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The People Issue

UMSL

MAGAZINE

FALL 2018

We
transform
lives

UMSL stories
of hope, courage
and passion





SHUTTER STOP

As business majors Zane Creek (at left) and Jean Safron prepare for finals week in spring 2018, they receive a lick of inspiration from Lamb of God, an eight-week-old puppy from Stray Rescue of St. Louis. The Paws and Relax event, which was hosted by Delta Sigma Pi and Pi Kappa Alpha fraternities, provided a break for students working toward their ultimate goals of earning UMSL degrees. See page 13.



IN THIS ISSUE

The People Issue of UMSL Magazine provides a small sampling of the 100,000-plus individuals whose lives were transformed through education at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Their stories personify UMSL’s new mission statement: **We Transform Lives.**

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Leaving a legacy

Anthropology major Amber McDaniel spent her summer navigating northwest India as a student in the Himalayan Health Exchange. McDaniel is one of 17 students and alumni selected for UMSL Magazine’s People Issue, which illustrates the many ways UMSL transforms lives.

The University of Missouri–St. Louis publishes **UMSL MAGAZINE** for alumni and friends. The magazine highlights excellence at the university. Circulation is 103,000, and the magazine is released twice a year.

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The Stieven family of west St. Louis County has made choosing the University of Missouri–St. Louis a family tradition.

Joe Stieven started the legacy when he selected UMSL for his bachelor’s and MBA degrees, and two children as well as a son-in-law extended the connection.

But the Stievens’ commitment to their alma mater has not stopped with education choices. Joe Stieven and his wife, Mary, have contributed more than \$5 million to support UMSL students and help address some of the university’s most pressing needs.

UMSL honored the couple for their generosity on Oct. 4 during the university’s annual Founders Dinner, where they received the E. Desmond and Mary Ann Lee Medal for Philanthropy.

“Mary and I are so humbled,” Joe Stieven says. “We believe so much in this institution – for what it’s meant to our family and to the greater St. Louis area as a whole.”

The couple’s contributions have advanced numerous projects, including construction of Anheuser–Busch Hall and establishment of the Alumni Association endowment. They also made a lead gift to the nursing simulation lab campaign.

“Individually and collectively, Des and Mary Ann were two of the most philanthropic people St. Louis has ever witnessed,” Interim Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Beth Krumm says. “I am delighted to say we are honoring a couple cut from the same cloth.”

Mary and Joe Stieven receive UMSL award for philanthropy



Paul Herring takes charge of University Advancement

Paul Herring chose the University of Missouri–St. Louis for a variety of reasons but having opportunities to share St. Louis success stories was a main motivation.

As UMSL’s new vice chancellor for University Advancement, he will be able to hear and echo those stories through the four main units he oversees in development and fundraising, alumni engagement, marketing and communications and St. Louis Public Radio I 90.7 KWMU.

“St. Louis is a classic American city with a strong sense of history, world-class cultural and entertainment institutions and great potential for further economic growth,” Herring says.

“No university is in a position better than the University of Missouri–St. Louis to help preserve that past and promote the future.”

In his previous position at Texas Tech University, Herring oversaw fundraising efforts that amassed nearly \$90 million in gifts and pledges in fiscal year 2018. He has more than 12 years of experience in higher education fundraising at Texas Tech, St. Mary’s University and the University of Southern Mississippi.

Herring will join UMSL later this year and oversee all aspects of University Advancement, manage the Chancellor’s Council and serve as UMSL’s chief fundraising officer.

“I look forward to working with these award-winning operations to enhance the UMSL brand and outreach to potential students and donors,” Herring says. “UMSL consists of endless St. Louis success stories that I want to help tell.”



Amber McDaniel's journey began in June, when she boarded a plane in St. Louis en route to the Himalayas in northwest India, and ended six weeks later upon her return with a 400-page journal, 2,000 photos and clearer sense of self.

McDaniel, a 30-year-old anthropology major at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, was among 30 students participating in the 2018 Himalayan Health Exchange expedition into the Indian Himalayas and Indo-Tibetan borderlands. Together, health-care professionals and students provided hands-on care to underserved populations in some of the most remote areas of the world. McDaniel was one of five non-medical students chosen for the team.

"It was an incredible journey," McDaniel says. "I traveled some of the world's most dangerous roads in minivans, camped 11,000 feet above sea level near the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, stayed in multiple monasteries with Buddhist monks, got invited to a Tibetan Hindu wedding reception, explored Kibber – one of the highest permanent human settlements – and helped treat nearly 900 patients."

McDaniel played a dual role during the expedition. She assisted at temporary medical clinics established in monasteries by coordinating appointments, verifying vital signs and helping distribute prescribed medications. She also explored communities with a staff anthropologist to learn more about the cultures and traditions of local residents, documenting the conditions that affect their health and health-care decisions.

Among the most striking factors, McDaniel says, were the extreme poverty and pollution. The Himalayas have increasingly become a tourist destination, leaving the region with more human and solid waste than it can manage.

McDaniel is including a discussion of pollution issues in a report she's creating for a UMSL independent study course.

"It's a real health hazard," she says.

McDaniel began preparing for the expedition nearly a year ago by buying backpacking equipment, hiking in the gear to ensure she could handle the trip's physical demands and researching the various cultures and religions she'd likely encounter.

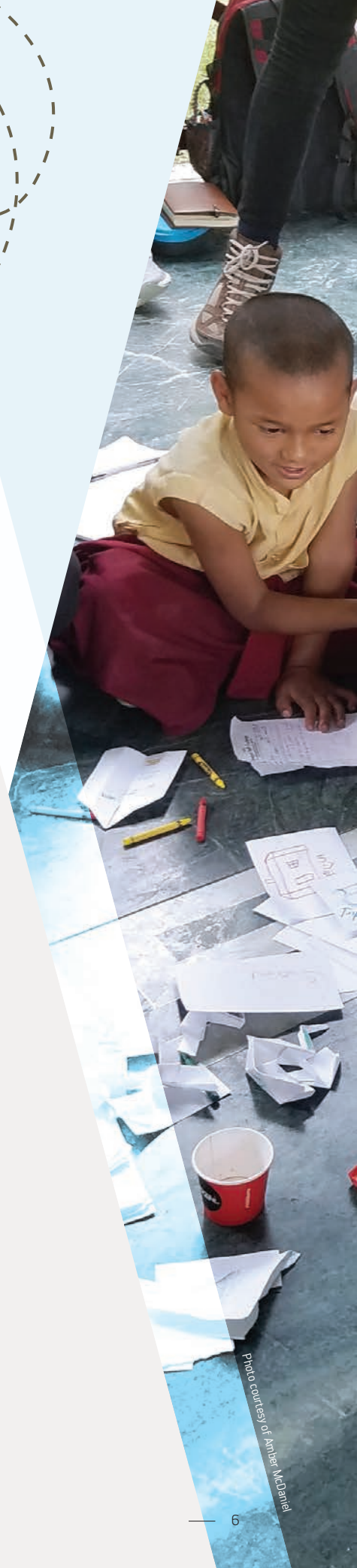
"I did not grow up religious," she says. "But I've always been fascinated by other cultures and religions. That's one of the reasons I was drawn to this adventure."

McDaniel is a typical UMSL student in many ways. She grew up in the St. Louis region, graduated from nearby Ritenour High School and started working full time, first in pet care and then with the Missouri Department of Conservation. She entered UMSL's undergraduate biology program because of her interest in conservation and ecology, but an introductory anthropology class shifted her focus.

"The first anthropology course changed my life," McDaniel says. "I switched majors because anthropology is a very flexible degree with many different career paths."

McDaniel's passion has evolved toward the medical side of anthropology, and she plans to pursue a master's degree in public health after graduating from UMSL.

"Everyone deserves a right to have a healthy life," she says. "It's still very new to me, but I know I'm on the right road toward affecting health policy and providing basic health-care services." ■■■



Right: Amber McDaniel entertains a group of children as they await medical exams at a monastery in Kullu, India.

Top left: Following her trip, McDaniel had a mantra of compassion tattooed on her arm. The phrase translated from Tibetan means "the jewel within the center of the lotus."

Photo courtesy of Amber McDaniel



AMBER MCDANIEL

Himalayan expedition
connects anthropology
major's passion
to a purpose

By Bob Samples

Lenora GOODEN

An advocate for St. Louis Area Foodbank
brings resources back to her alma mater

By David Morrison

Lenora Gooden finds profound meaning in the four words that make up the motto of the St. Louis Area Foodbank.

"Fighting hunger, feeding hope" fuels her efforts as the organization's vice president of operations.

"That 'feeding hope' part, that's the part I love: giving someone hope," Gooden says. "Sometimes, you just don't know how much that does for people, lifting up their spirits so they can move forward to make a better life for themselves."

Gooden started at the St. Louis Area Foodbank in 1996 as an administrative assistant. She worked her way up to vice president of product sourcing, a title she held for 15 years before stepping into her new role in July. As vice president of operations, she oversees agency compliance, the warehouse, distribution and product sourcing for the foodbank, which collected and provided more than 43 million pounds of food for those in need last year.

Along the way, she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in criminology from the University of Missouri–St. Louis in 2010.

"I always wanted to study why people do the things that they do, and that's what drove me toward the sociology degree," Gooden says. "Once I came and visited UMSL, just like the foodbank, my heart stayed there."

Over the past year, Gooden focused her attention on lending a helping hand at her alma mater. She had a conversation with an exceptional student worker at the UMSL Triton

Telefund call center and, as a result, started seeking out ways to give back.

She connected with Associate Director of Development Katy Robertson, a member of the Triton Hunger Relief Task Force, who suggested Gooden team up with Associate Director of Student Social Services Robin Kimberlin.

Kimberlin was heading up an effort to battle food insecurity among members of the UMSL community, a problem that affected around half of the university's student population, according to a 2017 survey.

Gooden was more than willing to throw the weight of the foodbank behind UMSL's initiatives.

"That was such a random coincidence of stars aligning," Kimberlin says. "She's making big things happen for us."

The foodbank provided 3,400 pounds of food for a pop-up pantry at the Millennium Student Center in August. In September, UMSL and the foodbank partnered up again for the Triton Mobile Pantry in which students, faculty and staff – as well as people from the surrounding community – could partake in the free service on South Campus.

"My favorite part of the job is knowing that we provided food for anyone who's food insecure, that they didn't have to wonder where their next meal was going to be," Gooden says. "It's going into a community and seeing where that help was needed, the smiles on their faces, hearing the stories of people who didn't know what they were going to do, but then we allowed options for them." ≡



Adis FAJIC

St. Louis County policeman stands out in his precinct as the only Bosnian-speaking officer

By Steve Walentik

These days, Adis Fajic patrols the same streets where he grew up as he works the overnight shift for the St. Louis County Police Department.

The job has him making regular drives past houses he once called home in south county, and he regularly runs into familiar faces among an enclave of fellow Bosnian immigrants who settled there in the 1990s.

"It's great," says Fajic, who joined the force two years ago. "I see a lot of people that I knew from before – childhood friends that have grown up. I get to see them, and I help translate. There's a lot of Bosnians in my area, and I'm the only Bosnian-speaking officer right now in my precinct."

His path into the front seat of the patrol car runs through the University of Missouri–St. Louis, where he earned a bachelor's degree in criminology and criminal justice in 2012.

Fajic didn't have a career field in mind when he transferred to UMSL from St. Louis Community College's Forest Park campus. He chose the school because of its proximity to home and the hope he could walk onto the basketball team, though he was aware of the strong reputation of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

He quickly realized basketball would be more of a time commitment than he wanted to make, but Fajic followed a friend as he enrolled in a criminal justice class taught by Assistant Professor Stephanie DiPietro and quickly discovered a subject that captivated him.

"The professors were into it," Fajic says. "They would actually help out, and they would try to get to know you even though some of the classes were filled in those big auditoriums. They still tried to get to know each and every one of us, and we just clicked. It just kept making me want to pursue criminal justice."

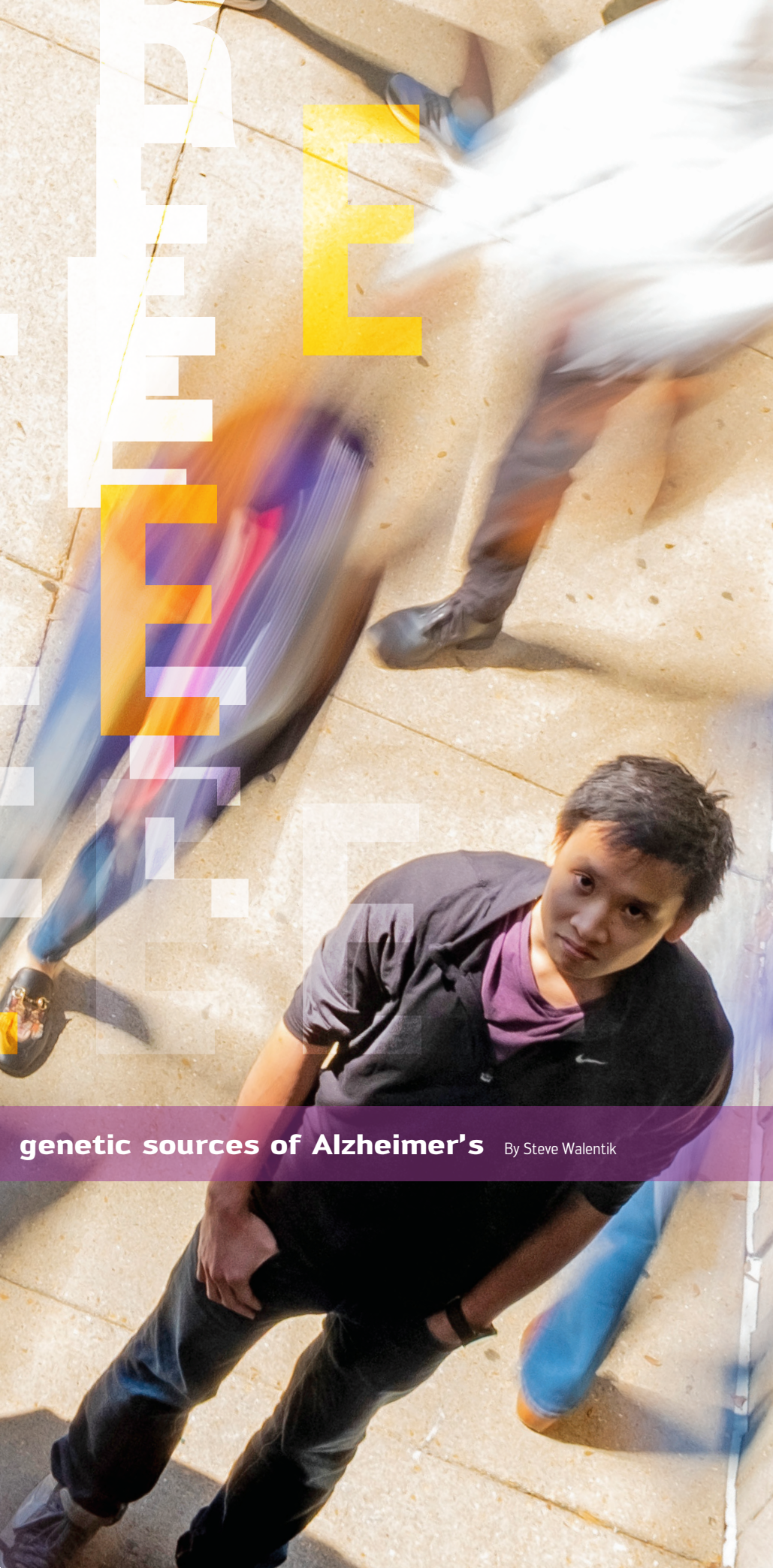
After finishing his bachelor's degree, Fajic went on to earn a master's at Lindenwood University before enrolling in the Eastern Missouri Police Academy. He graduated there and quickly landed his current job with a strong foundation on which to build his career. ≡





Assistant professor uses high-powered computing to mine

Assistant Professor of Computer Science Sharlee Climer (at left) and graduate student Michael Chan look toward the future as reflections of the past whirl around them. The duo works together in Climer's lab to unravel the genetic roots of Alzheimer's disease using computational tools.



SHARLEE CLIMER *has witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of Alzheimer's disease.*

She's seen the memory lapses and inability of a patient to reason through and perform what were once simple tasks, like sorting pairs of socks. She also observed the depression, irritability, social withdrawal and delusions that ultimately occur as the disease ravages the brain, robbing it of basic function.

Climer, an assistant professor of computer science at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, watched it all while living with and helping care for her mother-in-law, Muriel Climer, during the final stage of her life.

"It's a horrendous disease," Climer says. "It's horrible. Just devastating."

Muriel had been known for her soft smile and encouraging words throughout decades of work in the cafeteria at St. Louis Community College–Meramec. She was also a helpful and understanding landlord, who sometimes let months of rent slip when her tenants hit hard times.

"It was an extraordinary injustice that such a sweet soul was relentlessly tortured throughout her twilight years," Sharlee Climer says.

Her motivation, then, was never merely professional when she first began using her expertise in computational biology to try to unlock the biological secrets of Alzheimer's hidden inside genetic code.

"That's why I got thinking that I want to do something," Climer says. "It's the one disease researchers have not gotten any closer to being able to prevent, treat or slow. It's such an enigmatic disease. That's what got me started on it."

genetic sources of Alzheimer's By Steve Walentik

Climer believes that if she can discover which genetic markers are most closely correlated to individuals with Alzheimer's, she will be able to help point researchers toward more effective treatments.

She has developed several computational methods to unearth patterns in the mountain range of available case-control data she examines. One is a program called BlocBuster, which identifies combinatorial correlations amongst genetic markers and determines carriers of these combinations, testing for associations between the combinations and instances of disease.

Climer didn't start out researching Alzheimer's. In fact, when she was working toward her bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science at UMSL, she felt averse to biology.

"I didn't want anything to do with it," Climer says. "It involved too much new vocabulary. I studied physics and computer science, and they were perfect. They are always exactly right. Everything was clean. Biology's messy. There are always exceptions to the rules."

It was her doctoral adviser at Washington University who got her to open her mind to its possibilities when he presented her a problem cast as a mathematical linear program, the very kind she'd been developing software to solve.

She suddenly saw new possibilities in computational biology and became interested in learning more, taking biology courses on the side to build up her knowledge and vocabulary

so she could communicate what she was seeing to biological researchers. Climer, in fact, has enough course credit to have a master's in biology.

After finishing her PhD, Climer spent three years doing a postdoctoral fellowship in a lab at Washington University's medical school. Her work focused primarily on investigating genetic patterns found in heart disease patients.

Climer eventually moved into a position as an assistant research professor at Washington University. Over time, her research emphasis also shifted to Alzheimer's. That's continued since Climer came home to UMSL – the school from which three of her children as well as her husband graduated.

"I love UMSL," she says. "I feel like I really fit here. It's a great place to be. The students have been wonderful."

Climer's work has benefited greatly from graduate researchers who've worked with her, including Michael Chan, who is slated to complete his master's degree at UMSL this semester.

Chan has also taken a great deal from his involvement in the research.

"It's introduced me to how you can apply computer science to a lot of different things," Chan says. "It's really nice to be able to apply what I'm learning to something that could potentially help a lot of people." ■■■

// This work's also important for understanding your risk for disease. If you have a combination of markers that put you at risk, you might do things differently in life. There are environmental factors that can have an effect in addition to your genetic risk, so people would be inclined to exercise more or whatever it is that would help reduce the risk of them getting the disease." – Sharlee Climer

She has received \$737,080 in funding for her lab over a five-year period from the National Institute on Aging as the co-primary investigator on a grant with Carlos Cruchaga at Washington University in St. Louis.

BlocBuster uses what Climer calls the Custom Correlation Coefficient during this three-step process to identify genetic patterns that had remained hidden using standard research methods. It has allowed her to spot different subsets at the genetic level of what appears to be a single disease at the clinical level.

Her code was adapted to take advantage of the computing power of Summit, the world's most powerful supercomputer, under the direction of her colleague Dan Jacobson at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. In June, Summit broke the exascale barrier, exceeding a speed of a billion billion computations per second, while computing Climer's metric. Because of that achievement, the team was named a finalist for the Gordon Bell Prize, awarded annually to recognize outstanding achievement in high-performance computing.

BlocBuster revealed a "yin-yang" pattern in publicly available data that appears throughout global populations. Climer hopes discoveries such as this ultimately lead to better understanding of the genetic basis for the debilitating disease.

"This work's also important for understanding your risk for disease," Climer says. "If you have a combination of markers that put you at risk, you might do things differently in life. There are environmental factors that can have an effect in addition to your genetic risk, so people would be inclined to exercise more or whatever it is that would help reduce the risk of them getting the disease."

\$43,136

average starting salary

(2016-17 graduating classes)

94%

employed full time, volunteering
or continuing education

(2016-17 graduating classes)

100%

Examination for Professional
Practice in Psychology
pass rate (2013-17)

94%

National Board of
Examiners in Optometry
pass rate (2008-17)

93%

graduate nursing NCLEX
pass rate (2008-17)

92%

undergraduate nursing
NCLEX pass rate (2008-17)

75%

CPA exam pass rate,
leading all programs in
the St. Louis region (2016)

University of Missouri–St. Louis

The
successful
paths
of UMSL
graduates



Andrew

KISHNA

Engineering alumnus leads solo operation turned multimillion-dollar enterprise

By Sara Bell

As a teenager, Andrew Kishna had every intention of joining the U.S. Air Force.

Fueled by a desire to serve the country he immigrated to as an adolescent, he approached recruiters with a strong sense of direction. The 18-year-old was eager, capable and knowledgeable about architecture and construction, making him a match for a civil engineering group within the Air Force. So rather than enlisting, he utilized these skills as a contract employee.

Kishna's decision then led to a string of good fortune throughout the 2000s. He obtained additional consulting contracts with the Air Force as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs and eventually an infrastructure plan for his home country of Guyana.

By 2010, about two years after graduating from the University of Missouri–St. Louis' joint engineering program, Kishna capitalized on these contracts to form Etegra, a St. Louis-based architecture and engineering firm.

He started the company as a solo venture and has seen it evolve into a multimillion-dollar business that satisfies his initial desires to serve his country through planning and design services for the VA, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security and a variety of other federal agencies.

"There's a sense of patriotism that comes along with the services we provide," says Kishna, who serves as Etegra's CEO. "I find a great deal of satisfaction from the work that we do designing facilities for our troops and veterans, whether that be for comfort or security."

As he developed Etegra into the 50-person operation it is today, Kishna still yearned for ways to serve his community. He reviewed issues plaguing the St. Louis region and reflected on his own hardships growing up.

Kishna's family had plenty of support but not always stable resources, so he looked for ways to aid St. Louisans suffering in both areas. His service ambitions then evolved into the founding of Restoration House, a nonprofit that guides homeless and at-risk youth through holistic and individualized programming.

"I was lucky that I had people to encourage me along the way," Kishna says. "A lot of individuals in impoverished areas don't have that person or family that will push them through. This program provides that encouragement and resources. I didn't start far off from the people that we're serving and ended up here – all through family support. I'm just trying to provide that to others." ≡

Julie NICKLES

Doctoral research enhances NICU operations at area hospital



By Jessica Rogen

When Julie Nickles, a nurse leader at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital, started research on nursing care in the new neonatal intensive care unit single-patient-room model, she found fewer than 10 studies.

Fortuitous timing because the University of Missouri–St. Louis DNP student needed a clinical scholarship project. Her employer's switch from the traditional cohort model, in which infants are treated collectively in a large room, worried many nurses.

"I had the desire to figure out what their concerns were," Nickles says. "What can we do to minimize those and, after the transition, were their fears reality?"

She started with those trepidations and developed pre-and post-implementation questionnaires for her coworkers. Her results demonstrated the benefits of

single-room care for nurses as well as patients. Increased patient safety, thanks partially to new equipment, was the largest gain.

She assuaged most concerns. Communication, interpersonal relationships and quality and speed of help in critical situations remained unchanged between the two care models. However, certain surprises have Nickles pondering.

The nurses surveyed reported decreases in their relationships with parents, which she attributes to families' increased autonomy. Respondents had fewer opportunities to learn from watching their coworkers and were less determined to give their best. Nickles hopes the latter originates from situational busyness and plans to resurvey this fall.

Thanks to her project, the St. Mary's NICU revamped its admission process to give nurses forewarning of incoming patients. They also decided to address problem areas, like human error prevention, with small, temporary groups that then dissolve. Though her DNP, which she earned in August, may lead to increased leadership opportunities, Nickles is happy with her current job and makes a point to split time between administration and patient care.

"I think it says something to your team that you are willing to go to the trenches with them," she says. "I don't know if, at this point in my career, I could give up patient contact. I still go to a lot of deliveries. I love it." ■■■

A D A M WIRA

Optometry student overcomes cancer, national boards as a new father

By Jessica Rogen

Adam Wira had the youngest face in the chemotherapy ward and was the only patient with a textbook.

The semester before preparing for part I of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry certification exam, the University of Missouri–St. Louis student underwent treatment for stage II testicular cancer. He scored high even though studying through chemotherapy was “nine weeks of hell.”

“I think you need the full story of my life to get an idea of why I am here right now,” he says.

When Wira was 11, his parents, Polish immigrants, repatriated with Wira from Chicago. The same year they moved, Wira’s mother passed away. He returned to the U.S. after high school rather than enlist for compulsory military service or defer with college.

He felt displaced until meeting his future wife. The two married quickly to help Afsheen, a Pakistani immigrant, attain permanent resident status. With temporary work visas, she found retaining jobs difficult, and Wira rapidly maxed out his salary potential working at Costco.

“That was my rock bottom,” he says. “I’m starting a family. I don’t want this kind of life for my kid. That’s when I realized that I need to go to school. I need to become something. I had this voice in my head, ‘You should look into optometry.’”

The UMSL College of Optometry was Wira’s first interview, and he earned a spot the same day. School turned out to be “pure studying 24/7.”

“I was in my second year and going on and on about being stressed about tests,” Wira says. “Afsheen just looked at me, ‘I’m pregnant.’ ‘Bull—.’ I didn’t believe it. It took me a while. I had to sit down. I immediately started choking up and just started crying. She showed me the ultrasound and grabbed this blueberry or maybe a green pea, one of those two little berries, and she put it in the palm of my hand: ‘That’s our kid.’”

Two months after his daughter’s birth and at age 31, Wira found a lump. Urgent care and then a urologist diagnosed Wira with a probable cyst but, for circumspection, the doctor ordered an ultrasound and found cancer.

“The world came down on me,” he says. “I can’t describe it. It’s like everything goes blank. Your body goes into this fight-or-flight mode, like a bear’s going to attack you. You don’t know what to do. I just remember that sensation and the doctor talking about how it’s very treatable, and the first step is to remove it.”

After surgery, cancer markers in Wira’s blood doubled. A PET scan revealed three cancerous lymph nodes, which meant chemotherapy. Afsheen’s family moved in to help, and UMSL Associate Clinical Professor Kathleen Boland set up a daily food drop-off calendar.

“By the third round of chemotherapy, I didn’t think I would be able to do a fourth round,” Wira says. “I thought it would literally kill me. That said, having a daughter, I would do anything just to be there for her.”

Wira passed his classes and was surprised how, once his hair regrew, daily existence returned to normal. Around his periodic screenings, Wira feels dread, then euphoric relief.

He is on track to graduate in 2019 and contemplating his future specialty, having just completed a rewarding clinical disease rotation.

“Using medicine to intervene to stop a disease is a great feeling,” Wira says. “That’s why I do it. Why I study on end, why I don’t see my family, why I go through chemotherapy with a book in my hands even though I just want to puke somewhere. That’s why I am still here.”





K R I S T I N BASS

Education alumna sees her way through tragedy, parenthood to UMSL degree

By David Morrison

By the time her mother passed away in August 2011, Kristin Bass was less than a year into her course of study for an MEd with an emphasis in adult and higher education at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

Bass took over guardianship of her nephews, Kenneth Moore and Kristopher Conner, for whom Bass' mother had been caring since Bass' sister passed away in April 2006.

It all got to be too much for Bass, who stepped away from school for more than a year. Still, she kept her goal of graduation in mind. And she had a powerful ally in UMSL College of Education Associate Dean Shawn Woodhouse, who explained that one of the most important program goals is student retention.

"Dr. Woodhouse helped me whip my life into shape when it was falling to shambles," Bass says. "I didn't know how to deal with it. You don't really know what to do, but I knew not to stop."

Bass returned to UMSL and earned her MEd in 2014. While progressing toward her degree, she started as a graduate assistant in the Office of Student Financial Aid and was promoted to financial aid coordinator by the time she left the school's employ in 2016.

While in the department, she took over a financial literacy program that her predecessor Tiffany Izard started, finished its components and turned it into a hit on campus, exporting it to different departments and showcasing it to prospective students.

"She has always struck me as a person with an amazing resilience," Woodhouse says. "It has a lot to do with her inner drive to want to impact others within the community in some very significant ways."

In February, Bass started a job with the Hazelwood School District, working as the assistant to Deputy Superintendent Natasha Baker. Her primary role is project management, and part of her duties involve evaluating the discipline system and figuring out ways to help students through tough times in their lives, like Woodhouse did for Bass during her break from UMSL.

The higher education MEd emphasis, catered to students who are interested in working as staff or administrators in educational environments, helped prepare her.

"You want to get students in the mindset of planning for the future and hope that will guide some of their behaviors now, so they can rethink some of those decisions they're making," Bass says.

Her nephews came through the storm as well: Moore is in medical school, and Conner is a junior at the University of Central Missouri. Bass says she can't take credit for their success, though. They were just as important to her as she was to them.

"I can say with 100 percent certainty that I would not be where I am had it not been for God's grace and a support system that valued not only where I was wanting to go but that was willing to help me put one foot in front of the other," Bass says. "That's my obligation now." ■■■

By Steve Walentik



Aleathea WILLIAMS

**Congressional Black Caucus
Foundation intern discovers pull
toward civic engagement at UMSL**

From hearings of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, seminars at The Washington Post and even an awards ceremony she attended at the French Embassy, Aleathea Williams packed a lot into her summer in Washington.

The senior political science major at the University of Missouri–St. Louis spent the majority of her time in the nation’s capital in the office of Congressman William Lacy Clay, accompanying him to meetings, manning the phones at the front desk or attending to other tasks given to her by his permanent staff. She landed there through an internship organized and funded by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

The up-close look at government in action – and sometimes inaction – made a lasting impact.

“I feel more empowered. I feel more educated. I feel more empathetic,” Williams says. “Sometimes you look at your local and state reps, and you think, ‘Oh, they’re not doing enough. They should be doing this and this.’ But being there, I actually saw what my congressman was doing and saw what other congressmen and congresswomen try to do. I saw how hard it is sometimes when you’re in a markup session and you can’t get any amendments approved for the bill when you worked so hard on them.”

Williams, a Kauffman Scholar from Kansas City, Missouri, came to UMSL in fall 2015 intent on studying nursing. It was about a year after the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, and she soon found herself drawn to politics and policy issues after attending several protests.

“I realized I wanted to do something more for my community, and I felt like I wanted to work within politics and law,” Williams says.

Since then, Williams, a student in the Pierre Laclède Honors College with aims of attending law school, has found numerous ways to help propel herself down that path. She is a former vice president of Associated Black Collegians, a Sue Shear Institute fellow and past participant in its 21st Century Leadership Academy and now the vice president of the Student Government Association.

It might only be a matter of time before she heads back to Washington.

“I want to feel like I’m using my voice,” Williams says, “and actually making an impact for those that look like me.” ■■■

A close-up portrait of Bernard DuBray, a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with warm lighting.

Bernard DUBRAY

The longtime leader of Fort Zumwalt is a champion for one of Missouri's largest school districts

By Jessica Rogen

Fort Zumwalt School District Superintendent Bernard DuBray starts his mornings at 4:30 a.m. and, on calm days, finishes work 12 hours later.

The University of Missouri–St. Louis 1977 secondary education and educational administration MEd alumnus is currently the longest-serving and one of the hardest-working superintendents in Missouri. The district comprises 18,000 students, 3,000 employees and approximately 75 administrators. This translates to five high schools, four middle schools, 16 elementary schools and some days that stretch to 19 hours.

"In a big district like this, it's pretty wild most of the time," he says.

When DuBray started as superintendent 34 years ago, Fort Zumwalt educated around 8,200 students served by one high school, two middle schools and eight elementary schools.

Keeping up with the district's growth is one of his proudest accomplishments.

To achieve this expansion, DuBray facilitated eight tax increases and \$375 million in general obligation bonds. Credibility, built over time, and Fort Zumwalt's community investment created trust in the district.

"I'm really proud of the fact that we were able to communicate to the public and get the support we needed when we needed it," he says.

Communication is an attribute of DuBray's tenure, evident through measures like Positive Peer Influence, which teaches students the reverse of negative peer pressure, and School Message, technology that allows the district to contact all parents simultaneously. DuBray also helped transform the conversation around the district's negotiated agreements through a problem-solving strategy called win-win.

He takes inspiration from figures like former UMSL faculty member Jerry Pulley and administrators like Larry Doyle, who preceded DuBray as superintendent.

"I respected him so much that I was scared to death to follow him," DuBray says. "If you follow someone who is really successful, it's tough because you have to be as successful or more successful. I knew I had to work hard and harder than he did." ≡



UMSL
Student Affairs

R O B I N KIMBERLIN

Alumna's personal approach to Triton care gives rise to Student Social Services

By David Morrison

In the broadest terms, Robin Kimberlin is a social worker. Within that profession, she describes her specialty as "higher education case management," which could end up being just about anything.

"In the field, you might work with only people who are homeless, veterans, people with addiction, or people with health disparities, for example. But here, we see a really diverse set of issues and people," says Kimberlin, who serves as the associate director of Student Social Services at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. "The thing they have in common is they're college students. It's exciting, it never gets old and it's very challenging. I didn't know I wanted to do this, but I'm definitely hooked."

Kimberlin started as the official social worker for the UMSL Division of Student Affairs by happenstance: She was finishing up her research assistantship with the now School of Social Work Dean Sharon Johnson right around the same time student affairs was looking for a candidate to head a pilot program aimed at helping students who lacked basic needs.

Kimberlin was game to take on the role as a practicum for her MSW, with which she graduated in 2012.

After graduation, student affairs hired her part time. Then a little more than part time. Then full time. Then, she worked with the division to create Student Social Services, which has been its own department within student affairs for the past three years.

Now, Kimberlin employs another case worker in the department and takes on a couple of UMSL

practicum students each year. She estimates that her team helps 100 to 150 students a year through case management as well as 700 to 1,000 through efforts to quell food insecurity.

She credits Associate Vice Provost D'Andre Braddix and Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Curt Coonrod for giving Student Social Services the autonomy to grow organically at a time in which universities around the country are also realizing a need for dedicated social workers for their students.

"The need just kept coming," Kimberlin says. "The more I communicated to campus that I was here, the more students I was able to serve. We're mostly connecting students to resources in the community and on campus. We're just helping students with any type of barrier going on in their lives that isn't academic related."

That has taken the form of creating programs that address issues such as prevention of alcohol and drug misuse, food insecurity, unstable housing or homelessness, crisis intervention and securing resources for students who are parents, which is an experience that's especially familiar to Kimberlin. She had her first child during her junior year at the University of Missouri–Columbia.

She moved back to St. Louis, finished her political science bachelor's degree at UMSL in 2002, then after staying home with her children, came back for her MSW.

"My kids have kind of grown up on a college campus, which is really cool," Kimberlin says. "That's something I definitely talk with student parents about. You might feel guilty that you have to study and do homework, but college will always be a part of your kids' lives because they're watching you." ■■■



Thomas BAKER

Army veteran, former
police officer channels
past experiences in
use-of-force research

By Steve Walentik

Thomas Baker was a little more than 10 years away from retiring with a nice pension when he decided to leave the Phoenix Police Department in 2014.

He had been part of an officer-involved shooting five years earlier, firing at a suspect in self-defense while responding to a domestic violence call. That experience ultimately guided his choice to pursue another career path.

"It was an important moment in my life," the doctoral student at the University of Missouri–St. Louis says. "It was something that influenced me leaving policing. It was something that made me want to make a transition."

Baker completed two semesters of undergraduate coursework at Arizona State University to finish his bachelor's degree in political science and made the decision to pursue graduate work in criminology.

"I had an interest in the political and social implications of police use of force, and while I was considering leaving, police use of force was becoming a huge social issue," Baker says. "I started learning a little bit about it, reading about it and just sort of felt a desire to take part."

It was at the beginning of his graduate studies at Arizona State that Baker, at the suggestion of one of his advisers, read "Into the Kill Zone: A Cop's Eye View of Deadly Force," written by UMSL Professor David Klinger.

Baker reached out to Klinger in an email to compliment him on the book after finishing it, and a year later he enrolled in one of Klinger's UMSL

courses on a continuing education basis after relocating to Missouri with his family. The move came after his wife, Denise, accepted a position as an assistant professor of psychological sciences at Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Soon after, Baker applied to UMSL's PhD program and was accepted. These days, Klinger oversees Baker's research.

"Right now, my focus is on the use of force at lower levels on the continuum, so police using force to control subjects and how those techniques can, if not properly executed or used in the right way, lead to higher levels of use of force," Baker says. "I'm interested in what tools and techniques are available and how police officers are being trained in these techniques."

Baker is getting financial support from the Pat Tillman Foundation as he pursues his PhD. The Army veteran, who served from 1996-99, was among 60 honorees chosen for its scholar program earlier this year.

He hopes to land a tenure-track faculty position after earning his degree and is excited to bring his military experience into academia, where he feels veterans have been underrepresented during his own studies. ■■■



Former social worker now makes community impact through cybersecurity research

Adelaide ABOAGYE

A few years ago, Adelaide Aboagye was in the middle of a master's program studying ways to reduce instances of child marriage in Ghana.

Through her time as a research assistant, she proposed policy changes and hypothesized that poverty, tradition and lack of education – particularly among girls – were predictors of early marriage.

After growing up in Ghana, she's tied to the topic. Education was her way out.

Aboagye began her educational pursuit as an undergraduate social work student in her home country and later transitioned to Washington University in St. Louis, where she earned an MSW. She assumed an affinity for helping others would guide her through a career in social work, but after a year in the field, she found herself called back to research.

She's now at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, where she's still helping others – she's just doing it from behind a computer screen.

Aboagye arrived at UMSL in 2016 interested in expanding on her data science knowledge. But during her first semester in the Master of Science in Information Systems program, she began researching cybersecurity issues, which sparked a new area of interest.

"With my background in research, I decided to look at issues concerning theft and data loss," Aboagye says. "These are real issues affecting a lot of companies and government agencies, so that led to my interest in cybersecurity."

Today, her research focuses on cyber threats burdening the health-care system, particularly improper disposal of protected health information in hospitals. She does this independently while also balancing work as a graduate assistant for the Department of Information Systems. In the role, she assists faculty members with research, including examining cybersecurity issues in western Africa, and serves as a student tutor.

By Sara Bell

Aboagye's assistantship motivated her to submit her own research for a graduate cybersecurity workshop in March at Kennesaw State University. She was the only female selected for the cohort of seven.

"I think all of these things make me more diverse, and I'm looking at different roles that I can play as a student and also a researcher," Aboagye says. "My experiences since coming to UMSL have opened a lot of doors for me and have encouraged me to go on for a PhD to pursue teaching and research." ≡



Robbie Hart and his colleagues spent a dreary week earlier this year in the mountains of western Bhutan.

They were doing fieldwork below Mount Jomolhari, studying the effects of climate change on Himalayan flora as part of the Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments, more commonly known as GLORIA. They had a film crew with them, but it left after a few days of limited visibility in the cloudy, rainy, frankly depressing conditions.

Before their work was finished, Hart, a PhD graduate in biology from the University of Missouri–St. Louis and now an assistant curator at the Missouri Botanical Garden, joined his colleagues for the long ascent up to their highest field site, more than 4,900 meters above sea level.

The weather cleared as they got closer to the peak, and by the time they arrived, out of breath, at the top, Hart found himself gazing in amazement at Jomolhari and the other summits that emerged before him.

"Is this really my life?" he thought to himself.

Hart took a roundabout path to get where he is after growing up the son of two biologists in proximity to the Olympic Mountains in Washington.

He used his time as an undergraduate at Swarthmore College to study linguistics, and it was that work that first brought him to the Himalayas as he spent time doing research in Nepal.

Hart was fascinated by the rich information about the natural world he found packaged into the languages of local and indigenous people. After finishing his degree, he assisted noted linguist David Harrison on the book "When Languages Die," which documented how this



Above: Alumnus Robbie Hart and his research partners celebrate an ascent to their highest field site on Mount Jomolhari, 4,900 meters above sea level.

ROBBIE HART

Biology PhD graduate researches the effects of climate change on alpine plants in the Himalayas

By Steve Walentik



Photo courtesy of Robbie Hart

environmental knowledge can be lost when speakers of these place-based languages switch to speaking a global language such as English or Chinese.

Hart also started looking into graduate programs, including some in anthropology and environmental science. But he was drawn to a National Science Foundation-funded studentship working with Jan Salick of the Missouri Botanical Garden to research changes in biodiversity and local livelihoods in China's Yunnan Province while pursuing a degree in ecology, evolution and systematics in UMSL's Department of Biology.

He got a jump start on his fieldwork with assistance from two scholarships through the Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center designed to help new students to rapidly begin collecting preliminary data. Ultimately, his dissertation contained three chapters about the ecological and evolutionary

implications of the changes he observed and another on the ethnobotanical significance, including knowledge within local languages.

Hart learned of the garden's involvement with the GLORIA network and the permanent plots it was tracking in the Himalayas during his time as a doctoral student. He even got involved in some of the work as a side project while writing his dissertation.

He felt fortunate to be able to make that a central part of his work when he joined the garden's research staff full time after earning his PhD. He now makes annual trips to the Himalayas to do fieldwork.

"We're on the mountain for maybe two weeks," Hart says. "Then we also spend time doing ethnobotanical work, doing interviews with local people

about their perceptions of climate change and how climate change is affecting them."

The high-elevation plants he studies often have important medicinal uses or make their way into beauty products, aromatics and food supplements.

Hart believes it's important to educate a broader audience on the significance of climate change on these useful mountain plants. Earlier this year, he submitted a plain-language summary of the work his collaborator Hassan Sher is doing in Pakistan's Swat Valley in the Western Himalayas and won a BioOne Ambassador Award for his efforts. ■

Alexander SCHLAUBITZ

Airline executive entrusted
with an iconic German brand

By Sara Bell

Alexander Schlaubitz and his Lufthansa team enjoy a highly exposed status in the German marketing world.

Any development or change the airline undertakes becomes national news. Journalists even call to examine the thought process of logo color selection. But despite the pressures around him, the Lufthansa vice president of marketing and University of Missouri–St. Louis alumnus navigates his varied responsibilities with excitement and humility.

“Lufthansa is one of the most significant German brands, so I’m massively grateful for the role,” Schlaubitz says from the back of a cab following a flight from Vienna. “It’s an incredibly visible brand, and it’s a very emotional brand. If anything comes up – positive or negative – it becomes front-page news. With the job comes a great responsibility.”

Having lived in Germany during his teenage years, Schlaubitz has a deep connection to the brand as well.

He spent the first decade of his life in Venezuela and then immigrated with his mother to her home country of Germany. By 18, Schlaubitz moved to his third continent to be closer to his father and study marketing and philosophy at UMSL.

With a strong business sense and curiosity about the fundamental motivations of others, Schlaubitz’s multidisciplinary education proved an important factor in his career trajectory.

“My time in the philosophy department was probably one of the most impactful because I discovered how to critically think through things, how to deconstruct problems and come up with logical solutions,” Schlaubitz says. “In my job, I try to vigorously comprehend what people’s needs are and take a deep look at ways in which we can

add value to their lives. That’s where psychology and philosophy come in to help.”

Since transitioning from Facebook five years ago, Schlaubitz has led Lufthansa’s global content production, business marketing, media advertising, digital innovation and brand strategy.

In February, his team revealed its first rebranding project in 30 years, which included a modern take on Lufthansa’s 100-year-old crane logo.

The undertaking paid off as the company earned

more creative awards in the last year than in its entire history.

“Being allowed to participate in the shaping of such an important asset is pretty fascinating,” Schlaubitz says. “I have a heightened sense of curiosity, so it’s a brilliant time to try to figure out what motivates people. Technology is changing. Cultures are changing. There is nothing that is standing still, so it’s a fantastic intellectual challenge to try to stay ahead.”





MSW alumna puts her training to work in advocating for death row inmates

Erin LAND

By David Morrison

Erin Land isn't exaggerating much when she says she lives out of her suitcase. She's based out of the Federal Public Defender's Office in Phoenix but is also working on the cases of death row inmates in California, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Utah and Texas.

As a mitigation specialist investigator with the Capital Habeas Unit, it's her job to dig deep into the pasts of those sentenced to death to determine whether there were any factors overlooked during their trials that may, upon reinspection, lead to more lenient sentences.

She works in tandem with lawyers, paralegals and fact investigators, with the goal of getting people off death row. Land, who earned her MSW from the University of Missouri–St. Louis in 2015, knows the gravity of her work.

"We take on these really massive cases, and the consequences are so high," Land says. "This person's life is at stake. I really get to know the client. I get to know their family. We go above and beyond to make sure that our clients' life stories are told."

During her time at UMSL, Land served her graduate practicum in the Federal Public Defender's Office in St. Louis. She also landed a two-year research assistantship with Professor of Social Work Uma Segal, studying emerging health-care issues that face the elderly immigrant population.

"In most cases, I am responsible for putting together a comprehensive social history," Land says. "I was able to get a nice set of skills in a lot of different fields at UMSL so that I could do this work, which is so complex and requires all these different hats we have to wear."

Success comes slowly, if at all, in this line of work. Like the case of Ha'im Al Matin Sharif, who served 29 years on Nevada's death row before the CHU's efforts freed him in June 2017.

Land's only been at it three years, so she hasn't experienced the same range of emotions as some of her colleagues who have been working on cases for decades. Someday, she hopes she will.

"These jobs are pretty competitive," Land says. "I'm with a lot of people that have big schools behind their names. I'm proud that mine is UMSL." ≡

GLENN

NICHOLAS

A young chemist
setting a new path
for his family legacy

By Jessica Rogen



Nicholas Glenn *grew up surrounded by educators. His mother, grandmother and two aunts had all worked in public schools. Glenn assumed he would follow suit – until he discovered chemistry.*

The University of Missouri–St. Louis alumnus started a chemistry doctorate at the University of Michigan this fall and established a new family trade: His younger sister will follow him into chemistry at the University of Missouri–Kansas City.

“I think I was initially fearful of studying chemistry because I was unsure if I would succeed, as it was a different career path than what most of my family had chosen,” he says. “I guess, in a way, seeing me doing well gave my sister the confidence that she could succeed.”

Glenn started his undergraduate work at Lindenwood University in 2013 then transferred to UMSL for the smaller class sizes and less expensive tuition. Once he realized that he could continue his study in a fully funded doctoral program, Glenn focused on that goal.

“At that point, attending graduate school seemed like a realistic option for me,” he says. “So, I began looking into different research opportunities.”

While browsing the National Science Foundation website, Glenn discovered Research Experiences for Undergraduates. The 10-week program introduced him to the graduate school environment and workload. He participated in two REUs, one at Michigan and the other at the University of North Carolina. He also studied the bioanalytical applications of nanoporous gold surfaces in Professor Keith Stine’s lab at UMSL.

“I didn’t necessarily feel ready when I applied for my first research experience, but I got comfortable as time went by,” he says. “Most importantly, I felt like it helped me get my foot through the door at an institution I was interested in attending.”

In a Michigan lab, Glenn studied acidic atmospheric particles and their impact on health and the environment while getting a sense of life in Ann Arbor. At UNC, he learned about nitric oxide’s role in wound healing, blood pressure regulation, vasodilation and nerve communications.

“For years, nitric oxide was primarily viewed as a contributing factor to environmental pollutants,” Glenn says. “I remember being intrigued by how such a small molecule has such a huge role in a part of so many major processes.”

Glenn previewed Michigan’s computational lab this summer before beginning school in the fall. He is one of five 2018 UMSL chemistry graduates in doctoral programs across the country. Glenn is interested in bioanalytical research but is open to other options, which fits with his larger interest in the field’s multitudinous possibilities.

“There’s an aspect of chemistry behind everything,” he says. “There’s always something new, whether it’s how to stop a certain disease or environmental issues. You can use it to understand a majority of problems in the world today.” ☰



Photo courtesy of Scott Soderberg

60s

E. William Gillula, BA 1969, retired from the CSI Leasing Board of Directors.

Gwendolyn Moore, BA 1969, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 4. Gwendolyn was also named a 2018 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and exceptional accomplishments of women. Gwendolyn is the curator of urban landscape and community identity at the Missouri History Museum in St. Louis.

Dale Westerholt, BSEd 1973, joined State Farm Mutual Insurance Company as a claim section manager.

Mary Edwards, BM 1974, retired from St. Louis Public Radio | 90.7 KWMU after 44 years.

Donald Imholz, BSBA 1975, was named to the SSM Health Board of Directors. Donald is the founder and CEO of Don Imholz and Associates.

Thomas Minogue, BA 1976, was named to the 2019 list of The Best Lawyers in America. Thomas serves as chairman of Thompson Coburn LLP.

Gloria Carter-Hicks, BSAJ 1977, was awarded a 2018 Most Influential Business Women Award by the St. Louis Business Journal. Gloria is the president and CEO of Hicks-Carter-Hicks in St. Louis.

Mark Reger, MA 1977, transitioned to teaching full time at Limestone College in Gaffney, S.C. Mark was formerly dean of faculty at Limestone.



Martha Ambrose, BA 1978, wrote "Claire's Last Secret," published by Severn House.

Dale Oberkfell, BSBA 1978, received a 2018 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on April 26. Dale is the president and chief financial officer of Midwest BankCentre in St. Louis.

Terry Koebbe, BSBA 1980, was named chairman of Dent Wizard International in Bridgeton.

Marilyn Ratkin, MBA 1980, was honored at the Women of Achievement Luncheon in Clayton for her dedication to improving the community through advocacy and direct service.



Benjamin Washington, BSBA 1980, was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal with a 2018 CFO of the Year Award.

Benjamin is the chief financial officer for the Missouri Historical Society.

Virginia Westmoreland, BA 1982, was awarded a 2018 Most Influential Business Women Award by the St. Louis Business Journal. Virginia is the director of marketing at the Saint Louis Zoo.



Dwight Canning, BSBA 1983, was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal with a 2018 CFO of the Year Award.

Dwight is the vice president and chief financial officer at the St. Louis Community Foundation.

Bernard King, MBA 1983, was named one of America's top financial advisors by Barron's newspaper. Bernard is the managing director at UBS Financial Services in St. Louis.

John Wightman, BA 1983, was promoted to chair of the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine at the Uniformed Services University F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine in Bethesda, Md.

Peggy Fiala, MEd 1985, joined the Chesterfield Day School in Missouri as the head of school.

70s

Kathleen Osborn, BSEd 1970, MEd 1974, was honored by KIPP St. Louis at its annual Champions for Education Breakfast. Kathleen is the executive director of the Regional Business Council.

Sunny Schaefer, BSEd 1970, MEd 1980, retired from her role as executive director of Operation Food Search after 22 years of service.

Richard Jung, BA 1971, was presented a gift of appreciation by the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington.

Michael Finkes, BS 1973, MS 1978, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 4. Michael serves as president of the UMSL Chemistry Alumni Council. Michael is retired from Monsanto and is a former president of the UMSL Alumni Association.

80s

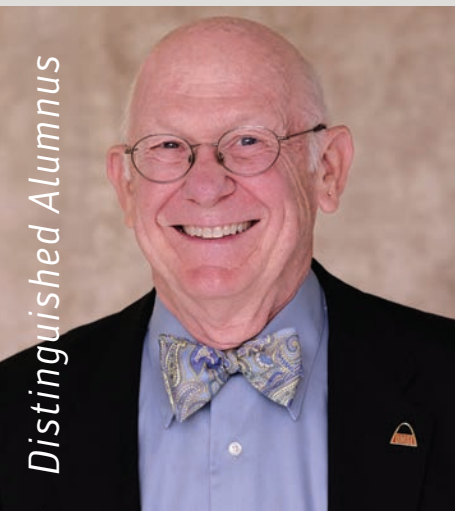
Karen Evans, BSW 1980, joined Grace Hill as a Second Acts Encore fellow.

Nikki Goldstein, BSW 1980, received the 2018 Harvey A. and Dorismae Hacker Friedman Award for Excellence in Service to Older Adults. Nikki is the executive director of Crown Center for Senior Living in St. Louis.

Distinguished Alumna



Distinguished Alumnus





UMSL alumni invade Coors Field



A number of red shirts clashed with the traditional purple of Coors Field on Aug. 26 in celebration of the St. Louis Cardinals and the University of Missouri—St. Louis. More than 550 UMSL alumni live in the Denver area, and a group of 33 gathered in a suite at Coors Field to watch the Cardinals top the Colorado Rockies 12-3. The alumni in attendance spanned several generations, from a 1976 alumnus to a 2017 College of Business Administration graduate who relocated to Denver for a job. The UMSL Office of Alumni Engagement is planning similar events in Washington, Chicago, Kansas City, Dallas and Florida.

Amy Kweskin, BSBA 1985, was awarded a 2018 Most Influential Business Women Award by the St. Louis Business Journal. Amy was also inducted into the Parkway School District Alumni Association Hall of Fame. Amy is the vice chancellor for finance and chief financial officer at Washington University in St. Louis.

Mary Suiter, BS 1985, PhD 2007, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 4. Mary is an assistant vice president and economic education officer at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Richard Thornton Jr., BSBA 1985, was named vice president of law enforcement and operations at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.



Rose Windmill, BA 1985, was appointed to the Bi-State Development Board of Commissioners by Missouri Governor Mike Parson in July. Rose is the associate vice chancellor for government and community relations at Washington University in St. Louis.

Patrick Higgins, BSBA 1986, joined Jefferson Bank and Trust in Creve Coeur as senior vice president.

Maxine Mirowitz, OD 1987, was recognized as one of the 2018 St. Louis Jewish Light Unsung Heroes. Maxine is a certified pilates reformer instructor for the St. Louis Jewish Community Center.



Teri Murray, MEd 1987, was elected to the Ranken Jordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital Board of Directors. Teri is dean of the Saint Louis University School of Nursing.

Thomas Santel, MBA 1987, was elected executive director of Civic Progress in St. Louis.

David Cole, BA 1988, wrote a new series of educational children's books, "The Math Kids: The Prime-Time Burglars," published by Common Deer Press.



Doris Coleman, BSBA 1988, received the 2018 Outstanding Volunteer Award presented by the UMSL Alumni Association at the

annual IGNITE! conference on Aug. 24. Doris serves as treasurer of the African American Chapter of the UMSL Alumni Association.

Edward Protzel, MA 1989, received a gold medal in the Literary Titan Book Awards for his novel, "Honor Among Outcasts," published by TouchPoint Press.



Mark Vago, BSBA 1989, was appointed as chief financial officer for Bi-State Development Agency in St. Louis.

90s

Robert Smith, BGS 1990, OD 1994, was awarded the 2018 National Optometric Association Founders Award for his "outstanding and unselfish contributions to the NOA and the visual welfare of all the citizens of the nations."

Distinguished Alumna





Christi Abeln, BSN 1992, MSN 1994, received one of St. Louis Magazine's 2018 Excellence in Nursing

Awards. Christi is a pediatric nurse practitioner at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Stanley Freerks, MBA 1992, received the 2018 UMSL Business Dean's Medal at the Salute to Business Achievement Awards ceremony on April 26. Stanley is retired from Risk Placement Services of St. Louis.

Laurie Phillips, BSBA 1992, received a 2018 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on April 26. Laurie is the CEO of St. Patrick Center in St. Louis.

James Lally, MBA 1993, received a 2018 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on April 26. James was also named to the Business Journals' national list of 100 notable financial executives. James is president and CEO of Enterprise Financial Services Corporation.

Caroline Tinsley, BA 1993, joined Tucker Ellis LLP as a partner in the firm's Medical & Pharmaceutical Liability Group.



Amy Hunter, BA 1994, was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of its 2018 Diverse Business Leaders. Amy is a manager

of diversity and inclusion for St. Louis Children's Hospital.



Veta Jeffery, BS 1994, joined Midwest BankCentre in St. Louis as senior vice president of community and economic development.

Bryan Pearlman, BSEd 1994, founded Most Valuable Professional Development in St. Louis.



Tim Pecoraro, BSEd 1994, was promoted to superintendent of the Pattonville School District.

Michael Taylor, BSBA 1995, MBA 2000, joined Green Flash Brewing Company in San Diego as CEO.

Sean McKessy, MBA 1996, was promoted to partner at RubinBrown in St. Louis.

Victor Potapov, BA 1998, MA 2000, became a software director at Cerebri AI in Toronto.

Scott Dallman, BSBA 1999, was promoted to market president at Midland States Bank in St. Louis.



Roberta L. Harrison, BSN 1999, MSN 2001, PhD 2007, was promoted to associate dean for academic programs and

community/global partnerships for the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Nursing.



Kenneth Cella Jr., BSBA 1993, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 4. Kenneth is principal of client strategies at Edward Jones in St. Louis.

UMSL Alumni
University of Missouri—St. Louis



Alumni from the Pierre Laclède Honors College received the Alumni Affinity Organization of the Year award during IGNITE! 2018, a leadership conference for UMSL alumni volunteers. Group members (from left) Elizabeth Eikmann, James "JB" Carroll, Holly Pope and Sean Fieser, along with Fieser's wife, Julia, celebrated the honor during the Aug. 25 event at the Millennium Student Center on North Campus. The honors college network earned the recognition for its continual growth in membership and event turnout. Its fall 2017 happy hour and spring 2018 trivia night saw record attendance.

A growing group



00s



Opal Jones, BSBA 2000, MBA 2017, was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of its 2018 Diverse Business Leaders.

Opal serves as president and CEO of DOORWAYS in St. Louis.

David Warner, BGS 2000, was appointed senior vice president and relationship manager at Busey Bank in St. Louis.

Beth Goetz, MEd 2001, was named athletic director at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

Robert Jackson, BS 2001, wrote "A Murder in the STL," published by RLJ Publishing.

Robin Kimberlin, BS 2002, MSW 2012, was named a 2018 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and exceptional accomplishments of women. Robin is the associate director of UMSL's Student Social Services.



Andrea Markwardt, BSN 2002, MSN 2005, was a winner of the 2018 Nurses: The Heart of Health Care

Contest. Andrea is a transplant coordinator at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis.

Denise Bogard, MFA 2003, wrote "After Elise," published by Ardent Writer Press. Denise retired from Lift for Life Academy in St. Louis after 14 years.

Lori Gwyn, MS 2003, PhD 2005, was named director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at Southwestern Oklahoma State University-Weatherford.

Christopher Young-El, MEd 2003, EdSp 2008, EdD 2017, was promoted to principal of Normandy Schools Collaborative 7th-8th Grade Center.

Richard Muma, PhD 2004, was promoted to provost and chief academic officer at Wichita State University in Kansas.



Andre Stevens, BSBA 2004, joined the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery Board. Andre is the engagement manager for Daugherty

Business Solutions.

Michal Grinstein-Weiss, MA 2005, was named the Shanti K. Khinduka Distinguished Professor at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.



Osman Özturgut, MEd 2005, PhD 2006, was appointed dean of extended university and associate vice

president for international programs at California State University Channel Islands.

Loren Rullman, PhD 2005, was appointed vice provost for student affairs and dean of students at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich.

David Branding, BSBA 2006, was promoted to managing director of industrial real estate at JLL in St. Louis.

Susan Fitzgerald, BSEd 2006, joined Valley Insurance Agency Alliance in St. Louis as a processing specialist.

Colleen Hafner, BSBA 2006, MPPA 2012, joined Rise Community Development in St. Louis as a project manager.



Shelly Parks, MEd 2006, was named the Missouri Teacher of the Year. Shelly is an English teacher at Francis Howell North High School.

Brian Salmo, BSBA 2006, received a 2018 UMSL Salute to Business Achievement Award on April 26. Brian is the general counsel of LMI Aerospace in St. Charles.



Shante Duncan, BA 2007, opened the Joan B. Quinn Safe House, a home for abused young women. Shante is the founder and

executive director of Sisters Helping Each Other Reach a Higher Height, a St. Louis-based nonprofit that works to create safe spaces for women and girls of color.

Aaron Golchert, BSBA 2007, received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award at the UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 4. Aaron is the director of N2 Publishing in St. Louis.



Outstanding Young Alumnus



Carla Johnson, BSBA 2007, was elected vice president of communications for Urban League Young Professionals of

Metropolitan St. Louis.

Timothy Anderson, BSAcc 2008, MAcc 2010, was promoted to partner at RubinBrown in St. Louis.



Pamela Puppo, MS 2008, presented a seminar at North Dakota State University in the Department of Biological

Sciences titled "From Islands to Prairies: Studying the Factors that Influence Plant Diversification Patterns." Pamela is a postdoctoral fellow at NDSU.



Distinguished Alumna

Tori Gillespie, BSME 2007, received a Distinguished Alumni Award at the UMSL Founders Dinner on Oct. 4. Tori is a mechanical designer at KAI Design & Build in St. Louis.

Bliss

Elizabeth Howard, BSEd 2004,
to Don Herberts on June 2

Maureen O'Brien, BSBA 2007, BSACC 2007, MAcc 2008,
to Philip O'Brien on Aug. 25

Catherine Croci, BA 2011, MEd 2014,
to Rob Eaton on May 19

Ryan N. Davis, BSBA 2012,
to **Santina Grzac**, BS 2014, MS 2016, on Aug. 14

Sean Fieser, BSBA 2015,
to Julia Krisheminska on Feb. 7

Eric Weidinger, BA 2015,
to Melissa Beyer on July 27

Teresa Frank, BSBA 2016,
to Ethan Hayden on April 14

Kathryn Bruno, BSN 2017,
to Cody Corber on June 2

Michael Hill, BSBA 2018,
to Elizabeth Pulliam on Aug. 3

Adam Thompson, BA 2018,
to Rebecca Smith on June 16

Corey Smale, BA 2008, opened
American-Chinese restaurant
Good Fortune in St. Louis.

Isaac Butler, MBA 2009,
received a 2018 UMSL Salute
to Business Achievement
Award on April 26. Isaac is the
vice president for the Office
of Diversity and Inclusion and
adjunct assistant professor at
the St. Louis College
of Pharmacy.

Antionette Carroll, BS 2009,
MA 2012, received a Saint Louis
Visionary Award on April 23.

10s



**Matthew
Delventhal**,
BS 2010,
completed a PhD
in economics at
the Universitat
Autònoma de
Barcelona.

Shunta Johnson, BSN 2010,
MSN 2015, was honored in the
St. Louis American Foundation's
2018 Salute to Excellence in
Health Care. Shunta is a nurse
practitioner at BJC HealthCare.

Jacob Kliethermes,
BSN 2010, was a winner of the
2018 Nurses: The Heart of Health
Care Contest. Jacob is the
executive director of nursing at
Mercy Hospital Lincoln in Troy.

Michael Wolpert, BSACC 2010,
was promoted to director of
accounting for ophthalmology at
EyeCare Partners in Ballwin.



**Leonora
Muhammad**,
BSN 2011, was
elected to
the Certified
Correctional
Health
Professional
Board of Trustees. Leonora
is a senior director of quality
improvement and patient safety
for Corizon Health in St. Louis.

Rachel Turney, MEd 2011,
EdD 2017, joined William Woods
University in Fulton as an
assistant professor of education.

Elise Barry, BS 2012, was
promoted to client operations
manager for OneSpace in
Swansea, Ill.



**Elizabeth
Fuchs**,
BSW 2012,
MSW 2013, was
selected as
Missouri's 2018
Champion of Pride
by The Advocate
magazine. Elizabeth is the public
policy manager for Promoting
Equality for all Missourians.

Christine Mathews,
BSN 2012, MSN 2017, received
one of St. Louis Magazine's 2018
Excellence in Nursing awards.
Christine is a nurse practitioner
at Mercy Hospital St. Louis.

Fredrecka McGlown,
BA 2012, BS 2012, MA 2015,
was recognized as part of the
St. Louis Business Journal 30
under 30 class. Fredrecka is
co-manager of the Young Adult
Workforce Division at St. Louis
Agency on Training and
Employment.



**Jason
Vasser-Elong**,
BA 2012,
MFA 2014,
wrote "shrimp,"
published by
2Leaf Press.
Jason is a

program specialist for the
Missouri Arts Council in
St. Louis.

Elizabeth Eikmann, BA 2013,
was named director of operations
of the International Photography
Hall of Fame and Museum in
St. Louis.

Leonard Johnson,
MPPA 2013, was selected
for the position of director
of neighborhood business
development at St. Louis
Development Corporation.



Serving UMSL's 100,000 alumni

The University of Missouri–St. Louis Alumni Association Governing Board of Directors welcomed three new members in July. Debra Harper-LeBlanc (at left), BGS 1986, Eric Madkins, BA 2001, and Elle Fitzpatrick, BS 2015, are slated to serve three-year terms.



Lischen Reeves, MEd 2013, joined the Shook, Hardy & Bacon law firm in Kansas City, Mo., as an associate.

Jackson Suhre, BS 2013, was promoted to senior manager of analytics at Premium Retail Services in Chesterfield.

Meghan Douty, BSBA 2014, founded paddleboard company Carolina Waterman in Myrtle Beach, S.C.



Kathleen Riddler, BA 2014, MA 2016, joined Express Scripts as the business communications specialist in the strategic

performance solutions department. Kathleen was also a 2018 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and exceptional accomplishments of women.

"I look forward to working with each of these new members," Governing Board President Stacy McMurray says. "They bring new energy, expertise and diverse talents to the board. They have been great advocates for UMSL, and we are excited to utilize their vast career, philanthropic and volunteer experiences to help advance our alma mater. We also look forward to engaging our new and current members in the many cultural and educational programs offered on campus as well as professional leadership opportunities."

Harper-LeBlanc is the academic dean of liberal arts, criminal justice and human services at St. Louis Community College. In her career, Harper-LeBlanc has acquired numerous awards, including the Excellence in Teaching Award at Montgomery College and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Texas.

Madkins is the vice president of community development for Regions Bank. He also serves as a board director for the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council, Epworth Children and Family Services, Metropolitan St. Louis Community Reinvestment Association and Riverview Gardens Education Foundation.

Fitzpatrick is a histotechnologist at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. She was one of the first students to graduate from the UMSL Opportunity Scholars Program, a full-ride scholarship created for academically gifted first-generation college students or other students from the St. Louis area who are underrepresented in the workforce. She continues to give back to the program by interviewing potential Opportunity Scholars.

In Memoriam

Sympathy is extended to

Joani Narayan, BA 1971,
on the passing of her husband

Russell Christian Jr., BA 1976,
on the passing of his father

Gary Hoffman, BA 1977,
on the passing of his wife

George Chakides Jr., BSBA 1980,
on the passing of his father

Vincent Baum Jr., BSED 1994,
on the passing of his father

- 1960s **Carolyn Brown**, BA 1968, on March 18
Andrea Kern, BSEd 1969, MEd 1971, on April 8
Susan Moll, BSBA 1969, on May 23
Duane Straube, MEd 1969, on June 4
Thomas Wydrzynski, BS 1969, on March 16
- 1970s **Donna Halterman**, BA 1970, on Dec. 18, 2016
Ruth Stone, BSEd 1970, on April 18
Beatrice Lamb, MEd 1971, on Sept. 6
Richard Sperandio, BA 1971, on July 27
Barbara Vires, MEd 1971, on Feb. 18
JoAnn Dollus, BSEd 1972, on May 6
John Lee, BSBA 1973, on June 7
Esther McGowan, MEd 1973, on Aug. 8
Fredrick Seitz, MEd 1974, on May 6
Alberta Cohen, BSEd 1975, on June 30
Norma Jean Downey, BSEd 1977, on May 31
John Bacigalupo, BA 1979, on June 10
Joyce Eaton, MEd 1979, on May 30
Karl Kuhlman, BS 1979, on Feb. 5
- 1980s **Mark Wunderlich**, BA 1980, on April 30
Janet Torrisi-Mokwa, BA 1982, on July 23
Daniel Lemay, BSBA 1985, on May 13
Janet Wolfmeyer, MEd 1987, EdD 1991, on Feb. 10
Paul Moccia, OD 1988, on April 27
Zelli Frischetti, BSEd 1989, MA 1993, on July 21
- 1990s **Anthony Quinn**, MS 1990, on March 14
Michael Ahrens, BSBA 1991, on Jan. 31
Anita Potzmann, BSBA 1991, on June 26
Geralf Rohde, BA 1991, on May 7
Theodore Listerman, BA 1992, MA 1995, on March 17
Lauren Milner, BA 1999, on May 25
- 2000s **Peggy Ryan**, MEd 2002, March 27
James Devereux, MBA 2003, on June 30
Clinton Berry, MA 2005, on July 12

Kirsten Jones, MPPA 2015, was recognized as part of the St. Louis Business Journal 30 under 30 class. Kirsten serves as residency coordinator at the Washington University School of Medicine.



Yang Li, MBA 2015, was certified by the Institute of Packaging Professionals. Yang is a global business

coordinator at TricorBraun in St. Louis.

Evan Loveless, BA 2015, joined 2e Creative as a human resource coordinator. Evan was also appointed treasurer of the Maplewood Public Library Board of Trustees.

Han-En Chen, MBA 2016, joined EnTie Commercial Bank in Taiwan as assistant relationship manager.



Natalie Hilterbrand, BLA 2016, BLS 2016, was named a 2018 UMSL Trailblazer, which celebrates the diverse and

exceptional accomplishments of women. Natalie is the LGBTQIA+ and leadership development intern at Washington University in St. Louis.

Stephen Nations, BA 2016, joined Drive Social Media in St. Louis as a senior copywriter.



Tamara Wells, EdD 2016, was honored by the St. Louis American Foundation at its 31st Annual Salute to Excellence in

Education Gala on Sept. 29. Tamara is a secondary English language arts curriculum educator and instructional facilitator in the Hazelwood School District.

Thomas Drier, BSBA 2017, joined Gershman Commercial Real Estate in St. Louis as an associate.

Jennifer Gruenloh, MA 2017, presented at the 28th Annual International Conference about Virginia Woolf on June 21 at the University of Kent Woolf College in Canterbury, England.

Jack Krewson (below, at left) MEd 2017, and **Gavin Schiffres**, MEd 2017, cofounded Kairos Academies, a charter school set to open in 2019 in St. Louis. Jack is the former math department chairman at Normandy High School. Gavin previously taught in the Jennings School District.



Sean Burkett, BA 2018, joined the Department of Justice in St. Louis as an operational support technician.



Marco Pipoly, BS 2018, became UMSL's 100,000th graduate at the spring 2018 commencement ceremony. Marco is enrolled in the

neuroscience PhD program at the University of Iowa.

Benjamin Shattuck, BA 2018, joined Wells Fargo Advisors in St. Louis as a business systems consultant.

Samantha Sproul, BSBA 2018, joined Hogan-Hansen in Waterloo, Iowa, as a staff accountant.



Creating Communities

When Rudy Angulo, BA 2012, was growing up, he didn't have very many Hispanic role models. He admired family members and fictional TV characters, but from there, his options were slim.

That's one of the reasons Angulo, a recent law school graduate, is passionate about connecting with aspiring Hispanic and Latinx professionals.

"I want to help out as many young Hispanic people as I can because, how it was with me growing up, when I thought of someone like an attorney or a doctor or anyone that was a really successful person, I always thought that was unattainable for me," he says. "The only examples of lawyers I'd seen were on 'Law & Order' or on television, so I think it's important for people to meet someone who is like, 'I'm a successful Hispanic person, and you can be too.'"

He hoped to have some of those conversations when he decided to attend the UMSL Latinx Meet & Greet on Sept. 20. The event brought together UMSL Hispanic Latino Association members, Spanish-language students, administrators and alumni for an

evening of conversation and networking in the Millennium Student Center.

Luimil Negrón, UMSL's graduate assistant for Latino recruitment and retention and HISLA adviser, had the idea for the event after reviewing UMSL's 2018-23 strategic plan, which calls for the rollout of Hispanic, Asian, international, veteran and LGBTQ alumni chapters by 2023.

"As an avid reader of our strategic plan, I saw that there was an entry for alumni association affiliated chapters," Negrón, MA 2015, says. "So, I picked up the phone, and I called our alumni office. A lot of our Latino students haven't personally met another Latino professional. That may sound shocking to some people, but that's actually the experience of a lot of the students, some who may be first-generation students in a state like Missouri. For me, it was so important that ours see, 'Hey, there are people who graduated from here who are doing amazing things and coming here to get to know us and help us – who are coming together for a purpose that is larger than themselves.'"





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Calling all alumni

UMSL alumni were part of a milestone moment in 2018 as the university celebrated its 100,000th graduate. Today, a new generation is working toward a similar goal of earning degrees while creating meaningful change. Your participation in the Triton Telefund will help them get there.

The university call center connects current students and alumni with the goal of creating a brighter future for fellow Tritons. By answering the call, you can enhance UMSL's ability to offer new scholarships and innovative programs to the next 100,000 students.

For more information, visit giving.umsl.edu.

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