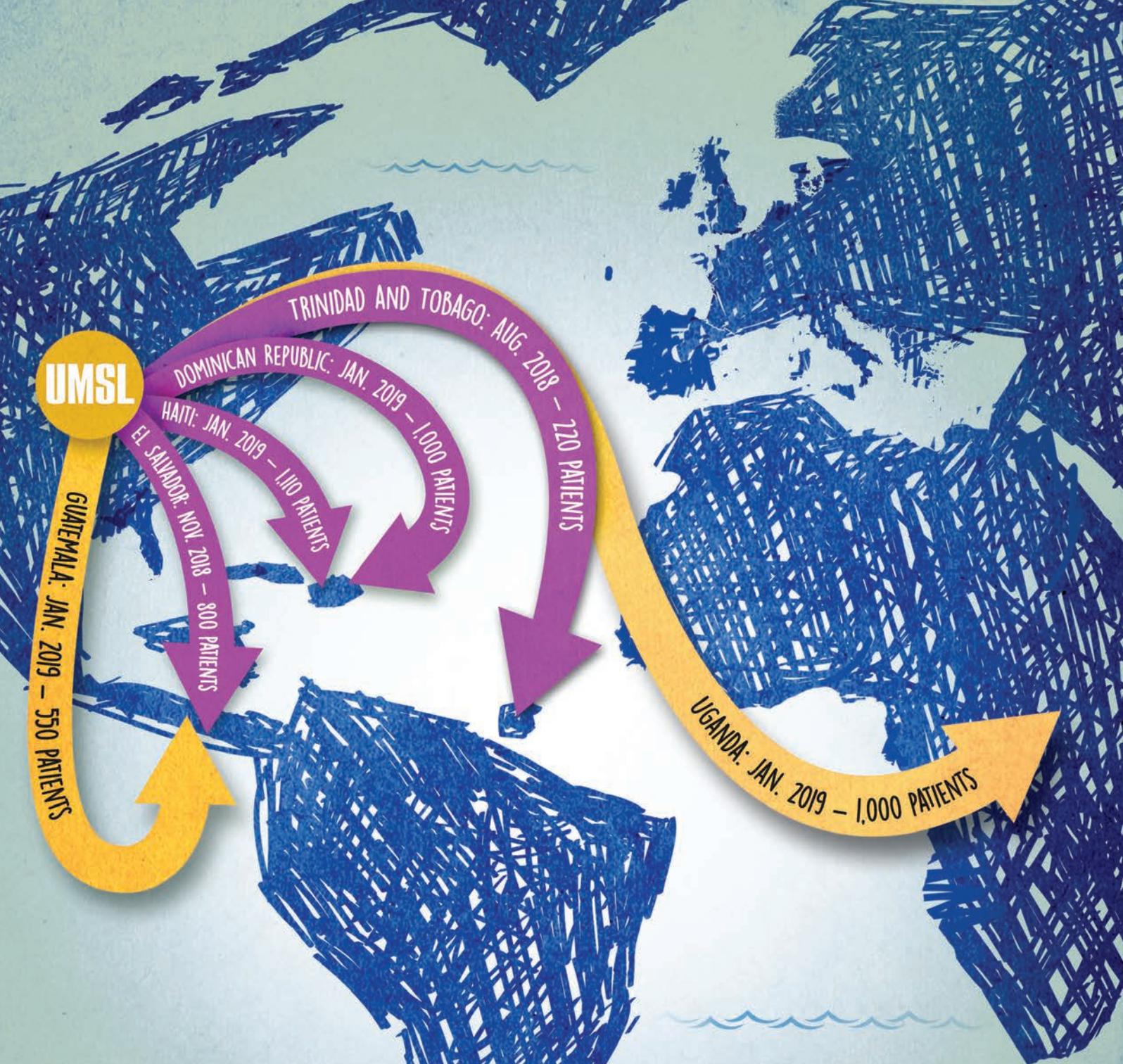
The lack of preventive care and services for Guatemala’s under-resourced communities reminded Njihi of rural areas of Kenya, his birthplace, and the

experience reinforced his desire to do medical missionary work. For Palmer, seeing the Guatemalans working to improve care within their country had a profound but opposite influence.

**“There was a lot of personal growth that came from this trip,” she says. “It switches you out of the ‘I want to go abroad and help people’ and refocuses you on underserved populations back at home.”**

According to Murphy, nursing students who study abroad are more likely to work with underserved populations in the U.S., have expanded attitudes on diversity, learn about culture and cultural humility and increase their skills as practitioners. She hopes to include College of Optometry students on future trips, which will teach all involved how to be effective on an interdisciplinary team.

“Another benefit for students is that the trip makes them remember why they became nurses,” she says. “You can get overwhelmed with practice here. That was the thing I heard all week long, ‘This has restored my soul. I am so excited to be a nurse again.’”



**UMSL**

**GUATEMALA: JAN. 2019 – 550 PATIENTS**

**EL SALVADOR: NOV. 2018 – 800 PATIENTS**

**HAITI: JAN. 2019 – 1,100 PATIENTS**

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: JAN. 2019 – 1,000 PATIENTS**

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: AUG. 2018 – 220 PATIENTS**

**UGANDA: JAN. 2019 – 1,000 PATIENTS**

**COLLEGE OF NURSING**

1,550 international patients served

**COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY**

3,130 international patients served

# AN INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

During the 2018-19 academic year, the College of Optometry and the College of Nursing treated a wide range of conditions around the world – from cataracts to precancerous cervical cells. Through six international trips, UMSL students and faculty had a lasting impact and gained valuable cultural and practical skills.

**STANDING INSIDE** his longtime Woods Hall office, Tom George systematically scans a towering bookcase. From top left to bottom right, he studies 21 shelves packed with 16 years of memories.

He first calls attention to a pointed stone plaque commemorating his distinguished service to higher education. George then moves down the row to a gold Rawlings football in a glass case. It's just one of the numerous accolades he's received from the Boy Scouts of America.

His brief review of the memorabilia collected during his years as chancellor of the University of Missouri–St. Louis continues from there until he reaches a photo of himself taped against a wall – a moment captured from a campus fundraiser for cancer research.

George's approach to outlining the contents of his bookcase is intentional with close attention to detail – similar to his leadership style.

Since 2003, he has led UMSL through a period of pronounced physical change and growth in almost every avenue. George has guided the university with a collaborative spirit and a passion for UMSL's mission of transforming lives.

His clear mark on the 56-year-old institution will remain well beyond his retirement on Sept. 1.

"When I think about leadership, personally and professionally, I think about the sense of integrity, trustworthiness and a concern for other people. These are the attributes about Chancellor George that resonate with me," Chief Diversity Officer Deborah Burris says. "It is through that leadership style of collaboration, of having the freedom to express oneself and banter different thoughts and ideas that has helped UMSL to be all that we are."

Under George's leadership, the university enrolled 311,810 students, set record numbers in research grants and philanthropic support, awarded 44,820 degrees and grew its local and global partnerships.

Highlights from his 16 years include celebrating UMSL's 50th anniversary, opening six new facilities and breaking ground on the Express Scripts headquarters on North Campus.

"I would call my time here productive. But I'm not talking about myself. I'm talking about the productivity of the campus and the university," says George, who is the longest-serving chancellor in

UMSL's history. "We've grown. We've matured. We've seized opportunities. I think that speaks to who we are. We're not staying complacent but rather always looking for opportunities."

Behind his actions to enhance the university is George's desire to create clear pathways for student success. Moments such as witnessing Marco Pipoly, UMSL's 100,000th graduate, cross the commencement stage or grasping a Paralympic gold medal won by 2015 alumnus Steve Cash make the laborious hours invested over the last 16 years worthwhile.

"You hear a lot about Dr. George being a chemist, writing books, authoring papers and being a jazz musician, but let me tell you what his greatest quality is: his passion for the students and propelling this school forward and making sure that this is a world-class organization developing the leaders for tomorrow," retired Express Scripts CEO and Chairman George Paz says. "A lot of employees over at Express Scripts are UMSL graduates, and it is what makes our company great."

In George's remaining months as chancellor, he will maintain a full schedule as a national search begins for his successor.

"We can't replace Chancellor George," University of Missouri System President Mun Choi says. "But what we are going to do is identify an individual who will carry on the outstanding tradition of caring deeply about our students, caring deeply about the research of our faculty that make a difference and extending the engagement opportunities to not only St. Louis but Missouri and the rest of the world."

Barbara Harbach, George's wife, is also retiring from her position as Curators' Distinguished Professor of Music, chair of the Department of Music and director of the School of Fine and Performing Arts. The couple has no firm plans for retirement, but George notes "UMSL and St. Louis will always be part of our past and future."

"I have nothing but the fondest memories of the University of Missouri–St. Louis," George says. "You tend to remember the good times, and there were tons of good times. I'm certainly going to remember those, whether it's the basketball game that we won at the buzzer, celebrating state and national awards that people received or opening new buildings. There are many, many good times that I'll think back on. But the people are what really make UMSL work. It's about the people." ≡



“It’s  
about  
the  
people”

RETIRING CHANCELLOR

**TOM GEORGE**

DEDICATES 16-YEAR  
TENURE TO UMSL

COMMUNITY | By Sara Bell





## ***Student veterans find community, place to launch new careers at UMSL***

By Steve Walentik

Veterans who gain the most attention in the United States typically fall into one of two categories.

There are the ones celebrated for the heroism they displayed while battling in war zones and the others who've returned broken from those same locales, battling conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and struggling to readjust to civilian life.

But most former soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen exist unnoticed somewhere in the wide space between.

# **SUCCESS AFTER SERVICE**

"There's this whole group of stealth veterans," says Joshua Perschbacher, director of the Veterans Center at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

"They probably sit in the same pew at church next to you. They're at the baseball games. And unless they are invited to stand up on 9/11 or Veterans Day, you might never know that person is a vet."

Currently, more than 400 student-veterans have found a home on the UMSL campus. They blend right into the rest of the student population as they work to earn their degrees and brighten their futures.

Here are a few of their stories.



**PAUL**  
**Nator**  
Former Green Beret,  
civil engineering student

**Paul Nator was attending Ranken Technical College and working construction jobs on the side back in 2010, but he couldn't escape this persistent feeling he could be doing something bigger.**

He enlisted in the United States Army and eventually earned his way into special forces, spending five years as a Green Beret. He served five deployments, including two in Iraq and three in Southeast Asia.

Nator was first deployed to Iraq as Operation Iraqi Freedom gave way to Operation New Dawn, but he returned years later as fighting flared up again. His experiences overseas shaped him.

"You go through these hardships and successes with people that are like you and understand you to coming back here, and it's just not the same I guess," Nator says. "It wasn't easy to leave behind."

Nator knew he had to find something to challenge himself as he transitioned out of military service. He thought the UMSL/WUSTL Joint Undergraduate Engineering Program could do just that.

He still had a difficult time leaving behind the camaraderie of his unit.

"It's cliché, but we fight for one another," he says. "I spent two years in the infantry and five years in special forces, and even more so on a special forces team, you know every single one of their wives and kids. It's a big family."

After discharging in 2017, he remained wary of returning to school and uncertain how he'd fit in after so much time away.

"I know at first I was very standoffish in thinking I might be too old for this," Nator says. "The commuter population and the veteran population made it easier than I originally thought."

Nator hasn't only been working toward his degree in civil engineering. He's also been studying entrepreneurship and spent four months last year interning with startup Jrop through the Ameren Accelerator program.

Just being in that environment and interacting with other interns inspired Nator to explore launching his own business.

He's brought his military expertise to Green Hat Shooting Solutions, which opened last May and provides firearms training. He also took part in the inaugural Entrepreneur Quest Student Accelerator as he grows the venture.

"As a business, we're really getting a lot of momentum," Nator says, "and having conversations with different military units that want to hire us on as contractors."



**MARGARET**  
Rheinecker  
Air Force veteran, nursing major

**Margaret Rheinecker spent seven years as an aerospace medical technician in the U.S. Air Force.**

“That’s a very long way of saying medic,” says Rheinecker, who was stationed most of that time at Nellis Air Force Base near Las Vegas.

The experiences she had working in the flight medicine clinic there and during three deployments – one to Kyrgyzstan and two to Qatar – gave her an up-close look at health care and ultimately steered her toward her intended career in nursing.

“I like interacting with patients and the ability to potentially help somebody – whether it’s just a minor scrape or abrasion or they’re on their deathbeds,” Rheinecker says. “It’s really rewarding.”

She started making plans to study nursing and had settled on UMSL after researching the BSN program and the Veterans Center even before she separated in July 2017.

Rheinecker started classes a month later and has been making steady progress toward her degree. The Dupon, Illinois, native had already had a year of college coursework at the University of Missouri–Columbia before her enlistment, and she’s now on track to graduate in 2020.

Ultimately, Rheinecker would like to end up working with trauma patients, either in an emergency room or trauma intensive care unit.

“I want to do something a little fast paced and a little bit more hands on,” she says. “When I did my rotations at the trauma center, I felt like I was able to help more. You could see anything from folks who were sick to somebody who broke a bone to a full trauma code.”

Rheinecker has maintained her military connections since she started school, serving one weekend a month and training two weeks a year in the Illinois Air National Guard. She hasn’t ruled out re-enlisting after graduation.

“I have not made that decision yet,” Rheinecker says. “I’ve just wanted to focus more on school. You always have the ability to go back to active duty. I’ve been kind of eyeballing it, but I’ll just have to see where it goes in two years.”

**Jarrett Hickman had been enjoying his time in the military, especially the stretch in which he was stationed overseas in Okinawa, Japan.**

“That place was like a vacation,” he says. “I would love to retire there.”

He also thought he was getting ideal training for the type of job he wanted post-service by working as a military police officer in the Marine Corps. But a freak back injury suffered while lifting weights during his stay at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina threw his future in criminal justice into disarray.

“I couldn’t sit in a patrol car longer than two or three hours, and it limited my ability to run,” he says.

Doctors didn’t recommend surgery but instead gave him spinal injections, and Hickman began working with a chiropractor while starting to reconsider his future.

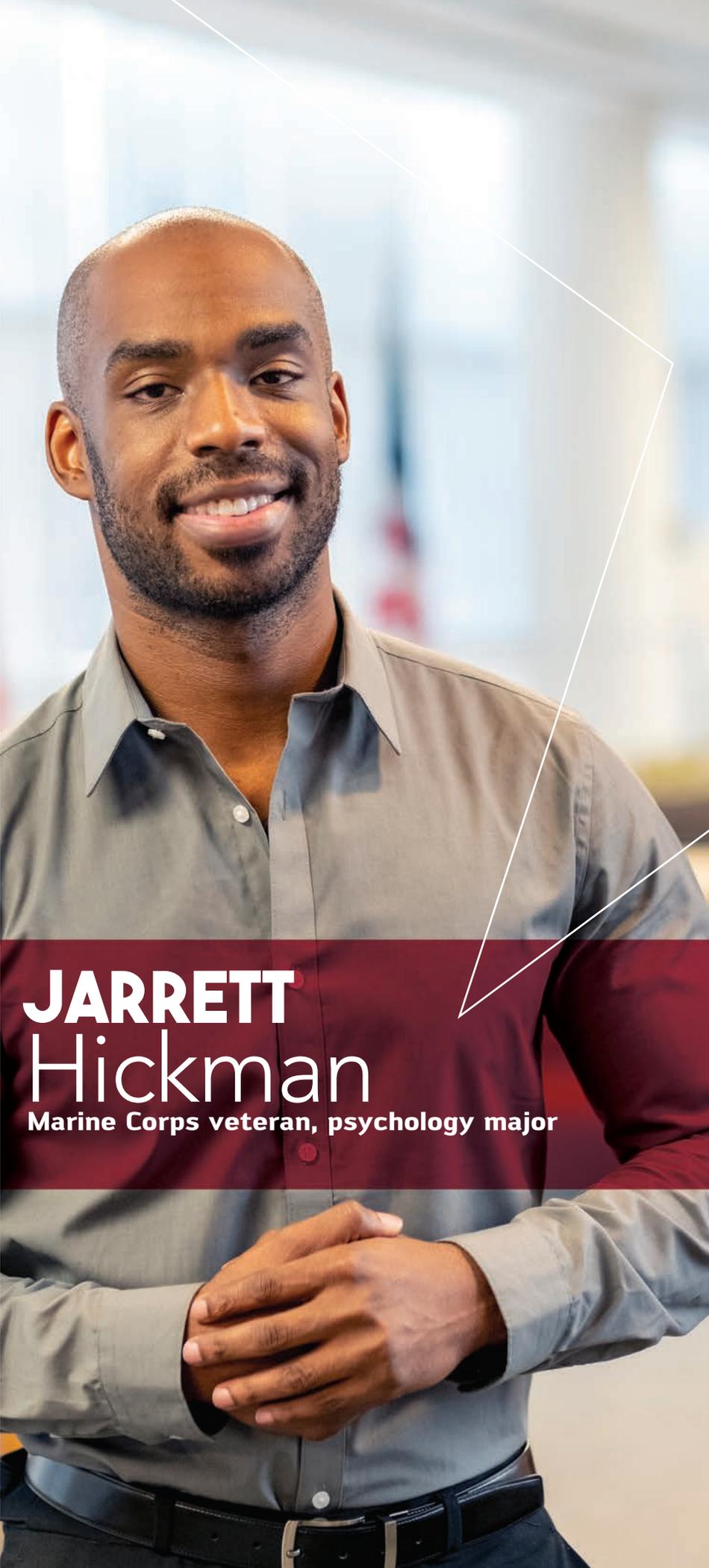
The native of Alton, Illinois, long had an interest in psychology, so he decided to pursue that upon separating from the corps after five years. He started at Lewis and Clark Community College and then transferred to UMSL at the urging of one of his instructors.

His first semester back in school was rough as he attempted to work full time and maintain a full course load with a child at home. He’s since dropped his job to focus solely on studying while his family has grown. He and his wife, Britney, now have three children, ages 1, 3 and 5.

Hickman’s on track to graduate this spring and has been applying to graduate programs. He wants to be a clinical psychologist, and he recognizes it’s a career that could help him serve other veterans.

“Right now, I’m studying PTSD in the lab, and I did that because, like most veterans, I’ve had people that I know who’ve committed suicide after getting out or right before they got out,” he says. “If I could learn skills to help people go through that transitioning process, I’d really like that.”

It’s not the only group he’s interested in serving. He’s also honing his Spanish skills so he can work as a bilingual counselor because he sees a need among the growing Hispanic immigrant population.

A portrait of Jarrett Hickman, a Black man with a short beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt over a dark red shirt. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is a blurred indoor setting. A white geometric line graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# JARRETT Hickman

Marine Corps veteran, psychology major

**Tori Tappe feels called to support other veterans. It's the whole reason she's at UMSL pursuing her bachelor's degree – and then maybe a master's – in social work.**

Tappe, who transferred from junior college in Kentucky last fall, isn't certain yet if she wants to work at a Veterans Affairs hospital or another nonprofit catering to former troops. In fact, she hasn't ruled out the idea of re-enlisting in the Marine Corps and working inside the military structure.

But she knows she wants to help.

Being a support to her fellow Marines remains the thing she loved most about her time in service, which included working as an airframe mechanic on EA-6B Prowlers and ultimately serving as a work center supervisor. She assisted junior Marines, connecting them with resources and helping them through difficult times.

Tappe also can't forget the impact a military and family licensed counselor had in the wake of her 16-year-old brother Hank's suicide, not long after she returned from her first deployment to Japan in 2013.

"I talked to him, and I knew that was what I wanted to do," Tappe says. "I've been through some stuff. I knew I wanted to be there for people who needed help. He was there for me at my darkest time."

Tappe, who grew up in Union, Missouri, and enlisted in the Marines within weeks of her high school graduation in 2011, feels an incredible kinship with fellow veterans.

She fought some depression when she first returned to civilian life in 2016 and again last summer when she was moving back to Missouri and waiting to begin classes at UMSL.

But school has kept her active and upbeat, and she finds fulfillment volunteering at the Veterans Center.

"Staying busy is my thing, and it keeps me focused," Tappe says. "Sometimes I miss it, and until I started working at the Veterans Center, I felt off. But those are my people, and I fit in so well. It's fun. I love talking to different people, hearing their stories and just telling my story to them."



# TORI Tappe

**Marine Corps veteran,  
social work student**



# PATRICK Murrell

Marine Corps veteran,  
business alumnus

**December proved to be a whirlwind for Patrick Murrell, who wrapped up his BSBA with dual emphases in finance and international business and rolled almost immediately into a new job at TD Ameritrade.**

The first couple months there weren't exactly calm either, as he tried to prepare for the Series 7 and Series 63 exams he needed to pass to become a licensed stockbroker.

With those challenges behind him, he's started settling into his position in financial services, speaking to clients and guiding them on potential trades.

It's the type of work Murrell imagined himself doing when he decided to go back to school as he was leaving the Marine Corps infantry in 2015.

"I really wanted to get into finance specifically as a part of business," Murrell says. "I liked the numbers game of it. There was something about it that just seemed interesting that you could make money with money. It fascinated me."

He'd done some investigating and decided even before his service time ended that UMSL was the right school to help him get there. It was close enough to where he grew up in west St. Louis County, provided an accredited program and didn't require him to stretch the benefits he had

available through the GI Bill after serving for 4½ years, including a deployment to Asia with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Murrell had been studying criminal justice at Southeast Missouri State University when he decided to enlist in 2011. UMSL made it easy for him to transfer his existing credits.

He points to Lead Undergraduate Business Advisor Monica Farrell and staff members in the Veterans Center for showing him the most efficient path to his degree while even building in time to study Arabic.

"Everything was pretty user friendly, especially with the amount of hands-on attention you get with advisors that would help you with your schedule," Murrell says. "For the amount of value you get, UMSL was a really great school for business." ≡

THE  
OF FUTURE



# F o r m u l a

UMSL TECHNOLOGY COULD HELP  
UNLOCK THE KEYS TO BETTER  
BABY NUTRITION

By Steve Walentik



Chemistry PhD candidate Mithila Bandara (at right) shows Alexei Demchenko, a Curators' Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, the product of her work attempting to synthesize complex molecules found in breast milk.

ID 134968252 © Elena Nichizhenova | Dreamstime.com



M

ithila Bandara dons clear safety glasses and scoops white powdery substances into a small round-bottom flask.

She pours in some clear solvent and adds a magnet that will help stir it all together. Next, she might apply heat or cooling as she sparks the chemical reaction she hopes will prove a crucial step in piecing together a complex molecule.

It's slow work for Bandara, a doctoral candidate who's passed untold hours this way over the past 2½ years while working in the lab of Alexei Demchenko, a Curators' Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

Bandara has been trying to chemically replicate the sugars that occur naturally in breast milk – called human milk oligosaccharides.

So far, she's managed to synthesize four molecules. But there are 162 or more found in human breast milk, and researchers around the globe have struggled to isolate and recreate them in the lab.

Bandara remains optimistic about the work.

"I'm actually really happy to contribute because it's something nowadays that everyone is talking about," Bandara says. "I think I'm doing something useful."

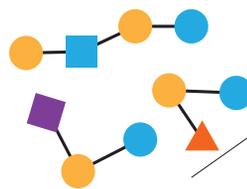
Interest in human milk oligosaccharides stems from the role they're thought to play in babies' health, boosting immune systems and blocking pathogens. They have probiotic effects, helping infants develop friendly bacteria in the digestive system. Many believe they also provide important building blocks for the brain.

# 162+

oligosaccharides  
found in breast milk

They have probiotic effects, helping infants develop friendly bacteria in the digestive system. Many believe they also provide important building blocks for the brain.

oligosaccharides  
älägō sakə rīd



It's no surprise then that manufacturers of baby formula are intrigued by the possibilities that adding synthetically produced human milk oligosaccharides might have for improving their products.

Already, two relatively simple sugars found in breast milk have been created with the help of enzymes and approved for use in formulas in the United States and Europe. Three more are set to be introduced in a clinical trial in Europe.

Demchenko is a synthetic carbohydrate chemist whose lab frequently participates in collaborative biologic studies or food chemistry, but he has no illusions of getting involved in formula manufacturing. He has received a grant of more than \$2 million from the National Institutes of Health, a portion of which is specifically set aside to help produce human milk oligosaccharides synthetically. He's hoping other scientists might use the molecules produced in his lab to more easily identify them in breast milk and test their specific antimicrobial properties.

He's been collaborating with Carlito Lebrilla, a distinguished professor of chemistry at the University of California, Davis, whose lab is working to determine bioactive components in milk.

"If all of the individual molecules were available, people would understand their properties and their roles much better," Demchenko says. "A mother produces a cocktail of 100 compounds, but scientists don't know exactly which one does what."

Ultimately, Demchenko wants to move beyond the traditional methods Bandara has been using to create these molecules.

In collaboration with UMSL Professor of Chemistry Keith Stine, Demchenko's lab is developing technology for automated synthesis, in which a computer tells a machine how to more efficiently mix the chemicals and run the reaction. The process of making human milk oligosaccharides appears to line up well with the technology.

"We're teaching the machine to deliver all the building blocks that Mithila would synthesize into the system," Demchenko says. "With the pumps that are part of the machine, we'll pump the reaction mixture through, and we will assemble molecules that way.

"All you need is to place compounds in vials. You don't even need to dissolve anything. They're dry compounds. You put them in the tray, you stick the tray into the machine, you program the software, press the button, go home, come back, you've got the molecule ready."

The technology could help advance the science that goes into improving nutrition at such a crucial stage of life. ≡

# defining “I’m my own path”

She teaches.

She empowers.

She houses women in need.

And now  
Shante Duncan aims  
to build up north St. Louis.

By Sara Bell

**At 8 o'clock on a miserably cold February morning, eight middle school girls shuffle into their school library one by one. The first student with a bright smile shouts a morning greeting as she walks in and pins her hair into a ponytail. Another arrives, leans her head on the center table and begins to explain that she's coming down from a sugar rush caused by her morning breakfast.**

After six others find unique routes to their seats, the girls make another round of individual introductions. They begin by affirming themselves – some touting their inner strengths, others their outer beauty – and end by saying something positive about the person sitting next to them, creating a space for empowerment and a community of sisterhood.

Such is the routine for L.O.V.E. Project instructor Shante Duncan four days a week in nine schools across the St. Louis region.

Duncan, a 2007 communication alumna of the University of Missouri–St. Louis, is the founder and executive director of the grassroots nonprofit S.H.E.R.A.H. – short for Sisters Helping Each Other Reach A Higher Height.

She started the organization in 2004 when she hosted a few old friends at her house for a night of bonding as she tried to navigate the end of an unhealthy relationship. Today, she's expanded the simple fellowship group into a growing nonprofit that empowers a substantial number of St. Louisans through community sister circles, a safe house for women who have experienced complex trauma and an in-school educational program.

"When I started S.H.E.R.A.H., it wasn't with the intention of me educating women about what it takes to be empowered. That was so far from my reality," she says. "We started as an honest, safe space for women. We had no intention of being anything other than that. We were just trying to figure out how to become the best versions of ourselves."

**"We started as an honest, safe space for women. We had no intention of being anything other than that. We were just trying to figure out how to become the best versions of ourselves."**

While that remains a major objective, Duncan's vision for S.H.E.R.A.H. continues to evolve.

Her latest project – the Joan B. Quinn Safe House – opened in April 2018 as an eight-person residence that houses women who are recovering from sexual violence, transitioning out of incarceration or have experienced homelessness. The three-bedroom home, which was previously owned and renovated by Bill and Mary Neumann of Changing Lives Today, provides a free living space for the residents, who also receive food, clothes and other necessities.

Duncan had long hoped to establish such a space since she frequently opens her family home to women who reach out to S.H.E.R.A.H. for a safe place to stay.





In late 2017, Duncan received a text from a friend saying that the Neumanns were looking to sell their north St. Louis property to an organization with a similar mission. About 30 other agencies, including some of the largest in St. Louis, were interested in the space. Duncan didn't think S.H.E.R.A.H.'s offer would stand up against the resources of these other organizations, but her husband urged her to submit a proposal to see if her vision for the home would align with the Neumanns' hopes for the next owner.

A few weeks later, Duncan invested her family's personal savings into purchasing the property, signed the paperwork and added an important accessory to her key ring.

"I got to a point where I was overwhelmed with telling women who needed a place to stay that I couldn't help and giving them referrals to places that also couldn't help them," Duncan says. "Having that on my spirit was wearing me out. Now, the women are doing well, getting connected to life skills and have access to therapy. We always tell them that this is not a shelter. This is a home."

Soon, she hopes to purchase other dilapidated buildings in north St. Louis to house additional women, create another safe house for minors who have experienced sexual violence and revitalize the neighborhood.

The origins of this passion date back to childhood. At 10, Duncan remembers walking past a vacant lot on her way home from school and offering a simple prayer: "God, if you can get me out of here, I promise I will come back and be a resource for people in my community."

She's done just that.

Meghan O'Donnell, a longtime friend of Duncan's, was an early participant in S.H.E.R.A.H.'s sister circles, a women's networking group that focuses on a variety of topics such as business development, spirituality and parenthood. She was 18 at the time of her first meeting and struggling to find a sense of belonging after graduating from high school. Duncan and other attendees helped O'Donnell find a community and establish challenging but attainable goals for the next period of her life.

"When you hear about meditating and self-love it seems so foreign. But when I started joining the sister circles, I noticed that it kept me focused throughout the week and focused on my goals," says O'Donnell who is now an on-air personality for Radio One St. Louis.



"I was learning things about myself that I would have ignored otherwise. Shante really helped me learn to believe in myself. I've never had someone who is such a living resource."

Duncan also serves as a resource to elementary, middle and high school girls across the region. S.H.E.R.A.H.'s in-school program – known as the L.O.V.E. Project – is focused on empowering girls of color between the ages of 9 and 17. The curriculum, which is written and delivered by Duncan, centers on four core areas: self-love, sisterhood, community development and entrepreneurship. She hopes the eight weeks spent on each of these principles will allow students to identify their talents and community projects they are passionate about while also overcoming issues and stereotypes specific to African American girls.

"I've made my own way, and I'm defining my own path," she says. "My passion is to create a platform for more Shante Duncans from north St. Louis and for us to create the type of life that we want in our communities. I want to see us in a certain space. I always believe that it starts with women and girls. I believe if women can remember how powerful, amazing and beautiful we are and share that with our daughters, we can build up our community." ≡

# MISOOK YU'S flat-fee financial planning brings stability to St. Louis small businesses

By Jessica Rogen



Her score meant she'd get a subprime rate, which would limit her saving power.

Yu figured she wasn't the only person caught unaware by credit's pervasiveness.

"In Korea, I was working in a brokerage firm, and I thought I was smart, and I just needed to have a good job and make a lot of money," she says. "But I realized that is not enough because the financial laws are so complex in America. Even if you save the same amount of money, depending on where you put it, you can get a tax deduction, not pay taxes on profits until retirement and be protected from creditors."

So, Yu enrolled at UMSL, where faculty members such as Gary Flotron and Thomas Eyssell answered her every question.

"I was shameless," Yu says, laughing. "If I did not understand something, I would see the professor after class. They were very, very nice and helped me to the end."

The Korean community in St. Louis was Yu Financial Advice's initial base, though it has expanded since thanks to her unique model. She charges a flat fee, which allows her to serve all clients equally regardless of their income and assets, and enables small business owners to start a retirement plan with low costs.

To that end, Yu published her book, "Achieving Financial Stability in America," in English and Korean. One day, she hopes, financial planners won't be needed.

"I cannot tell you how many people I see who made very good money over their lifetimes but did not achieve financial stability," she says. "As they get older, they feel poorer and don't even know why. I want to change that." ■■■

To hear Misook Yu recount contrasting Chapter 7 bankruptcy tales is to understand how deeply she cares for her clients.

Voice breaking, she explains that she'd picked up the phone to find a man with a question. An immigrant and small business owner, he'd done well. Then the recession hit. He knew bankruptcy would strip him of everything but was terrified he'd lose the cash in his bank account as well.

He would.

Yu compares him with another man who protected his 401(k) savings thanks to his planner's understanding of financial law.

Universal financial know-how is Yu's *raison d'être*.

At 40, she enrolled at the University of Missouri–St. Louis and, in 2012, graduated *summa cum laude* from the College of Business Administration. After a year at Edward Jones, the certified financial planner opened Yu Financial Advice, which specializes in retirement planning for small business owners.

"A lot of what I do is helping people without money," she says. "What I want to see is that people who cannot hire highly qualified financial planners help themselves so they won't have to have a sleepless night worrying if they will ever be able to retire or if they can send their kids to college."

Originally interested in programming, Yu immigrated from South Korea to St. Louis while in her mid 20s to study at St. Louis Community College–Florissant Valley. Despite swearing to her parents she'd return after college or "make soup with her 10 fingers," Yu met her husband while in school. They got married and raised two sons, and Yu settled in.

While purchasing a house, she was dismayed to learn about credit in the U.S.

Brain injury  
inspires **KEVIN  
GEEKIE**  
to earn  
degree,  
assist others

By David Morrison

It was supposed to be a simple procedure.

Back in 2006, when Kevin Geekie was 26 years old, he went into the hospital to get a benign tumor removed from his cerebellum, at the back of his brain. Expected recovery time: two weeks.

"I was in there for six months," Geekie says. "I started taking a nosedive. I was doing fine. Then, all of a sudden, I did really bad."

Geekie developed an infection that drove him into a coma. Through the ordeal, he developed ataxia, a nervous system condition that resulted in severe motor and speech impairments and left him using a wheelchair.

It took Geekie some time to get used to his new life. Once he did, though, he knew he wanted to make a difference for others in a similar situation.

"I've been through it. I live with brain injury," Geekie says. "Now I'm talking to you: not sleeping in bed, being depressed. Just get out and do it. You've got to do it."

Geekie is pursuing his bachelor's degree in social work at the University of Missouri–St. Louis and expects to graduate in May 2020. He started taking one class at a time in 2013 but became motivated to do more around the time his mother passed away two years later.

"It's been challenging, slow," Geekie says. "Because of my disability, I can only take two or three classes at a time, so what takes people two years takes me four or five, maybe. It's really good to be near graduation. It's like seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

For a project in his Human Services Organizations class last fall, Geekie and his group developed a \$10,000 grant proposal to Ameren Missouri to fund



a counseling program for people with brain injuries. The course instructor, Associate Professor of Social Work Baorong Guo, says the project is no mere exercise. She expects students to do the research, collect the paperwork, make contacts and submit an actual proposal for consideration.

"He's a very devoted student, very dedicated to his learning," Guo says. "He has benefited from the services provided by social service organizations and, in the future, he really wants to give back to the community using his skills and expertise."

After earning his degree, Geekie hopes to work with the Brain Injury Foundation of St. Louis, helping people with brain injuries find employment. ≡

# ALEX ZVIBLEMAN

– UMSL’s first entrepreneurship graduate – eyes investment in university area

By Sara Bell

Alex Zvibleman didn’t intend to be at the University of Missouri–St. Louis for long.

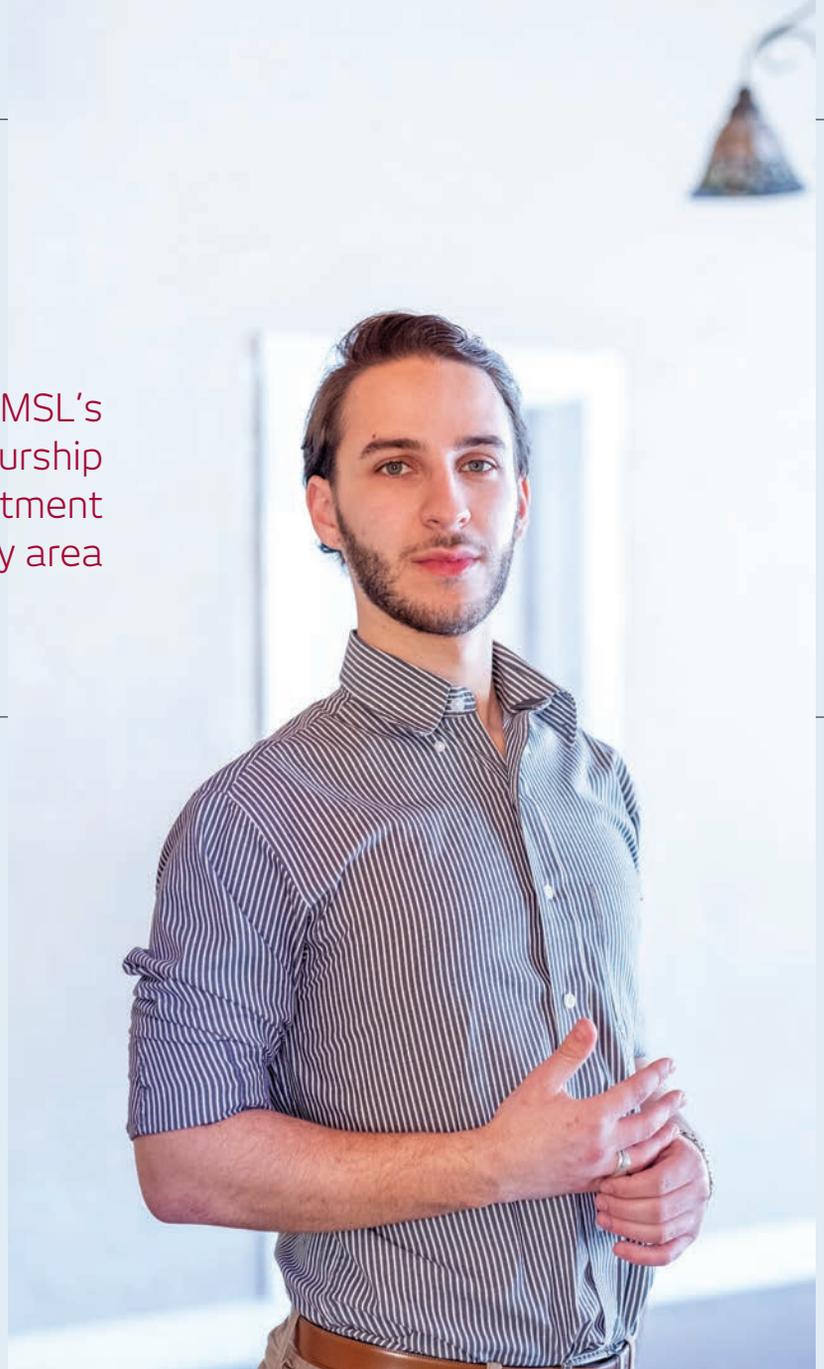
He assumed the local institution would be a one-semester stop as he spent time with his ailing grandfather. But three years later, Zvibleman’s still networking in the Millennium Student Center, scheduling meetings with university administrators and captivating UMSL audiences with his entrepreneurial ideas.

“I just couldn’t leave,” Zvibleman says with a smile. “I was going to go to Tulane University, but this place is just so cool, and there is so much potential here. You can really be a big fish in a small pond. What you put into it, you’ll get out.”

The potential Zvibleman originally saw in UMSL will keep him in the area a little longer.

He plans to open a coffee shop later this summer about a block from campus down Natural Bridge Road. The business’ name – Seize the Bean – and concept center around Zvibleman’s desire to foster a community of fellowship and drive social development among UMSL’s commuter population. He says patrons can expect a quality cup of their favorite caffeinated beverage and to be greeted at the door with reminders to seize the opportunities around them.

“I wanted to create a space in the area that’s for UMSL,” he says. “I realized that the community here is my passion. I wanted to focus on our students because I knew I could do better for UMSL. We’ll be the environment that students need and help further the culture that UMSL deserves.”



As he prepares for the venture, Zvibleman hopes to adopt the skills and networks he’s created as UMSL’s first entrepreneurship graduate – a business degree emphasis formally approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education this spring.

During his undergraduate years, he’s run the gamut of UMSL’s entrepreneurial offerings. He served as an officer for the Entrepreneur Club, secured a competitive internship in the inaugural Ameren Accelerator and won \$10,000 as a finalist in UMSL’s first Entrepreneur Quest Student Accelerator.

He says these experiences, paired with a traditional education, focused his ambitions and provided pathways to explore the array of skills necessary to be a successful entrepreneur.

“UMSL has elevated me to a point where I can admire and appreciate my past but can also see where I could go in the future,” he says. “Since coming here, I’ve become much more grounded. The education I received is key because I knew what I wanted and needed for my business ideas, but I didn’t know how to get those things. My education has helped me learn to seize opportunities, and I hope to pass that on to others as well.”

# KATHY OSBORN

joins select list  
as St. Louis Citizen of the Year

By David Morrison

A picture sits on Kathy Osborn's desk at the Regional Business Council office in Clayton. It depicts Osborn and noted philanthropist E. Desmond Lee together on stage at the Mark Twain Athletic Center, grinning in anticipation of celebrating then-Chancellor Blanche Touhill being named the 1997 St. Louis Post-Dispatch Citizen of the Year.

Touhill was the first woman to ever earn the honor, and Osborn was her vice chancellor of university relations at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

"We had a very strong working relationship. There was a high degree of trust," says Osborn, who earned both a BS in education in 1970 and an MEd in 1974 from UMSL. "That was a very significant moment. Little did I think, 20 years later, I would be receiving the honor."

In December, Osborn became the third woman ever to earn the Citizen of the Year award from the Post-Dispatch. As president and CEO of the RBC, Osborn's job is to marshal the resources of St. Louis-area businesses toward transformative business, civic and philanthropic affairs for the betterment of the region.

There was no job description for this post when Osborn left UMSL to take it in 1999. She started with a steering committee of 20 business leaders to gauge interest and mold early initiatives then quickly expanded the council to its current membership, which is capped at 100.

The RBC has spearheaded ventures such as massive collections for the United Way – \$200 million over the past 20 years – the development of a Young Professionals Network that currently includes 4,200 minority employees from area companies and the Reinvest North County Fund that raised nearly \$1 million to benefit Ferguson and surrounding areas after the civil unrest of 2014.

"In our society, there are really only two ways to grow and develop: You need an education and you need a job," Osborn says. "The quicker you can get people on that path of independence, the better. How can we take business knowledge and work in collaboration with the public sector to help people get the skills and education they need to succeed?"



Osborn says she benefited from working her way through UMSL at a time when it was still young. Her years working at her alma mater, teaming up with Touhill on initiatives such as the Des Lee Collaborative Vision, too, springboarded Osborn into her current role. The Des Lee Collaborative Vision currently endows 23 professorships at UMSL and helps make the university a draw for leading experts in a variety of fields.

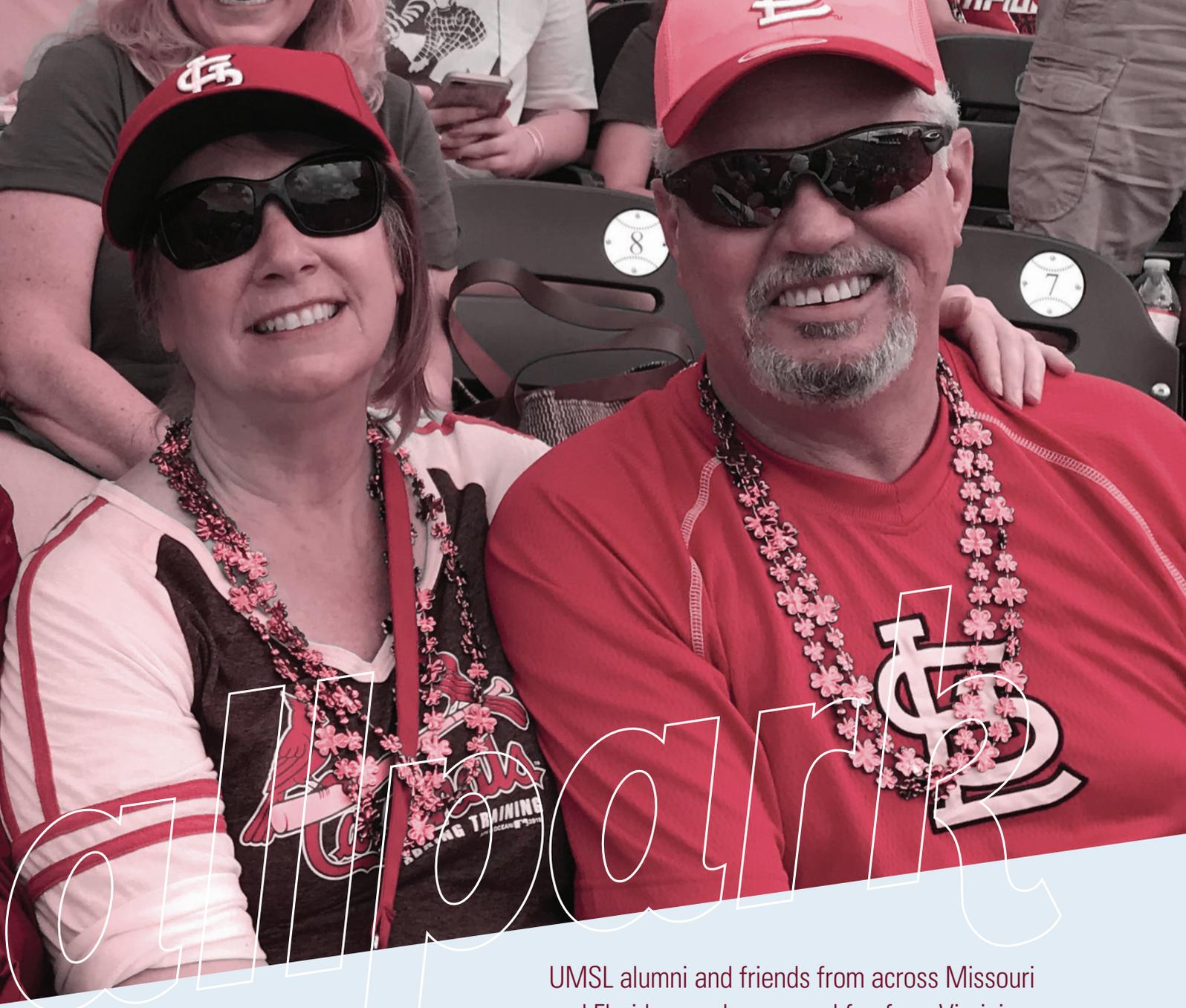
She maintains a frequently updated list of the nearly 40 civic awards she's earned during her career, from the UMSL Trailblazer Award in 1997 to the 2018 United Way of Greater St. Louis Freeman-Kortkamp Award for her years of volunteer service.

"Since I was a young girl, I've had a sense of purpose: I wanted to do something to help make this a better place," Osborn says. "I guess at the end of the day, hopefully, I have done that." ■■■



# At the 13

**YOU**  
BELONG



# Outings

UMSL alumni and friends from across Missouri and Florida – and one proud fan from Virginia – converged in Jupiter, Florida, on St. Patrick’s Day to cheer on the St. Louis Cardinals during spring training.

More than 60 people tailgated outside Roger Dean Chevrolet Stadium before heading inside to watch an afternoon of baseball. Among that group, (from left) Paula Harvey, BEd 1970, MEd 1974, and David Harvey, BSBA 1972, joined friends Karen Wadley and James Carroll. The annual spring training event is starting to grow, and more Cardinals outings are in the works for Kansas City, Denver and St. Louis this fall and at additional locations in Florida next spring.

**Stay Connected** | We want to hear from you! Share your news, photos and follow us.



**Keep in Touch** | Help UMSL and your classmates stay connected by sending career updates, wedding announcements and notice of alumni outings to [alumni@umsl.edu](mailto:alumni@umsl.edu), 314-516-5833 or [umslalumni.org](http://umslalumni.org).



## CLASS NOTES

### 1960s

**Gary Jacob**, BS 1969, was appointed as CEO of Immuron Limited.

### 1970s

**Gloria Clark Reno**, BA 1973, was elected the presiding judge of the 21st Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri.

**Joel Goodman**, BSAJ 1976, was selected as one of the San Diego State University School of Public Affairs' 50 distinguished alumni in November. Joel retired from the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 2008 after 31 years.

**Maria Perron**, BA 1977, was elected president of the Legal Services of Eastern Missouri Board of Directors. Maria is a partner of the Perron Law Firm in St. Louis and practices personal injury, medical malpractice and employment law.

**Terry Moss**, BSBA 1978, was promoted to senior vice president at Central Bank of St. Louis. Terry created and manages the bank's multimillion-dollar consumer automobile lease portfolio.

### 1980s

**Sandra Van Trease**, BSBA 1982, was elected to the board of directors for the National Association of Accountable Care Organizations. Sandra is a group president for BJC HealthCare in St. Louis and is responsible for overall business and growth strategies for a select group of BJC's community hospitals.

**Kenneth Marx**, BSBA 1983, was named the chief financial officer of Ranken Jordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital.

**Frank Cusumano**, BA 1984, was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. Frank is the sports director at KSDK Channel 5 in St. Louis, where he has worked since 1993. Frank has won 17 Emmys, including the Best Sports Anchor award for his storytelling and sports coverage.

**Thomas Reilly**, MA 1984, wrote "Hope in the Shadows of War," published by Koehler Books. The novel focuses on a Vietnam War veteran's return home. Thomas is the founder and chairman of Tom Reilly Training in Chesterfield.

**Laura Benedict**, BSBA 1985, wrote "The Stranger Inside," published by Mulholland Books. Laura is the author of seven suspense novels.

**John Nations**, BSBA 1985, joined Evans & Dixon as a member and practice chair in the firm's business services group. Prior to joining the firm, Nations served three terms as mayor of Chesterfield.

**Patrick Chunn**, BSBA 1987, was appointed to the University of Missouri-St. Louis Chancellor's Council in January. Patrick is the chief financial officer for Diamond Health-care Corporation in Virginia.

**Julie Eckhoff**, BSEd 1987, received an Excellence in Teaching Award from Emerson Electric in November. Julie teaches at Henderson Elementary School in St. Charles.

**Scott Ream**, OD 1987, was appointed to the State Board of Optometry by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson. Scott is an optometrist at Ream Optometry in Thayer, Missouri.

**Stephen Cook**, OD 1988, rejoined the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in Corpus Christi after 28 years of running a private practice near Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri.

### 1990s

**Brian Weaver**, BA 1990, MA 1998, received an Apple for the Teacher award from the Alpha Zeta Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority in November. Brian teaches in the Jennings School District.

**Alice Weaver**, BSEd 1991, received an Apple for the Teacher award from the Alpha Zeta Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority in November. Alice teaches in the Jennings School District.



Left: Lisa Yanker, MBA 1991, enjoys the reception and remarks portion of the **Pierre Laclede Society Community Confluence** on Feb. 12 in the Millennium Student Center.

The evening of drinks and dialogue between alumni and donors offered presentations from seven UMSL professors, student finalists in the Entrepreneur Quest Student Accelerator program and St. Louis Public Radio reporter Eli Chen.

*Photo courtesy of Sara Wilson Photography*



Right: UMSL Police Department Lieutenant Tom McEwen, BSAJ 1990, and Captain Marisa Smith, BLS 2017, proudly display the UMSL phone holders delivered to them by the Office of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving.

More than 350 other gifts were personally delivered to alumni who work at UMSL as part of an on-campus engagement project.

**Michael Van Well**, BS 1994, joined Alliance Technologies in St. Louis as a manager of client services.

**Heidi Eckert**, BSW 1995, became a partner in the newest branch of FordHarrison in Clayton.

**Linda Wimpfheimer**, MEd 1995, was appointed to the Committee for Professional Counselors by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson. Linda is a licensed professional counselor and owner of the Marriage & Family Institute in Clayton.

**Clayton Bellamy**, BA 1996, joined Griffin Communications in Oklahoma as a director of analytics.

**Jamie Buchner**, BEd 1996, received an Excellence in Teaching Award from Emerson Electric in November. Jamie teaches at Fort Zumwalt West High School.

**James Lehn**, BSBA 1996, serves as president of St. Pius X High School in Festus, Missouri.

**Kelly Johnson**, BA 1997, was appointed as a United States Immigration judge by the U.S. attorney general in October. Kelly will preside over the immigration court located in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Robert Broeckelmann**, BS 1999, joined Iya CyberSecurity Solutions as a managing director.

**Coleen Rakers**, MSN 1999, joined Pana Medical Group as an adult nurse practitioner.

**Angela Pearson**, BS 1992, was promoted to senior vice president, wealth management market leader, at PNC Bank in St. Louis.

**Elke Buckland**, BA 1993, was named the vice president of development at Boone Center, Inc., a nonprofit that provides employment and vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities.

**Bryan Bethel**, BSEd 1994, joined Battle of Pilot Knob State Historic Site as a natural resource manager in August. Bryan's responsibilities also include management of Elephant Rocks State Park and Dillard Mill State Historic Site.

**Paul Fregeau**, MEd 1994, received the Herald & Review's 2018 Newsmaker of the Year award, which is given annually to the

person who had the biggest impact on the Decatur, Illinois, community. Paul has served as superintendent of the Decatur School District since July 2017.

**Amy Hunter**, BA 1994, was recognized by the YWCA Metro St. Louis as a 2018 Leader of Distinction. Amy is a manager of diversity and inclusion for St. Louis Children's Hospital.

**Veta Jeffery**, BS 1994, joined the board of directors of the Empowerment Network, a nonprofit organization that aids individuals, families and caregivers in making informed decisions about prostate cancer. Veta is a senior vice president of community and economic development at Midwest BankCentre.

## 2000s

**Deborah Meyer**, BSEd 2000, MEd 2007, received an Excellence in Teaching Award from Emerson Electric in November. Deborah teaches at Orchard Farm High School in St. Charles.

**Orvin Kimbrough**, MBA 2002, was named the CEO of Midwest BankCentre and its holding company, Midwest BankCentre Incorporated. Orvin previously served as president and CEO of the United Way of Greater St. Louis.

**Trisha McAliney**, BS 2002, obtained a certified fraud examiner certificate. Trisha is a mortgage fraud auditor at The Compliance Group in St. Louis.

**Jessica Rusnack**, MA 2002, PhD 2006, became a senior consultant for Leadership Alliance in St. Louis.

**Jason Buol**, MA 2003, joined Associated Bank as a senior vice president, team leader and senior portfolio manager of private client and institutional services.

**Lathon Ferguson**, BA 2003, joined Mercy Health System as the director of diversity and inclusion for the entire network.

**Matthew Hirschfeld**, BGS 2003, drew sketches of the "Scandal" cast to commemorate the television show's final season. Copies of the sketches were given to the cast and crew. Matthew works as a graphic artist in Los Angeles and previously drew sketches of all NBC shows and actors nominated for Emmy Awards for a promotional campaign.



**EVERY DAY WHEN SHE WAKES UP, TORI FOSTER REMINDS HERSELF OF A FEW THINGS:** continue a career search, keep networking and enjoy life. She knows the checklist by memory, but when she needs an extra push, the media studies major gazes at the inspirational poster hanging in her Oak Hall dorm room.

Inscribed on the sheet are pieces of advice given to Foster by the many UMSL alumni she's met by working as a student caller for the Triton Telefund, the university's alumni engagement and fundraising call center.

"Ever since I started working at this job, I would write down small pieces of advice that alumni tell me," Foster says. "Since I am an overachiever and hard on myself, I read these things every day because it tells me that I should keep working but that I also need time to relax and spend quality time with my family. Every night, I have really good calls with people, and they give me some great advice. Working here definitely has helped me become more connected to UMSL. I can't wait to graduate and be an UMSL alum."

**Christopher Lehmutz**, BSMIS 2003, was named to the St. Louis Business Journal's 2019 40 under 40 class. Christopher is a senior director of the Express Scripts Enterprise Data Science team.

**Kelly Pollock**, MPPA 2003, was recognized by the YWCA Metro St. Louis as a 2018 Leader of Distinction. Kelly is the executive director of the Center of Creative Arts in St. Louis, which is the fourth-largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the U.S.

**Clint Skibinski**, BSBA 2003, was promoted to vice president of production at McBride Homes in November.

**Christopher Young-EI**, MEd 2003, EdSp 2008, EdD 2017, received an Apple for the Teacher award from the Alpha Zeta Chapter of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority in November. He is the principal of the Normandy Schools Collaborative 7th-8th Grade Center.

**Karen Englert**, BSEd 2004, was named to the St. Louis Business Journal's 2019 40 under 40 class. Karen is a director of government relations for the American Heart Association.

**Christopher Reed**, BSMIS 2004, completed the exam to be a certified training professional in October. Christopher is a manager of information technology training programs for McCarthy Building Companies in St. Louis.

**Fawn Ruch**, BA 2004, BFA 2012, received an Excellence in Teaching Award from Emerson Electric in November. Fawn teaches at Northwest High School in Cedar Hill, Missouri.

**Therese Shain**, BSEd 2004, won the Milken Educator Award, which is given each year to outstanding K-12 teachers, principals and specialists who are furthering excellence in education. Therese is a special education teacher at Bayless Elementary School in St. Louis.

**Noah Botkin**, BSBA 2005, was appointed as a managing director at Northwestern Mutual in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**Shannon Favazza**, MBA 2005, was named to the St. Louis Business Journal's 2019 40 under 40 class. Shannon is a director in firm analytics at Edward Jones.

**Rebecca Cornatzer**, MEd 2006, was honored with one of the St. Louis Business Journal's 2019 HR Awards, which recognize the best human resources programs or

## 1970s

**Lynetta Madigan**, BSEd 1970, MEd 1974, on Jan. 14  
**Bernice Osborn**, BSEd 1970, on Jan. 4  
**Thomas Schroyer**, BSBA 1970, on Dec. 9  
**Daniel Claverie**, BA 1973, MEd 1988, on Feb. 12  
**Richard Hey**, MEd 1973, MEd 1974, on Oct. 10  
**Mary O'Keefe**, BSEd 1974, on Oct. 23  
**Marian McGrath**, MEd 1975, on Dec. 30  
**William Garvey**, BA 1977, on Feb. 21  
**Stephen Payne**, BA 1977, on Jan. 11  
**Frances Allen**, BSW 1978, on Dec. 27  
**Paul Skyles**, BSBA 1978, on Oct. 4  
**Donald Zeiter**, BSBA 1978, on Oct. 11  
**Joyce Eaton**, MEd 1979, on May 30

## 1980s

**Edward Nestor**, BSAJ 1980, on Jan. 30  
**Barbara Bennett**, MEd 1981, on Jan. 1  
**Paul Nieman**, BSBA 1981, on Dec. 3  
**Timothy Kelley**, MEd 1984 on July 16  
**Mardan Abrath**, MBA 1985, on Jan. 21  
**Kathleen Bauer**, BGS 1986, on Feb. 23  
**Cynthia Reed**, BA 1988, BA 2010, on Oct. 23  
**David Sinclair**, BSBA 1989, on Feb. 10

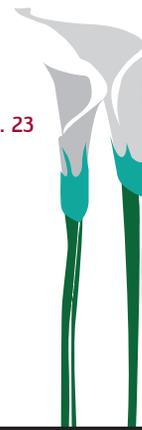
## 1990s

**Wanda Koelsch**, BA 1995, on Oct. 5  
**Gaetano Spoto**, BSBA 1998, on Feb. 6  
**Candy Charowhas**, OD 1999, on July 31

## 2010s

**Sean Conway**, BLS 2010, on Dec. 19

## In memoriam



practices that have had a positive impact on employees and their organizations. Rebecca is a director of human resources for S. M. Wilson & Co.

**Jennifer Jaeger**, BSBA 2006, joined Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri as the chief operating officer in October. The organization serves more than 40,000 girls in St. Louis, St. Louis County and 27 other Missouri counties.

**Duc Le**, BSBA 2006, was named the vice president of retirement services of USI Consulting Group in St. Louis.

**Tegan Klevorn**, BA 2007, MEd 2009, joined World Wide Technology as a corporate marketing manager.

**Kelli Allen**, BA 2008, MFA 2011, wrote "Banjo's Inside Coyote," published by C&R Press. The work is Kelli's third full-length poetry collection. Kelli is also a four-time Pushcart Prize nominee and has won additional awards for poetry, prose and scholarly work.

**Lisa Clancy**, BSW 2008, was sworn into the St. Louis County Council on Jan. 1. Lisa represents the county's fifth district and formerly served as the associate director of UMSL's Community Innovation and Action Center.

**Sarah Cole**, BS 2008, worked as a first assistant editor on "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse," which won the 2019 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

**Benjamin Fuchs**, BSBA 2008, was promoted to liability account supervisor for Thomas McGee Group, which provides insurance and risk management services.

**Jessica Gitto**, BA 2009, was promoted to national account manager at Western Specialty Contractors.

**Suzanne Rogers**, BA 2009, was promoted to director of strategic marketing at The Tolan Group in St. Augustine, Florida.

## Bliss



**Elizabeth Eikmann, BA 2013, to Monica Duwel on Feb. 2**

**Stephen Lewis, BS 2016, MA 2018, to Dana Channell, BA 2018, on Oct. 13**

**Cassie McFadden, BSN 2016, to Derrik Starrett on Aug. 18**

## 2010s

**Christina Dancy**, BSPPA 2010, joined Midwest BankCentre as an assistant vice president and leader of the bank's Pagedale branch.

**Lisa Isenberg**, MSN 2010, DNP 2013, joined Pediatric Partners of the Southwest as a pediatric nurse practitioner in Colorado.

**Brooke Mayfield**, MA 2010, PhD 2017, was selected by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson to join the second class of the Missouri Leadership Academy. Brooke is an assistant director of investigations for the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

**Christine Way**, MBA 2010, was promoted to vice president, enterprise and experience products, of Ascension Technologies in St. Louis.

**Cordaryl Patrick**, MPPA 2011, was recognized as a 2019 Community Hero from the Emerson Family YMCA in Ferguson. Cordaryl is the recovery coordinator for strategic initiatives at the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership.

**Christopher Miofsky**, MEd 2012, joined Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, as an assistant director of student involvement and development. Christopher oversees all fraternity and sorority life on campus.

**Angela Mitchell**, MFA 2012, wrote "Unnatural Habitats & Other Stories," published by WTAW Press. The short story collection is Angela's first book. Angela is the director of the St. Louis Writers Workshop.

**Lauren Arthur**, MEd 2013, was elected to the Missouri State Senate during a special election in June. Lauren represents constituents in north Kansas City.

**Gethorio Davidson**, BS 2013, became an assistant to the city manager of Dickinson, Texas.

**Lauren Kenney**, BA 2013, joined We Are Alexander, a St. Louis marketing agency, as a talent acquisition specialist.

**Daniel Latham**, MBA 2013, was promoted from project engineering to the client relations team at Bloomsdale Excavating.

**Ryan Smith**, MFA 2013, wrote his debut poetry chapbook, "The Death Metal Pastorals," published by Black Lawrence Press. Ryan teaches in the MFA in writing program at Lindenwood University.

**Michael Sneller**, BAcc 2013, MAcc 2016, joined Wyndham Destinations in Orlando, Florida, as a senior auditor.

**Andrea Caraveo**, BSAcc 2014, BSIS 2014, BS 2014, was promoted to chief of staff of supply chain systems at Boeing in St. Louis.

**Paul Katnik**, EdD 2014, joined the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Paul is an assistant commissioner of the Office of Educator Quality within the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**Taulby Roach**, MPPA 2014, was named president and CEO of the Bi-State Development Agency in January.

**Natalie Roberts**, BA 2014, BSBA 2014, became an associate in the Transactional Commercial Practice Group at the Goldenberg Heller & Antognoli law firm in Edwardsville, Illinois.

**Seth Williams**, BS 2014, joined the Bethlehem Police Department in Pennsylvania as an officer in November.

**Ryan Czado**, MBA 2015, joined Lockton as a director of pharmacy solutions for the northeastern United States.

**Shawntelle Fisher**, BS 2015, BES 2015, was the keynote speaker for the annual St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley and North County Churches Uniting for Racial Harmony and Justice Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. Shawntelle is the founder and CEO of The SoulFisher Ministries, a nonprofit that works with young people who have incarcerated parents.

**Marisol Ramirez**, MFA 2015, joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Phoenix as a public relations manager.

**Lucas Wittenberg**, BSBA 2015, joined Powers Insurance & Risk Management in St. Louis as a commercial lines insurance advisor.

**Cecelia Abshire**, MEd 2016, started a new position as a learning and development specialist for Uber in Chicago.

**Nousheen B. Ehsan**, BS 2016, was featured in the Pierre Laclède Honors College's Provenance newsletter. Nousheen is a law student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and a strategic relations manager for St. Louis County Prosecutor Wesley Bell.

**Sarah Hayes**, BA 2016, joined Los Alamos National Laboratory's research library as a graduate researcher.

**Daniel Musgrave**, MFA 2016, received the 2019 Iceland Writers Retreat Alumni Award. Daniel is a member of the Tulsa Artist Fellowship.





Sydney Harris, MA 2017, took her Triton spirit to the ice during the second annual **UMSL Night with the St. Louis Blues on Feb. 12.**

She was selected to ride the Zamboni between periods and was one of the 240 members of the UMSL community who gathered at Enterprise Center. The UMSL contingent of students, alumni, faculty and staff received UMSL/Blues-themed beanies and witnessed an 8-3 victory over the New Jersey Devils.

**Jessica Ploss**, BS 2016, joined the McLean County Coroner's Office in Illinois as a senior deputy coroner.

**Darrell Stewart**, BSBA 2016, was promoted to an engineering test and technology, project management specialist at Boeing.

**Clayton Adam Clark**, MA 2017, wrote "A Finitude of Skin," published by Moon City Press. The collection of poems received the 2017 Moon City Poetry Award. Clayton is a public health research scientist at Battelle.

**Jennifer Connelly-Bowen**, MPPA 2017, was promoted to executive director of the Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis, which works to gather community leaders of all backgrounds to build engaged and equitable neighborhoods. Jennifer is the organization's first executive director.

**Brendon Cox**, OD 2017, joined Vold Vision in Fayetteville, Arkansas, as an optometrist.

**Angela Kammann**, MBA 2017, joined Ascension Technologies in St. Louis as a product owner.

**Emilie La Breyere**, BA 2017, joined Mineral Area College's admissions office as an admissions representative.

**Patrick Mulcahy**, MPPA 2017, joined the St. Louis County Department of Planning as an administrative assistant.

**Coral Pucci**, OD 2017, joined the UMSL College of Optometry as an assistant clinical professor.

**Yishu Su**, MBA 2017, joined TD Ameritrade as a financial representative.

**Joshua Ayers**, BSIS 2018, joined Ascension Technologies in St. Louis as a solutions development analyst.

**Mika Gordon**, BAcc 2018, joined AIG Insurance in Houston as an internal sales consultant.

**Naomi Russell**, BA 2018, joined Idiomatic in St. Louis as a business insights analyst.

**John Tegethoff III**, BSAcc 2018, joined HEI Hotels & Resorts as an accounting and human resources manager.

**Nilkumar Thanki**, BS 2018, joined Bayer's Crop Science Division as an intermediate biologist.



University of Missouri–St. Louis  
 60 J.C. Penney Building  
 1 University Blvd.  
 St. Louis, MO 63121-4400  
 2019056.105M.4/19.wa/mb-ovid bell press

nonprofit org.  
 U.S. postage  
 paid  
 St. Louis, MO  
 permit no. 3



Sophie



Future educators like **Benjamin**, business majors like **Muhamed** and nursing students like **Aldijana** and **Sophie** benefit from the gifts of people like you. Through the planned support of proud UMSL parent Marie Jacobs, these students and many more will have access to the JMS Foundation Scholarship. Marie recently established a charitable remainder annuity trust, providing her with an immediate tax deduction as well as guaranteed income at a set interest rate for the next eight years. Your endowed gift can also help UMSL students while providing fixed payments during your retirement years. Make a planned gift today to establish a legacy for tomorrow. **Contact Sharon Fenoglio at 314-516-6788 or [fenoglios@umsl.edu](mailto:fenoglios@umsl.edu) for more information about the many different planned giving options available.**

# Your Legacy Their Future

**UMSL** | Giving